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YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center
Bethel, Alaska
October 27, 2022
9:25 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Myron Naneng, Acting Chair
John Andrew
Jackie Cleveland
Norma Evan
Robert Hoffman
James Landlord
Henry Parks
Phillip Peter
Alissa Rogers

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

Recorded and transcribed by:

Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC
329 F Street, Suite 222
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-227-5312/sahile@gci.net

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Bethel, Alaska - 10/27/2022)

(On record)

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. It looks like folks have taken their seats in the room, so we're going to go ahead and get started here.

For folks joining us on the phone, you can find the updated agenda and all the meeting materials in the Federal Subsistence Program website. That internet address is doi.gov/subsistence and then if you click on the regions tab and choose Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta you'll see a link for meeting materials.

For all our folks on the phone if you could please remember to mute your phones when you're not speaking. That would be great. If you don't have a mute button on your phone you can press star, six to mute and star, six again to unmute.

Everyone in the room if you can please remember to sign in on the sheet at the table in the back each day of the meeting so we can have a record of all the attendees. That would be great. Thank you.

Just a housekeeping announcement about public comments. This is a regulatory meeting and the Council will be discussing and deliberating on Federal fisheries proposals. There will be opportunity for public comment on these proposals. If you're here in the room and you would like to give a comment when we get to these proposals, please just raise your hand and we'll have our Chair call on you to comment. If you're on the phone and would like to comment, please just indicate that you'd like to comment by saying Mr. Chair and we'll call on you to provide a comment then.

If you'd like to submit written comments on fisheries proposals, you can do so by either providing me, the Council Coordinator, with a copy if you're here at the meeting or you can email those written comments to subsistence@fws.gov and we do just ask that you have your name and your affiliation

and your contact information on those written comments.

There will also be an opportunity to comment at the beginning of each day on non-agenda items, so members of the public or tribal representatives if you'd like to provide a comment on anything that's not on the agenda there will be a chance to do so each morning of the meeting.

I believe that's all I have. We are missing our Chair Raymond Oney today, so our Vice Chair Myron Naneng is going to be stepping in to be the Chair of the meeting today. I'll turn it over to Myron now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: We'll call the meeting to order and then we'll have the invocation. If everybody can please stand up. Phillip will be giving the invocation.

(Invocation)

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Let the record show that the meeting was called to order at 9:25 a.m. Let's go ahead with the roll call.

MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

MR. PARKS: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: Norma should be joining us. I believe she got weathered out yesterday. John Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Thomas Alstrom.

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: Thomas, were you able to call in?

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: Thomas wasn't feeling well. He wasn't able to make his flight, but he may try to call in to the meeting later today.

Jacqueline Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: James Landlord.

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: James also got weathered out on his flight yesterday and will hopefully be joining us later this morning or after lunch.

Phillip Peter, Sr.

MR. PETER, SR.: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Alissa Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Wasilly Alexie.

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: Unfortunately Was had a death in his family and he is not going to be able to join us at the meeting.

Ray Oney.

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: Were you able to join us online, Ray?

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: Myron Naneng.

MR. NANENG: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Robert Hoffman.

MR. HOFFMAN: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Robert is joining us on the teleconference today. Thank you so much for calling in, Robert.

MR. HOFFMAN: You're welcome.

MS. MCDAVID: And Richard Slats. Richard is stuck in Anchorage. He will be coming in around noon today. Currently we have seven Council members present. We do have a quorum.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you. Can we quickly go around the room to have the audience quickly introduce themselves. We'll start with the translators.

SOPHIE: Good morning. I'm Sophia and I'll be your interpreter all day and tomorrow.

MS. MCDAVID: I'm sorry. If folks could please speak into the microphone when you introduce yourselves.

SOPHIE: I do not have a microphone. Hello. I'm Sophie (in Yup'ik). Quyana.

MS. ANDREW: Good morning. Joanne Andrew. (In Yup'ik) I'm the interpreter.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: I think the service staff would be -- it would be good to know who is from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. LAVINE: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. My name is Robbin Lavine and I'm the Subsistence Policy Coordinator with OSM and it's really good to see you all. Thanks.

MS. WESSELS: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. My name Katya Wessels and I'm Counsel Coordination Division Supervisor with Office of Subsistence Management. It is so wonderful that we can meet in person again. Thank you.

MR. FOLEY: Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. My name is Kevin Foley. I'm a fish biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. Good morning.

MS. KENNER: Hi. I'm Pippa Kenner and I work with OSM in Anchorage and I'm an anthropologist. Thank you.

MR. PLANK: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. Tom Plank, wildlife biologist with OSM.

MS. KLEIN: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. My name is Jill Klein and I work as the Regional Subsistence Coordinator. I'm based in Anchorage at the Regional Office and I also serve as an Interagency Staff Committee Member. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: How about the Bethel staff.

MR. MOSES: Good morning. I'm Aaron Moses. I'm the Subsistence Resource Specialist at Yukon Delta.

MR. DAVIS: Good morning. I'm Ed Davis, the Assistant Refuge Manager at Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Very new. Just got here this week.

MR. TULIK: (In Yup'ik) Christopher Tulik with the Yukon Delta Refuge.

MR. DANIELS: Good morning. My name is Bryan Daniels. I'm the waterfowl biologist at Yukon Delta Refuge and I'm also acting deputy manager. Good morning.

MR. LARSON: Good morning. My name is Paul Larson. I'm the Pathways student working under Bryan Daniels.

MS. FITKA: Good morning, Councilmen. My name is Serena Fitka. I'm the executive director for the Yukon River Drainage Fishery Association. Thank you for having us.

MS. MONCRIEFF: Good morning. My name is Catherine Moncrieff and I'm the Staff Anthropologist at the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. I'm very happy to be here today.

MS. CANFIELD: Good morning. My name is Gabe Canfield. I am the project coordinator at Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. Thanks for having me.

MS. SCHOMOGYI: My name is Terese Schomogyi. I'm the programs manager at the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody else?

MR. ADERMAN: This is Andy Aderman, wildlife biologist with the Togiak Refuge in Dillingham. Good morning.

KWETHLUK, INC: Good morning. This is Kwethluk, Inc. We have Nick Ayapan, Senka Guy, Anthony Olick and George Guy with Kwethluk, Inc. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Good morning. Anybody else online?

MS. DEBENHAM: Good morning. Rosalie Debenham with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Good morning.

MR. HARRIS: Good morning. This is Frank Harris, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kenai Fisheries Office.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody else online?

MR. GILLIKIN: Good morning. This is Dan Gillikin with the Native Village of Napaimute. I'm the environmental director.

MR. GUSSE: Good morning. This is Walker Gusse with the Bureau of Land Management out of Anchorage.

Mr. CHYTHLOOK: Good morning. This is John Chythlook with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Sport Fish Division.

MS. STUBY: Good morning. This is Lisa Stuby of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Sport Fish Division.

MS. GLEASON: Good morning. This is

Christy Gleason, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I'm the Yukon River Fall Season Manager.

MS. JALLEN: Good morning. This is Deena Jallen. Also with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Yukon River Summer Season Manager.

MR. RANSBURY: Good morning. This is Shane Ransbury with Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I'm the Fall Season Assistant Manager for the Yukon.

MR. MCKEE: Good morning. This is Chris McKee, Statewide Subsistence Coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management and Interagency Staff Committee member out of Anchorage.

MR. GRAHAM: Good morning. This is Cory Graham with OSM.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody else online.

MS. STRAM: Good morning. This is Diana Stram with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

MS. POLLOCK: Good morning. This is Nikki Pollock with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. I'm the new operations manager.

MS. PATTON: Good morning, everyone. This is Eva Patton now with the National Park Service Subsistence Program in Anchorage and ISC member. Really wonderful to hear all of your voices and wonderful to know you're meeting in person. I wish I could be there with you. Take care. Good morning.

MR. SMITH: Good morning. This is Nick Smith with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

MR. SUNDOV: Good morning. This is Tim Sundov, fish biologist in Glennallen with BLM.

MR. THERCHIK: Good morning. It's David Therchik, Refuge Information Technician, Y-K Delta.

MS. DECKER: Good morning. This is Sam Decker with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Anybody else online.

MS. JOHNSON: Good morning. This is Ashley Johnson with AVCP in Bethel Natural Resources Department.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Don't be shy. We can't see you. So introduce yourself if you're online.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Okay. If that's everyone online, let's introduce the public that's here in Bethel.

MR. MAGEL: Good morning. My name is Andrew Magel. I'm the fisheries technician at the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Thank you.

MR. ANDREW: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. (In Yup'ik) I was, like everybody else, looking on FB when you guys called. My Yup'ik name is (in Yup'ik). I'm originally from the Yukon River, but I live here in Bethel. Timothy Andrew is my taxpayer name. I'm glad to be here participating. It's been a long time.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana. Anybody from the public online.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN NANENG: I know there's one in the corner that's -- oh, Jeff, do you want to introduce yourself?

MR. SANDERS: Do you want me to?

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Yes. You're public.

MR. SANDERS: Jeff Sanders, long time Bethel resident and also have an extensive relationship with Lower Yukon through family and fishing.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thanks, Jeff. Ambrose, do you want to introduce yourself.

MR. AGUCHAK: Ambrose Aguchak from

Bethel.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Ambrose. Thanks everyone for introducing themselves. I'd like to welcome everyone for face-to-face meeting after the last couple of years. It seems like every organization that's meeting nowadays are saying thank you for meeting in person so that we can discuss some of the issues that are affecting us every day in lives and hopefully plan a future for our families and our kids in the future.

So I really appreciate everyone having introduced themselves and the different departments, State departments as well as Federal departments that are working on this issue, the livelihood of our people in the Y-K Delta. I know it affects other concerns statewide.

So with that we'll go on to agenda item number 5, the review of the agenda and the adoption.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. Council members. There is an updated copy of the agenda. It should have been at your seat. Does everyone have a copy? It has a little yellow at the top with the date on it. If you all want to look that over there. There was only one minor change from the agenda that was in your meeting books and that was the addition of agenda item number 11(j) to elect a Council member to represent the Y-K Delta RAC on the State of Alaska Wood Bison Planning Team.

So that was just one thing that we realized we needed to add as an action item after the original agenda had been sent out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Thank you. (In Yup'ik) Are there any additions to the agenda that might be of importance to our meeting today? I know that addition plus there's also a possibility that there may be something that we might need to add to discuss on the agenda in the next couple of days.

I'll give everyone an opportunity to take a look at it and if there's no additions, then we'll move to adopt the agenda.

(Pause)

MR. PETER, SR.: Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make a motion to accept this agenda.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion made by Phillip Peter, Sr. to adopt the agenda. Is there a second.

MR. ANDREW: Second.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Seconded by John Andrew. Any further discussion on the motion.

MR. PETER, SR.: Question.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: The question has been called. All in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Those opposed say no.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion carried. We do have an agenda. Item number 6.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madame Chair. Council members, you can find the copy of the meeting minutes from your winter meetings starting on Page 5 of your meeting books.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, I'd like to make a correction.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Go ahead, Alissa.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. On Page 9 John Hanson is spelled H-A-N-S-O-N, not H-A-N-S-E-N. John Hanson, H-A-N-S-O-N. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana. Any other additions or corrections on the minutes.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN NANENG: If not, entertain the motion to accept the minutes with the correction.

MR. PETER, SR.: Mr. Chair, I so move to accept the minutes.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Motion made by Phillip Peter. Is there a second?

MR. ANDREW: Second.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Seconded by John Andrew. All in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Those opposed say no.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN NANENG: With that, thank you. The minutes are adopted from the previous meeting. We're going to the reports of Council members. We'll start with those online. Robert Hoffman, can you go ahead and give your Council Member report.

MR. HOFFMAN: Mr. Chairman, thank you. A report on the past meeting? I didn't understand the question.

MS. MCDAVID: Council Member Hoffman, right now is your opportunity if you want to share anything with the Council and those in attendance about subsistence activities in your region since the past meeting or any comments and concerns that you might have that you want to bring to the Council's attention.

Thank you.

MR. HOFFMAN: I'm just pleased that we're continuing our discussions on assisting the problems of our region. I really appreciate having these meetings for the future and I hope they continue because the problems are so serious in our region that we're having with, you might say, subsistence activities that carry us on through the winter months. So I really appreciate that we continue to try to assist the problem. I'm very, very proud of that.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Robert. Any

Council Member online.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Since we don't have anyone online we'll go ahead to Henry to give a report.

MR. PARKS: Mr. Chair, before I start my report I'd like to quickly introduce myself. My name is Henry. I'm from the Native Village of Nunapitchuk. Currently I'm one of the board of directors for our village corporation back home and I've been on the board for over 20 years. I'm one of the AC advisory committee members for the Lower Kuskokwim and here representing the Native Village of Nunapitchuk. I'm one of the church leaders back home at our Russian Orthodox Church. Currently right now I'm unemployed and I'm a single parent and I've got three kids and they're all adults now. I've got grandkids too.

The second thing I want to say good morning to all the Council Members, Federal agencies, the State agencies and all those on teleconference. I want to say a big thank you to our new coordinator Brooke for preparing this very important meeting.

We all know that we've been impacted by this pandemic for over two years, three years now maybe and this is my first in-person meeting, so I'm kind of very excited to be at this meeting with my Council Members here.

So that's why I'm -- so anyways from the last meeting that was in March we had long daylight hours in the month of March, so I usually go out and hunt ptarmigan because we had enough snow back home and we had good ptarmigan this year. Those previous past years we didn't see any ptarmigans anymore, but now they're coming back, which is good.

Now I did some other subsistence hunting. Rabbit, but not beavers. I went out to Yukon treeline to get (in Yup'ik) steam bath wood and when the days got longer I went out to the mouth of Dawson to manaq, ice fishing, pikes. I'm not the only person down there. Sometimes there's a lot of people down there manaq, ice fishing pikes.

So when the waterfowl started to arrive there were plenty again this year, but hardly any snow geese again. I don't know why, but there were a lot of waterfowl, cacklers, geese, swans, cranes. I went out maybe a couple times and had fresh birds. So when the ice got melted I went out to Baird Inlet. That's in Nelson Island area. It's pretty far from my place.

We had to go out and spend a few nights over there camping, spring camping. Take my family members along. Gathered eggs, seagull eggs, because we like seagull eggs. They're not like chicken eggs, but they're really good eggs. Seagull eggs. So we had enough, came back, shared our eggs with our immediate family members, cousins.

So when the salmon arrived I want to quickly say thank you to the Federal agencies, State agencies for giving us an opportunity to fish again this past summer. So we had a good fishing season. To me it was a fish -- a really good fishing season, but that first opener was not really good, but the second opener was really good. It was really good. The kings were at their peak on that second opener.

I want to quickly say and make a recommendation to the Federal agencies next time, hopefully, if it's God's will, next year, if we're going to be fishing again, please don't open it on Sundays. The reason why I bring it up is because we respect Sundays. It's called a Sabbath. A Sabbath day. We have to rest on that day. Our ancestors respected that day. One day. That's Sunday. We have to go to church and rest on that day.

Also I want to add please don't open it at 6:00 a.m. It's a little too early for us. Especially for us who are living up in the tundra villages area because it's a long trip going downriver by boat. It's over 50 miles to reach our fishing grounds down below mouth of Johnson. So 6:00 a.m. is a little too early for me. Not only for me, to other folks too. So 9:00 a.m. would be the best time. So please don't forget that.

I highly recommend to the State -- Federal and State agencies if you guys are going to give us an opening by next year, please open it at 9:00 a.m., eastern 6:00 a.m., because it's a long trip from

my village. Those three villages from my area.

Anyway, we did catch a lot of -- to me, I had a lot of kings this year. Reds. But chums were not very much again this past summer. So we had really good fishing season again this year, but I feel really sorry for the Yukon people because they were suffering again from catching salmons again this year.

So anyway we had a good season like I said and the weather was really good and our fish died out really good, smoke them, and we had enough salted salmon. Sulunaqs. We called them sulunaqs. Even half-dried salmons. They're all stored in our freezer ready to cook them later on down the road.

Anyways we had a good summer. The plants of the earth were there again. Fresh fruit, salmon berries. A few blackberries this year due to the weather. Blueberries. But we had a lot of red berries. In our area we had a lot of whitefish this year back in my hometown because we have a lot of lakes, rivers back home in my area. So again this year we had good fishing whitefish. Got some whitefish. Another fish pikes and the lush.

I think that's about it, but I know I have forgotten some of my reports. I would like to make a comment, Mr. Chair, besides my report here. I'm going to make an example of the farmers. You know, there's people who make farms, for example, fresh produce or even cattle. These people they have to keep an eye on their plants or cattle in order for them to grow or succeed. That's who they are. They're farmers. We call them farmers.

Now for us the land, the sea, the river. It's like our farm. Meaning if they're not being taken care of, they will extinct. So we have to somewhat keep an eye on salmon returns, waterfowl returns and other mammals. Sea mammals or land animals. Because if they're not properly taken care of they will extinct.

My point here is about salmon returns. Just making an example of like farming. Then for us Natives, there's over 55 under AVCP and every village, every household doesn't have a job back home. So since we're like left, we're not living in the big cities, we

live off from the land, subsistence way of life. That's our cultural way of life because we don't -- like I said, every household under AVCP, there's over 50 villages. They don't have jobs. So we rely on subsistence way of life.

So other races they live off livelihood ways of life, meaning they work and get groceries from the store, pay their expenses and whatnot, but for us Natives we're not like them. We don't have access, like road access in our villages, only boardwalks, and we have to have especially salmon on our table to feed our family members and our guests.

Right now we all know the Yukon people suffered again from salmon fishing, so I know that they don't have much, probably few fish in their freezer right now. Like I said, we always catch our shares -- or our catches, our catches to our relatives, cousins during potlucks or church gatherings. So that's who we are is Natives, as Yup'ik people, Native people. We always have to catch our catches.

So right now I know some they don't have salmon in their freezers. They will invite some guests, but maybe they will ask you got no dry fish. That's our number one social food, salmon. Whether they're dry fish, whether they're sulunaqs, half dried.

I think that's about it, Mr. Chair. Quyana.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Henry. Then we'll go next to John.

MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Quyana. This is real nice to see people instead of talking on the phone and figure out who they are, where they're from. It's been a long two years since we met in person like this. Nice to see all the folks in here. I'm pretty happy even though some of our members didn't make it.

Again, my name is John Andrew. In Yup'ik they call me (Yup'ik names). Those are my grandfather's and his brother's name. I'm a longtime fisherman, hunter, trapper and subsistence gatherer out here in my area. But this past -- starting from the spring our village up there and the four villages that

we all speak of on and off on fisheries issues.

This year we have such a late opening that some of us had to go back into the lakes to go after whitefish and pike. It's the first time I had to fish for whitefish and pike all the way into June. I had to share with the village. At least some households that don't have their own boats and motors to go out with or their setnets don't work.

In June we did not -- I did not go for setnet openings because I was hoping for -- waiting for driftnet openings because it's better to go for me -- it's better to go after fresh fish. Live fresh fish. I don't like to see dead fish in my setnets. On June 19 there was an opening. They said that was a good day, but I was handicapped. I had injured myself. I wasn't able to go. I told my family that I'll wait for silvers.

On July 3 opening I had a real good day on that setnet day. I had maybe 82 in the morning about three hours and I wanted to pull out my net there. One of my grand-nephews said I'll fish the rest of the day for our other relatives. I was pretty happy with that.

After that we had to wait for silver season because we were hoping that the Department would give us an opening for silvers. Because when we don't get enough kings and reds, we usually make it up with silvers or cohos off the river, but we didn't have any.

Come silver time the Department closed the whole river all the way from the mouth to upriver and -- all the way to upriver. It was a disaster right there. The fish were jumping for a whole three or four weeks. We weren't allowed to fish for them. That really hurted a lot of our families at the villages.

When we'd meet with the other four villages, we talked about the Area M fisheries. Try to limit -- put a limitation or ask them to put limits on salmon fisheries down in Area M trawling driftnet openers down there. They catch most of our fish before they get to our area in the Yukon and Norton Sound.

The Department has records starting back from way back prior to 1980s, the harvest records down there. We asked for limits or restrictions on the

fisheries. They always say no, no. We need more study or more research on it. They're not telling us the truth. You know they have records already.

The other one was the Bering Sea trawl fisheries that are intercepting our immature salmon. They catch them by the hundreds of thousands. Even some years by half a million. Chums and the kings. Now they're bycatch.

A few years back I read a report from Sports & Field by a guy named Shane Mahoney. This is all fisheries. There's a waste of at least 35 percent of all salmon catches or another species because some of them are not their targeted species or the wrong size or they just rotted before they work on them. It's a total waste.

Our people around here when they fish, they take all the fish back home. Take them and save some for the families and neighbors and elders and people that want them. We've been asking for restrictions and limitations on False Pass and Bering Sea since the 1980s. To this day they never -- it never has become a reality.

Some guy -- some fisherman down from Anchorage area he sat at three different Councils. We could have another council for the Bering Sea Fishery. Northwest Pacific Fisheries Management Council. I think -- I believe that probably ends up down on the Aleutian Chain, not at the Bering Sea side. It's something we really need to look into because the majority of the Northwest Pacific Management Council are not from our local area. They're talking about putting only two people on that seine and they're just a minority and they'll be powerless.

I could go on, but I have to thank Mr. Henry Parks for taking away what I had to say earlier. Saved me a lot of air time. Thank you.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, John. Alissa.

MS. ROGERS: Quyana, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. Good morning and welcome to the Y-K

RAC meeting. It is so good to see all your faces. My heart is filled with so much joy right now. It's so good to see you all again. I'm Anguksuar Qiuran, Alissa Nadine Rogers. The daughter of Allen Joseph and Marita Hanson, granddaughter of John and Alice Hanson of Alakanuk, Fred Qiuran Cyril Lincoln Joseph and Bridget Ala Joseph of Hooper Bay.

I currently am sitting on 23 other tribal entities, councils, committees, State agencies and 13 of them I seat as an official representative of them. I do have to declare that I do work for the State of Alaska, yet I will not be representing them here at this meeting.

For my report I'm kind of a little bit all over the place because I was trying to like compile it together, but thank you, Mr. Parks. You said a lot of what I needed to say.

For the smelts this year they were pretty plenty. They were nice and big compared to previous years, but not as much as in worms as there was previously. In the past three years there was a bunch of worms in the meat, so you had to really really cook your smelts really good or make sure they would dry them and then heat them in the oven. So smelts were really good for us this year. Which saved us a lot because we didn't get very much this year.

Smelts and bird hunting is pretty much all I got in my freezer right now. We didn't go salmon fishing because it didn't work with our schedule. We had motor trouble. We couldn't go out. We had net trouble. And we couldn't go moose hunting either. We attempted to go a couple times, but it just didn't line up with us this year.

Bird hunting. We were worried about the bird flu, but it wasn't as bad as we were anticipating it to be, but we definitely took a lot into concern.

This year there were a lot of baby ducks out there this year. Not so much other ones, but there was a lot of baby ducks out there. I felt like the incoming bird migration was a lot smaller, but the outgoing bird migration was way bigger this year.

Trapping for us was a good year this year. We did pretty good. It held us afloat. During egg hunting season was pretty good this year and lots and lots of greens. There was lots of kapuukaq. There was lots of butterheads, fiddleheads. There was -- we were a little late on the fiddleheads this year, but there was quite a bit of greens this year, which we were really thankful for. They were very welcoming compared to previous years.

For the summertime fishing was hard. Fishing was hard on our young people. They see how we react. They see how we take upon these regulations and how we have to live with them and yet we're still trying to teach them our traditional values and trying to teach them who we are and that it's a part of us and who we are trying to be with these regulations and new things that we have to abide by.

After meeting with a group of young people during the ONC Science Camp, we took into heart a lot of discussion items in regards to what they see because they're the ones that see what's happening out there. They observe, they learn and a lot of them are heartbroken. They were disappointed. A lot of them you could see it on their face.

They saw the pain in their parents and their family members who go hunting and fishing and aren't able to because if they're not able to go hunting and fishing, those family members of theirs revert to alcohol and drugs and it affects their homes, it affects their families and it hurts them as kids because they're seeing something completely different than what they're normally seeing and what they're observing.

So if they don't have their core ability to go subsistence hunting and fishing, they're having to sit at home and watch their families fall apart. They can tell how we respond and act. But one of the things that they wanted to bring forth -- we had this huge, giant whiteboards and we were scribbling all over them, but I told them we needed three main -- what are their three main concerns that they want to bring to the table.

One of them, they're scared of Donlin Gold. They're scared of what is going to happen to

them and their already troubled families. They feel like no one is out there to represent them and their future and what they want. They want a life that we have, that we lived even prior to regulations. They want the ability to walk out their door, go hunting and fishing without having to be sheltered, put in place, restricted.

The second thing that they wanted was to change the regulation in the fisheries. They wanted to extend the second half of the fisheries and reduce the front end of the fisheries so that it gives families more time because when that first fish gets here and the ability to go fishing they want fresh fish. They don't have fresh fish because we've been heavily restricted these past years and now they want fresh fish and the ability just to have fresh fish on the table is something they crave for. Something they miss. Something that builds their ability to get excited for the summer.

The third thing that they wanted to bring to the table was reducing the amount of regulations that are put forth on them and on their families and opening it up, giving it a little relaxing room for them to go out hunting and fishing because they feel so regulated right now. They can't go caribou hunting. They can't go ptarmigan hunting. They can't go fishing for salmon like they used to. They want these restrictions to lift so that they can experience them while they're young, while they're still learning and not have to wait until they're 30, 40 years old to actually be able to go out.

If we're talking about fishing, kings and chums and coho were so bad this year. The first reported king that was reported to me was on May 26th. I got a picture someone sent me and said the kings are here, the kings are here. And they ran -- kings ran this year all the way through until September 6th. The last picture that I got from someone who caught a king salmon was September 6th.

Usually my family doesn't go king fishing because ever since 2005 I've given up my rights to go fishing for kings because I believe my elders need it more than I do. It's a part of my diet, but it's more a part of their diet than it is mine. They need to eat what they're used to eating so that they

can reduce their health issues. If it means me giving up my portion to save theirs, then I will do that.

For moose hunting this year around the Kuskokwim area there was lots of moose this year. More than last year or previous years, but a lot of them are females and a lot of them are starting to have twinning rates. So we see two or three baby moose with a mother, which is great for our season because that means that they can start lifting restrictions here on moose hunting.

Our garden did pretty good this year. They were pretty big and decent. The only issue is that we had three hard days of hard freeze, which we had to start our garden over twice. We went from 84 degrees at its hottest during the day to -36 degrees overnight, which killed our plants. We lost it twice and it happened three times this summer where we woke up and it was nothing but pure ice. Everything in the greenhouse had survived those three days, but we definitely had to restart all our plants over twice, which pushed our season back by at least a month.

There was lots of ants this year. A lot of dragonflies and a lot of caterpillars than previous years. I don't know why, but this year I kept having dragonflies land on me, so that's how come I feel like there's more dragonflies.

Berries were pretty good this year. There wasn't as much blueberries, but if you knew where to look and if you knew how blueberries survive during our weathers and you know where to find them, they were really big. We had lots of salmonberries this year. They actually did pretty good. They were a little bit big and some of them already had pre-ripened before the ripening season ever started. So that first week of July we went out and there was -- there was pretty big ones out there.

I had a lot of people call me and report about bear activity. There was a lot of troublesome bears that were out there. Bears breaking into fish camps. Even bears going into people's houses. That's how bad it was. A family had to jump out a window because a bear came through their front door.

That tells me that there isn't as much fish up in the spawning grounds being able to sustain those bears, so they're migrating down to our area where they know there's human activity, there's fish available and people are putting up fish. So knowing that there's an increase of bear activity in our area is a pre-warning to me that we're not getting enough fish up to the spawning ground.

I did want to mention also that my grandpa told me -- and the reason why I don't forget this is because our graveyard had sunk and became a swampland and disappeared. It turned into a lake and my grandpa didn't want to be buried in the ground because he didn't want to sink and be underwater when his body is laying at rest.

This year we've had -- it's happening again. He said be -- he pre-warned me that it's going to happen. The land is going to change, it's going to shift. It may not be now, but it will be coming and don't forget. A lot of the land around our area including the Lower Yukon especially where a majority of those lakes are out there the lands are sinking and becoming swamp lands again and the highlands were lands that were currently sunk and swamped are now becoming hills and mountainous areas.

So be careful when you're going out hunting, that the lands are sinking. We don't know how deep it is under the tundra, but you can easily get mucked in those swamp lands.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm done.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Alissa. We'll move on to Jackie.

MS. CLEVELAND: (In Yup'ik).

MS. EVAN: Good morning, Chair. This is Norma Evans. My flight was cancelled, but I am on now.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Good morning, Norma. We heard you. Okay, Jackie, proceed.

MS. CLEVELAND: Hi, Norma. I wish you were here. (In Yup'ik) Hi, my name is Jackie Cleveland

in English and in Yup'ik I'm Nalikutaar. I live in Quinhagak currently where I live with my fiance and my dog. I work for Alaska Venture Fund as a project manager for a project called Iowa Story House which will launch in February. I also work for Togiak National Wildlife Refuge as an RIT. I think it's my second year there.

Some other positions. I'm the vice president for the Native Village of Quinhagak Tribal Council. Vice chair for the Central Bering Sea Advisory Council.

I'll go into the fishing part. When I was reading last year's minutes on my part it's not too different from last year's report. One thing that's still the same is that Quinhagak has no existing monitoring or data collecting systems in place for salmon fishery besides the aerial survey, which doesn't include counting chum salmon.

This year the aerial survey was I think inconsistent because it was earlier than usually done before. The one salmon survey, aerial survey that was done on the Kanektok River this year was done earlier than -- like a month earlier than previous years I believe. So the numbers showed -- I don't know the exact numbers, but the kings met the lower escapement goals. The reds, of course, exceeded the escapement goal. There's no count on chum. Then there's no count on silvers either.

Based off local traditional knowledge though, the silvers were there, but they weren't as plenty as before, but we still had enough to meet our needs. But I just wanted to mention that our silver numbers are not as low numbers shown on this river.

Our subsistence fishery did okay this year where most met their needs overall. We did however have a scare about the chum not showing up, which they did finally show up at the end of July. But there's still no count on them either. They did show up and they did show up in bigger numbers than the year before.

The kings are mostly jacks. In a given fish rack, I would say the ratio is now 60 percent reds and 40 kings for this past year because the chums didn't show up until later.

Kanektok was open to sport fishing all season, but District W4 did not have a commercial fishery season due to having no buyers. We continued to observe more pike numbers taking over our trout species. We're still able to get trout when we can, but we're noticing a lot more chum -- or, sorry, pike. But we're told when we do bring up as an issue that it has to be more numbers than that in order to do something. Then if they were to do something, they'd have to get rid of 70 percent of the population to make a difference and that would be a challenge.

I'll move on to the moose hunting season. It was better than last year. We did ask for an extension, but we didn't get it, but people still -- I think we had more tags still than -- way more tags still than last year. I myself filled my tag on (in Yup'ik) which I had no idea was going on because on the other side of the mountains it was sunny. It was still windy but sunny.

And then about the third day hunting I realized we hadn't heard a boat in three days and that's when I realized something was probably happening at home. So it was really scary going home with mixed feelings with my moose. Being happy with my moose and not knowing if my village was going to be there. But luckily we were at the (in Yup'ik) and our winds got up to about 45 miles an hour. Some erosion happened, but that's ongoing, the erosion part.

Some of the other animals and critters that we eat are rabbits, ptarmigan, seal, walrus, beluga, waterfowl, waterfowl eggs. We're known for having a big variety of medicinal and edible plants, which we had a good year of those, but we had no berries this year. People are saying it's because we didn't have much snow. And then it got really hot in May, which kind of fried some of the growth there. I guess when I get back there's still trout to be harvested and also mouse food.

I wanted to touch base a little bit about -- going back to the climate change. So we continued to face the erosion on our rivers and the coast. Actually it washed a lot of our archeological sites, but not the whole village. We were able to retrieve some artifacts.

Permafrost melt is putting a lot of infrastructure at risk at home, making many buildings unlevel and unsafe to even be in. Hunting and fishing patterns are changing of course. For instance the seals seem to be further out. Hunters have to risk their lives to go further out into the Bering Sea to get the seals. Then there's so much freshwater mix that I notice they sink faster with the freshwater mix.

I could go on but I think that's good. Okay. That's it for now.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Jackie. Phillip.

MR. PETER, SR.: Good morning. My name is Phillip Peter from Akiachak. I'm on the Federal Board for -- this is my second term on the Federal Advisory Board. I'd like to make a short report.

I'm a subsistence fisherman. I used to be a commercial fisherman. Now I'm concentrating on subsistence from the beginning of crash on chinook and chums.

I want to talk a little bit about what my elders used to talk to me. We had a big catch in the '90s or '80s or '90s on chum. When making a report me and my cousin we make a record on the chum on commercial fishing. I never forget what my uncle tell me. He talked to us really seriously and truth. Now you guys are happy and laughing. Laughing guys will over on chums. Watch. You will see no more chums in Kuskokwim. Laughing guys will over. It's true. You know it's true. I'm beginning to realize that everything is going to be changing from then on.

But he mentioned to us that reds will be more than chums. They're going to fill the Kuskokwim with reds. Few, few chums. You never talk about the chinook.

This summer first opening in June I catch nine. Six jacks, king, two reds and one chum. When the fish are low, fish will go in the Kuskokwim swimming. I just got a couple of drifts and I quit for all day. No fishing all day. I don't want to waste gas for fishing. Gas prices are really high in our area. But the second opening first drift we catch 20

jacks, six inches, 25 mesh, 35 fathoms.

The second drift we catch 24 jacks. All jacks. Small jacks. I realized that when those small jacks are swimming in the Kuskokwim, there are lots. I know there are lots. We're killing -- we're taking them. How can we protect the conservation for our generations? How come we're taking them. We're taking them. I know that, you know, protecting the chinooks.

Our elders, I see them with my own eyes and my father, my uncle, my grandpa, my grandmother, they prepared for fish to come on the river. My dad used to hang a net, 8.5 inch, 15 fathoms long and 28 mesh. All of them are old people. They wait for kings and set their nets. Gee, they catch really big ones. Let those small jacks pass through and the medium size kings pass through. That's the conservation, real conservation.

They don't let us use small 5.5 nets for kings. Only for chums and reds and sock -- chums and reds and coho. When are we going to learn. When are we going to learn. Those old people knew. Those old people knew. I never see 5.5. Almost eight feet king salmon. I don't see them no more.

We used to have a competition sponsored by Chevron, I guess. If we catch a big king, they'll give us an award. The biggest kind on the record on the competition is about 4.5 feet king salmon. I never catch any king salmon that length and I never used my 8.5 45-mesh 50 fathoms since the elders closed the net.

The elders closed the net, king salmon net. When they have a big meeting AVCP. I never use that net for a long, long time. Now it's been sitting in my sack. I never used them since they closed it. So I know this year we have plentiful jacks. Plentiful jacks in Kuskokwim this year. A couple of drifts I make in the morning, 6:00 a.m.. When I got back to my fish camp it was 8:00 a.m. Forty-four jacks. All jacks. No reds, no chums. All 44 jacks.

My wife told me to quit fishing for small jacks, so I quit fishing. I didn't fish on the third opening, but I told my son-in-law to fish and he catch 20 bigger on the third opening, bigger. Bigger

kings.

Also I'm really upset when the Federal government closed the river and transferred it to the State of Alaska. It really makes me upset.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Whoever is online can you mute your phone, please. We'd appreciate it. You're talking in the background.

MR. PETER, SR.: Quyana. The Federal to the State of Alaska. John mentioned a while ago. Once the Federal government take over the Kuskokwim from the mouth to the boundary of Aniak, the Federal government should control, take over complete. Not transferring it to State of Alaska.

This year it's really worse. In August it end up -- the weather is raining, windy. In August too, rain and windy. We never drift or set our nets. Two and a half -- almost month and a half for cohos. Our elders didn't care about those cohos because of the weather. In August we have a lot of rain in August when the cohos arrive to the Kuskokwim. We make (in Yup'ik) out of them. Some few (in Yup'ik). But I'm really upset and mad because I never fish. I fished for (in Yup'ik) and (in Yup'ik) for cohos.

The subsistence fishing looks like going wrong direction. Trying to control us. Us people who -- us people subsistence fishermen. We need those cohos. Commercial fishing is closed. Almost end of September the State of Alaska opened for setnetting. My nephews, two of them, they got 80 dogs. What about the rest of the community who owns dogs for recreation. Maybe those dog foods are high priced this year. Everything is going up.

I need to eat. I never taste -- only one time I taste only coho. After that it's not fair. Federal government and State government should work together. Seriously. This is not a game no more. It's not a game. Restrictions, restrictions and restrictions. Those laws.

Last year they finally accept my recommendation. Action as a group. Area M and NOAA. Finally. Finally, all those years them outsiders recognize us. Finally, all those years outsiders

recognize us. Finally recognize us. I hope it goes to reality. Those people are from other side. If we control it as Alaska Natives and follow what our elders used to tell us.

I know all the fish in the ocean will come back to our rivers. That's why our elders when they have AVCP meeting they close the king salmon net and us young people followed. Maybe the elders are expecting increasing the chinooks, but nobody paying attention. Nobody doing their work for us. Conservation.

Finally I hope -- and I would be really happy if we take over. I'm glad Inter-Tribal Fish Commission is working for us. If we have a port from Norton Sound, Bering Sea, us we know. We could control the Bering Sea, Norton Sound and Southeast if we work together with other entities.

We know moose are plentiful now because Yukon and Kuskokwim unite and work together to increase the moose. I know the Federal government know our actions and we could do the same for salmon.

I hope -- oh, one more thing. I want to make a small comment and let you guys know. This summer when the typhoon -- in the news on TV they talk about the typhoon is coming this way to our area, in the morning when I go out daylight I see plentiful ptarmigans going backwards, a lot of them, all white. And the birds were flying back. I know that will mean something. Will mean something.

INTERPRETER: They sought shelter.

MR. PETER: All animals and moose, everything, they got mind and think. They know the weather. The big storm is coming. My elders used to tell me don't be amazed what you see. (In Yup'ik) I already used that. Those elders they tell us what they did and they don't talk about what they did not do, but what they did. (In Yup'ik)

Quyana, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN NANENG: Quyana, Phillip. Norma. Make sure that on the record that Norma has joined us. So, Norma, we're asking for reports from

Council members.

MS. EVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In Marshall areas and in some areas -- can you guys hear me?

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes, we can hear you.

MS. EVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This year in Marshall area we had no blueberries, there were less salmonberries, I think and when we picked them they're very hard here it seemed like. We had (In Yup'ik) early on in May and June and it was too hot and dry for, I think the blueberries to grow.

Due to subsistence closures on the Yukon there were very little to no fishing at all, a handful of setnetters I asked in the community, and they said they were seeing bigger pikes ranging in the -- over feet sometimes. I wish we could have a fisheries during when the wintertime, when the pikes -- summer last year my dog ate my pike dryfish, quick-paks and dry-paks were dog treats.

In the summer in the river I still noticed there were no small fry fish salmon like swim around, I did not see any around. Also Marshall and the surrounding villages that use subsistence and wait for the eels it's been four years since we gotten those and if we do not see them this year it'll be five years.

This year we had two grizzly bears hanging around near our berry picking areas in the village, they're hanging around the old airport and they have been coming into town for a few weeks now. They killed a moose not even a mile from one of our -- the houses on the upper -- up river -- we had a funeral recently. I work on the tribal council, I cried because of the importance of our salmon during funerals, I did process salmon for her parents, you know, and just had a funeral for Charolette Alstrom, I couldn't help it I just cried because during her parents' funeral, me and my family we provided like salmon to them.

And that's my report from Marshall.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, Norma. Before I give my Chairman's report let's take a 10 minute break.

MS. MCDAVID: Back at 11:10 please.

(Off record)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Good morning. Going to call the meeting back to order again.

Do we still have all those that are online listening.

(No comments)

MS. MCDAVID: Norma, are you still on the phone with us?

(No comments)

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. MCDAVID: For those online, sorry, we are having some technical difficulties. I'll call again, Norma, are you on the teleconference line?

(No comments)

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, Norma if you're with us we can't hear you.

(Teleconference feedback - unmuted microphones)

MS. MCDAVID: If everyone besides our two Council members on the line could please mute your phones, press star, six, or your mute button, we're getting a lot of feedback.

(Teleconference feedback - unmuted microphones)

REPORTER: Maybe we should disconnect and call back in.

MS. WESSELS: Call back in.

REPORTER: Yes.

MS. WESSELS: So you're going to hang up.

REPORTER: Yes, hang up and then redial the.....

MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I have the number I just need the code.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: We're waiting for technical people to say that we can go ahead and that everything is hunky-dory with the technical stuff.

(Laughter)

(Off record)

(On record)

MS. MCDAVID: Norma, can you try again to let us know you're on the line.

(No comments)

MS. MCDAVID: What about Council Member Robert Hoffman, are you on the line Robert?

(No comments)

MS. MCDAVID: Can anyone else that might be on the teleconference try to speak up and let us know if you can hear us.

(Teleconference feedback - unmuted microphones)

MS. MCDAVID: Just so folks on the phone know, we can't hear anyone on the phone currently so we're trying to resolve that issue.

(Pause)

(Off record)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: In the interest of time I think we'll go ahead and continue. I'll introduce myself, my name is Myron P. Naneng, Sr., and it's my baptismal name. My Yup'ik name is (In Yup'ik) and I'm named after my grandmother who passed away right before I was born. I am from the village of Hooper Bay (In Yup'ik). I was born and raised there and lived there until I was eligible to go to high school and from there went to high school at St. Mary's, after St. Mary's, graduated from St. Mary's went up to UAF and also attended college here in Bethel at the Kuskokwim Community College. I've lived in and out of Bethel from 1974 through 1976 but I moved here to Bethel in 1979 and I've been here ever since.

One of the things that I used to not like about Bethel when I was going to college was having to pass through and one of the thoughts that I said back then, before I got married, was I will never live in Bethel.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Every once in awhile my wife says to me, do you want to move and I say -- I look at her and say, no, I don't want to move because within an hour I can go fishing, I can go hunting, go berrypicking and almost everything that I want to do, subsistence food gathering.

So I've been a subsistence fishermen at Hooper Bay when I was growing up when my dad used to out down to Bristol Bay to work at cannery and also to be a commercial fishermen, I had to be the one to subsistence for the family. A lot of people think that it's easy to fish for salmon at Hooper Bay. It depends on the prevailing winds during the wintertime to have salmon come into the Bay. If the winds are prevailing from Northwest all winter long then the Yukon River water is being pushed into the Bay so the salmon follow that Yukon River water along the Coast and up to the Yukon River itself. In 1985 I started commercial fishing on the Yukon, bought a permit, and also subsistence fished there at Black River, one of those old grandfathered in commercial fishing sites before the crashes of salmon that started happening -- the decrease started back in 1990s, it accelerated in 2000s and I have not fished commercially since about 2017 because I felt that a lot of people on the Yukon that

fished there needed it more than I did. However, every once in awhile I go subsistence fishing at Black River for my family and we did that when they closed the Kuskokwim River completely back about 2018.

So we gather enough for our family but more recently we've also had to gather more for those of our families from Hooper Bay as well as Scammon Bay because of the restrictions and closures of those fishing areas because of low returns of salmon to the Yukon River.

To fish here on the Kuskokwim nowadays you have to go to the non-spawning grounds to go fishing and they're not necessarily close by. You have to drive a long ways and it's not necessarily a one hour trip one way, it might take as much as two or three hours to get to where we want to go fishing for food. So with all those years of fishing on the Coast, on the Yukon and now the Kuskokwim I've observed a lot of changes to many of the subsistence fishing opportunities for many of our people in each of those areas.

One of the thing that has been observed by many of our people at Hooper Bay, tomcods, which used to be abundant during the spring and fall, the last two years there's very little returning but they're slowly returning this year. Halibut that's being fished by people on the Coast, like Nelson Island and along the Coast down to Quinhagak and even up the Coast around Hooper and Scammon that I know of, and even some of the Yukon River people are starting to go halibut fishing because they can't harvest any salmon, but the size of those halibuts are getting smaller, they're not as big as they used to be.

So all the fisheries have been impacted by both State and Federal management. You know in the past I used to be on the Alaska Yukon Canada Treaty negotiating team. You know how the best way to be kicked out of the negotiating team is, make a suggestion that the State of Alaska should address the issues of salmon management in-state before they go negotiating with another country. We have in-state issues that need to be addressed. After I made that comment at one of the negotiating team meetings I got a letter a week later saying, thank you for your services but your services are no longer needed. I must have

hit a point that really needed to be addressed back then. That was in the early 2000s. So I've attended many North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings, many Board of Fish meetings raising the concerns of salmon that have been decreasing over the years. And every time we go to the Board of Fish or the North Pacific Fishery Management Council they don't take into account our observations but they consider them to be anecdotal. Why do they consider them to be anecdotal? It's because we didn't have someone with a degree from an accredited university with only a couple of years of observations to tell them that what we're saying is not true -- like Phillip stated, elders from their observations will tell you what they're observing. They don't have to put it in writing or in a book to let you know that this what they're observing.

I used to go commercial herring fishing out at Scammon Bay and Cape Romanzof. My father in law, Teddy Sundown, when they -- when we -- before we went out to the fishing site told us, you young men better get ready because the herring are hitting out at Cape Romanzof, he wasn't even there to tell us that it was happening. A few hours later we heard an announcement from Fish and Game people that were on site saying that the herring had arrived, but he was observing it both from looking at the seagulls that were flying overhead, the cloud conditions and what he had observed over the years. If my father in law had said that at a Board of Fish meeting or someone who's trying to put together rules and regulations to restrict your livelihood, they would have considered that to be anecdotal. But it was true, and it was what he observed. I wish I could observe more so I can tell him I catch that -- this is what I learned from him.

You know, the last few years there has been lack of subsistence fishing on the Coast, the Kuskokwim, the Yukon, and various restrictions where fish racks are empty, where smokehouses are empty yet commercial fishing is allowed to happen on some of the known intercept fisheries of salmon that are bound for the Yukon and the Kuskokwim, and even to other spawning grounds in Western Alaska. Why do they say that. It's a mixed stock fishery that they've studied for many years, conducted genetic studies and also tried to find out where the salmon are returning to the spawning grounds, via genetic studies and every time that is brought up, including the tagging study that was done

back in 1980s they say it's inconclusive that any of that salmon is returning to the spawning grounds to the Kuskokwim, to the Yukon, or to other Western Alaska spawning grounds. And it affects our people, the Yup'iks, the Chup'iks, the Athabascans. And they allow commercial fishery first. And then my thought, and I've said this directly to the Commissioner of Fish and Game, are you trying to cancel culture and they say, what do you mean by that, you're canceling culture by the fact that you're not allowing our people to practice what they have done for many centuries, your rules and regulations continue to restrict, limit opportunities for our people. And I hate to say this but are we going towards what will close everybody out from fishing, both commercially, subsistence, sportsfishing, are we moving to that direction of endangered species status, endangered species listed. Because that's the only way that it's going to close all fishers.

A few years ago my wife and I were fishing for whitefish up on the mouth of Kisaralik, we caught a jack, Fish and Wildlife came by said we had to release it, which was fine with us, but one of the things we're also observing is the number of whitefish that we used to catch at the mouth of Kisaralik with small hooks and we're fishing primarily for whitefish, we're not catching as many whitefish as we did before. And that whitefish, we pressure cook it and make (In Yup'ik), mix it with berries, salmon berries, blackberries and blueberries and we eat it, it's good nutritional food. That's also slowly but surely being reduced substantially by the fact there's not as many chum salmon spawning so these other species of fish can be abundant for food and eating.

I've been a member of other conservation efforts. AVCP Waterfowl Conservation, Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council. In 1997 we were successful in getting the U.S. Senate to ratify the protocol amendment to allow for spring migratory bird hunting that they had closed back in 1916. That was the first recognition that our Native people would be able to harvest spring migratory birds as they returned. Because we know during the falltime all those birds return in higher numbers to their wintering grounds. We've even negotiated with some of the farmers down in California, Washington and Oregon. They want to kill off 50,000 cacklers and we said no.

Those are our food source. Those are what our people survive on when there's other food not available.

The moose moratorium that was instituted back in 2000s, latter part of 1990s. Five year moratorium to try to build the population of moose. You know I can brag to other parts of the state to tell them on the lower Yukon you can hunt for two moose today. You can hunt for a bull, a cow and/or a calf because there's so many moose in that area. But if you talk to somebody else that never seen a moose and you mention a cow they might think that it's livestock running around in their farmlands, but, in essence, what our people have done on the YKDelta is build up their farmlands. But the thing is is that five year moratorium was not the one that our villages accepted, our villages put in two more additional years to build up that moose population. Now the moose are going out to the Coast, they're even swimming in the Bering Sea, they're even down here on the Kuskokwim River and because of the efforts of our people to build up that number. I wouldn't be surprised if I see an antlered seal one of these days but that's something else.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: So I think one of the things that needs to be done is that the bycatch by trawl fleet needs to be reduced substantially because at their meetings they always say we're instituting excluders but do those excluders work, meaning that they're trying to avoid salmon in their trawls, yet they catch so many of them. They're trying to exclude halibut, but they're catching so many of them. At the AFN Convention just this last week there was a resolution that we supported where we're trying to get the State to move forward with the reduction of intercept fisheries down in Area M. It needs to be reduced. Because the numbers that they provide are only the reported numbers, they're not the total numbers of what they catch. Of chum salmon. And we're paying for the brunt of it.

So I believe we don't want to get to that endangered species status but are we being realistic that chums will return in higher numbers very soon. I hope that prediction doesn't happen but we'll be very much restricted for all of us and when that

happens will both Fish and Wildlife and/or State of Alaska have any management concerns over that, will they be able to manage the fisheries, you know, I think -- my belief is that we all have to work together to build those numbers up. If we can build numbers of other resources within the YKDelta and other parts of the state I think we can work together to make it happen but it's an ongoing concern.

So I hope that, like all of us here on the Regional Advisory Council, we hope that both State of Alaska and Fish and Wildlife are listening to us, we don't want continued regulations that further restrict. In essence these restrictions are killing our culture. And a lot of the people that live in the villages are feeling the brunt of it, they're feeling the brunt of not being able to harvest what they have relied on annually for food, you know, I fished as much as I can so I wouldn't have to pay as much to go to the grocery store to buy food that's not necessarily nutritious and, you know, it doesn't do well for my health to eat store bought food, I get what they call acute heartburn because of some of the chemicals they put in those foods. But salmon and other food that we harvest reduces that heartburn and also other sicknesses that we may have.

And as a family I think we need to get that fishery back for our people so that it can keep the families together, and that's what I mean by cancelling culture. It's disrupting the family unity. It's disrupting the opportunity to gather food as a family and also for our young people to learn that you have to work hard to gather all this instead of waiting for somebody else to bring it to you.

So that's my comments and I'd like to thank the Council members for their reports too.

So with that thank you very much.

Okay, now that we're done with the Chairman's report we'll go down and follow the agenda and go to Item No. 8, the service awards.

Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I realized in the sort of shuffle this morning that

I forgot to introduce myself to everyone. My name is Brooke McDavid and I'm your new Council Coordinator. I am very excited to be working with all of you. I know we've been talking a lot on the phone these last couple weeks getting ready for the meeting. So you all have gotten to know me a little bit but I wanted to make sure to introduce myself, especially for the other folks in the room that I may not have met yet and for the folks online.

Today we have just a couple of service awards to give out to folks but before we do that I just wanted to say thank you all, all Council members, for your service on this committee. The time you give, you volunteer to prepare for and attend these meetings, it's time, you know, away from your family and away from your jobs and we really want to thank you for that time. And, you know, we thank you for sharing your local and traditional knowledge with us, your experiences and your observations. It's invaluable to the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

So, Quyana, to all of you for that.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana.

MS. MCDAVID: Today we have two service awards to give out. And we try to give service awards out every five -- for every five years of service on the Council. We got a little bit behind because of Covid so we're trying to pick back up where we left off with that. And today we have Jill Klein with us, she is the Alaska Regional Subsistence Coordinator for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and she's also an InterAgency Staff Committee member and she's going to help give out the awards today. Jill will say a few words about the recipients of the awards and then if any of the Council members want to offer any words to the recipients or anyone else in the room you'd be welcome to as well.

I'll turn it over to Jill now, thank you very much.

MS. KLEIN: Okay. Thanks, Brooke. And I'm honored to be able to be able to give out these awards. And so first we have Alissa Rogers and she gets the first award in recognition of five years of service on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Council.

Ms. Rogers is a lifelong subsistence user in the region and currently lives in Bethel. When she was young per parents sent her to help with and to learn about subsistence and commercial activities from both sides of her extended family. Presently Ms. Rogers continues to participate as she shared earlier today, in as many subsistence activities as she can with her family. She harvests, processes and preserves a variety of wildlife, fish, birds, plants and berries, and she also shares her knowledge, her traditional subsistence practices with others. And she also served as the Chair of this Council.

Ms. Rogers, the Federal Subsistence Management Program thanks you again for your five years of service on the Council and for all the work that you do for subsistence users in the region.

(Applause)

MS. KLEIN: All right, the second one is to John Andrews -- or Andrew. He's been on the Council for 15 years. So he was previously recognized during the Council meeting held by teleconference but since this is our first time meeting in person, as you all know, in a couple of years, we wanted to be able to present him an award face to face.

The Federal Subsistence Management Program would like to recognize Mr. John Andrew for 15 years of service on the Council.

Mr. Andrew is from the community of Kwethluk and is also a lifelong subsistence user from the region. Mr. Andrew and his family have always lived a traditional subsistence lifestyle and he has extensive knowledge of regional resources from a lifetime of hunting and fishing. Mr. Andrew has hunted, fished and gathered just about every type of resource available in the region and we're so grateful for his expertise on the Council.

So, Mr. Andrew, the Federal Subsistence Management Program thanks you for your 15 years of service on the Council and for all the work that you do for subsistence users in your region.

(Applause)

MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(In Yup'ik)

INTERPRETER: Thank you to everyone who is sitting here in the audience and to the Staff for recognizing me. And thinking of all the elders who have gone on and they are here in our heart and in our mind for those of us who started attending these meetings so we have to try to help our people in our mind, heart and actions so in getting this recognition it is very happy to be recognized and acknowledged for my work.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, John and Alissa for your years of service.

(Applause)

(Photo opportunity)

(Applause)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Since it's almost noontime, we're going to take one hour and 10 minutes break because it's almost five minutes to lunch so I'll give the credit to the time. So one hour and 10 minutes so we can get back after lunch, so that'll be like about 1:10 that we'll get back.

Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brooke McDavid for the record. I did have a request, Mr. Chair, from our presenter from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. She has some scheduling conflicts, she won't be able to be here later this afternoon or tomorrow and she has requested, if possible, if you would entertain her presenting as soon as we get back from lunch.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes, we'll have her first on the agenda if there's no objections from the rest of the Council members.

(No objections)

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will let Dr. Stram know about that. And just so folks on the phone know, when we return from lunch we'll have Dr. Stram's presentation and then the next item on the agenda will be the opportunity for public comments on the non-agenda items.

Thank you.

We'll return at 1:10.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes. Quyana everyone see you after lunch.

(Off record)

(On record)

MS. STRAM: Good afternoon, members of the Council. My name's Diana Stram. I'm the Senior Scientist for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. I'm going to provide you an overview of the chinook and chum bycatch in the Bering Sea as well as actions that were taken up by our Council in June and actions that will come related to this for our Council in December. And, again, as Brooke said there's a longer presentation that was given to the Gubernatorial Bycatch taskforce, the Western Salmon Subcommittee back in July that's available for reference in your materials and I also have additional slides here that if you have additional questions I'm happy to answer them but in the interest of your time I tried to shorten this a little bit.

Next slide.

So just to provide you an overview and, again, the more detailed presentation contains all of these reports from July. This is what was presented to our Council in June of this past year in Sitka. This is per Council request last October. So we heard an overview of salmon stock status and research updates from both ADF&G and NOAA and that included stock status updates for Western Alaska chinook and chum and then the overview from both the Alaska Fisheries Science Center and ADF&G of their ongoing research plans as well as National mandates. We heard our annual reports on the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska salmon genetics reports, and I have some of that to show you here.

Right now that included chum salmon bycatch genetics from -- through the 2020 and 2021 fishery year because we did not receive 2020 reports due to Covid. And then the salmon chinook genetics were from 2020. They're still working on catching up so that they can provide those reports in a more timely manner so they're only one year out as opposed to right now where they're two. We heard about additional ongoing genetics work and plans from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. We provided a Bering Sea chinook adult equivalency and impact rate report as well as (indiscernible - distorted) on how to assess impacts of chum bycatch on Western Alaska stocks. Those are all contained in additional slides so, again, I'm happy to answer questions or walk through them but they're not included in this shortened version here. And then reports that we hear annually from the industry. We heard a report about salmon excluders. I will talk a little bit about salmon excluders in this presentation. And then reports from the three different sectors of the pollock fisheries on their incentive plan agreements as well as an update from SeaShare which is the hunger relief organization that distributes both donated as well as bycaught salmon and rockfish and other, and halibut back to communities within Alaska as well as the Pacific Northwest.

Next slide.

So the next few slides are just to provide you a brief history of the Councils actions in managements related to chinook and chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea.

Next slide.

So just as an overview, this is chum salmon bycatch in blue and chinook salmon bycatch in red and, again, the right-hand Y axis provides you the chinook salmon numbers, the left-hand axis in blue provides you the chum numbers and these are from 1990 through 2021. And then at the bottom I just showed what the numbers are and as of two weeks ago in October of 2022. So I'm going to walk through some of these trends because the trends in both species bycatch have driven a lot of our management responses. But just to note on here because it's not on the graph that the chinook bycatch as of October 13th was 6,336, the chum salmon bycatch as of October 13th was 242,350. And,

again, you'll note that high spike in 2021 of over 500,000 bycatch which we'll talk about in just a minute.

Next slide please.

So this slide just shows you that over the period of the '90s to the early 2000s when the Council's been managing salmon bycatch overall.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. STRAM: I'm sorry, did you want to pause for something?

(No comments)

MS. STRAM: Okay, I'll keep going. Please let me know if there's questions and I can pause.

So in the '90s and the early 2000s we managed salmon by time area closures so these were large scale closures in the Bering Sea that had a trigger limit so a numbered limit for both chum and chinook and time that those areas were closed so when they were triggered those areas closed and the Bering Sea pollock fleet had to move out of those areas.

Next slide.

And just to be clear I'm on Slide 6 now.

So what happened is then there was information indicating that those large scale closures called salmon savings areas were exacerbating, they were making the bycatch worse and that there was indications that the salmon inside of those closure areas, there was less salmon inside the closure areas than outside the closure areas so when the fleet was being pushed out of those broad scaled closures it was making the bycatch worse. So the Council developed an interim measure in about 2004 that was to exempt the fleet from the closures while they began to develop additional measures. And at the time the industry was developing what's called a hot spot closure system to

which all of the sectors belonged to and it's a closure system in which the fleet themselves can impose three to five day closures -- three to seven day closures, I'm sorry, based on areas of hot spots of bycatch that they experienced and communicated internally.

Next slide.

At that same time, I would say in 2005 while we were developing that we were looking at a chum cap in 2005, because of that high level over 700,000 chum caught as bycatch. While the Council started to develop that the focus in 2007 then shifted to chum because we had a high bycatch year of over 120,000 chinook bycatch in the pollock fleet. So the Council switched the overall focus from chum to chinook and we had multiple workshops with our science and statistical committee and experts in the field. The Council developed a bycatch committee that was a standing committee at that time to assist in developing different cap levels for chinook salmon at that time.

Next slide.

So that was what caused the development of what's called Amendment 91 and I'll talk about that in just a minute, that where final action for that was taken in 2009. The result of that action was to put a limit on the pollock fleet. It was divided out by sector and by season but it's the first time that there's been an overall limit for chinook bycatch on the pollock fleet whereby if that limit is reached the pollock fleet has to shut down. And, so that limit, again, is divided by sector and by season but if any of the sectors reach their seasonal limit they are shut down for the remainder of that season, if they reach it in the B season they're shut down for the remainder of the year. At that time we also started providing extensive outreach to Western Alaska communities. We have used the Regional Advisory Councils as a forum for which we could bring Council members to the communities in order to discuss salmon bycatch issues with the decisionmakers there so over the course of 2009 and 2010 we brought Council members out to each of the Western Alaska RACs as well as held some meetings of our own in other communities in order to provide outreach and hear discussions from the communities.

Next slide.

That Amendment 91 was implemented in 2011. There are some provisions that go along with putting a cap on the pollock fleet and part of that was that we instituted systematic genetic sampling. So previously any of the genetic samples from the salmon that were bycaught to determine which stocks of origin, so which rivers they were going back to, it was done opportunistically by observers when they had a chance to collect samples. And implementing Amendment 91 we instituted systematic genetic sampling so in the Bering Sea where it's 100 percent observed and now there's a census for salmon so every single salmon that is caught by the pollock fleet is counted either by an onshore -- by an observer on the actual vessel or by an observer in a shore side processing plant where the catch is delivered. There's also cameras that are onboard all vessels and all points of entry to ensure the compliance with that. In addition to that, the systematic genetic sampling meant that one in every 10 chinook was sampled for genetics and one in every 30 chum are sampled for genetics. That is still the case now. And so that gives us a representative sample that's consistent from one year to the next. So that was implemented in 2011 and at that time the Council then moved back to looking at chum bycatch because that measure was only for chinook and so the Council spent about two years developing measures for chum bycatch that were considered in multiple analysis. And then in 2012 when they were taking review of that analysis that included time area closures as well as overall hardcaps for chum -- we call them hardcaps when it closes the fisheries as opposed to a seasonal closure or a time area closure -- in 2012 the Council tabled it at that point because any of the measures that they were trying to consider seemed to be undermining the recent measures for chinook and chinook was always considered the priority.

Next slide please.

So in development of that then we began to develop what's called Amendment 110 and that was developed primarily in response to continued low returns of chinook salmon runs in Western Alaska as well as some analysis that we did that showed that there might be a need for some stronger vessel level incentives. We found that while overall bycatch was decreasing when we looked at a vessel level some vessels were continuing to have high bycatch despite

the idea that there were incentives to reduce their bycatch. So we made a number of changes under Amendment 110 in terms of increasing the vessel level incentives within the incentive structure on individual vessels, we put revisions -- we put provisions on fishing into September and October where they tend to catch higher bycatch of chinook and we also put into place a lower cap in times of low chinook abundance, which I'll talk about in the next slide. We also then included the chum measures as part of the incentive plan agreement. So before chum measures were taken as a lower priority to chinook, and so the closures were always for chinook so we folded the chum measures in with the incentive plan agreements with the idea that they would still prioritize chinook salmon bycatch avoidance but that they would also take measures to move away from areas of Western Alaska chum and we worked with the geneticists to provide as much spacial and temporal detail on the genetics of where the fleet was encountering Western Alaska chum understanding that that was the priority for avoidance.

Next slide please.

So overall this is the current system that's in place right now. Our measures to minimize salmon, PSC, prohibitive species catch, and that's what it is in regulation in the pollock fishery. So we have two different amendments then that set up chinook salmon PSC limits under Amendment 91 and then Amendment 110, we have a higher and a lower cap structure so right now what we have is a three river index that includes the post-season in-river run size abundance for the Kuskokwim, Unalakleet and the Upper Yukon so, in aggregate, those three rivers are added together and if the number of that -- the sum of those three is less than 250,000 fish then the cap drops in the following year for the pollock fishery to a lower cap. It drops from an overall cap of 60,000 to an overall cap of 45,000 with a performance standard that the fleet is intended to stay below, and, again, those are divided out by sector and season in order to continue to be able to fish under those cap levels. So for the past two years and also for 2023 we will be, again, under the low cap level because the aggregate three river index is below 250,000 fish. Under their incentive plan agreements the fleet then continues to provide additional incentives to avoid chinook and chum salmon under any condition of abundance, they have their own

rewards and penalties that are fixed in their plan agreements. Something that we can't do at the regulatory level. They also impose, again, hotspot closures. That little figure to the bottom right, those red boxes are areas in the Bering Sea that are closed when they have received information that say a vessel or two vessels have run into a chinook in a haul, or chum, then they will draw a closure around it and the fleet will have to avoid that closure for three to seven years -- sorry, three to seven days, while they continue to fish in the Bering Sea. We also have salmon escapement panels which I'll go over in the next slide and, again, donations to food banks, that's what SeaShare, the hunger relief organization handles all the donations of bycaught fish to -- for hunger relief and redistribution, both to Western Alaska as well as communities across Alaska and in the Lower 48.

Next slide.

So salmon excluders are now used in all pollock nets by regulation after Amendment 110 and what these are escape -- they're an escape mechanism within the caught end of the trawl net because salmon are better swimmers than pollock, they can sense the (indiscernible - distorted) in the current which is present where they've got this escapement panel and so when the net's moving through the water the pollock fall back into the caught end and the salmon are able to escape. They've run a number of experiments, the salmon excluders tend to do much better for chinook than they do for chum. I think that the most recent report that we heard in June there is about a 30 percent success rate in general for chinook. They've had trouble having similar success rates for chum, they've tried various designs and so -- but everyone is using those, they still do work for chum but not with as high of percentage of escapement.

Next slide please.

So just to give you a general idea in terms of the seasonal and area catch patterns for the pollock fishery, the graph that you see here just shows you from '91 to 2021 the overall catch of pollock in metric tons and then the colors just show you in terms of area where they're fishing, where they're catching it in both A season, the winter season and the B season, southeast and northwest of 170, which is a

dividing line in the Bering Sea. To the right of those panels that you see to show you the bars, are the catch concentrations and this is to show you what the winter fishery, which is called the A fishery, looks like in terms of where they're fishing so you see that they're concentrated pretty -- most of the shoreside fleet is always just north of Unimak Island and they stretch up towards the Pribilofs but they're constrained by ice cover so in most years -- 2019 you see it more concentrated, 2020 a warmer year they were able to move a little bit more up the shelf edge and around there and then 2021 you see kind of a patchier distribution, just concentrated around the Pribilofs and then concentrated in Unimak.

Next slide please.

And in contrast then, for the B season, again the ice cover, this is, again, pollock catch and here the fleet fishes -- the shore side fleet tends to be closer to shore, again, very far off shore in the Bering Sea and then in general up along the entire shelf edge stretching towards the Russian border to let you see to the far -- the far left, the upper left-hand corner shows you the extent of the fishing and, in general, that goes pretty close in some years the 200 nautical mile boundary of the EEC (ph) with the Russian fleets.

Next slide please.

The next couple slides I have just gives you some of the genetic summary that we heard in June. We do get this every year. I would note we normally get this report in April and this year we waited until June to take the report and I understand that we're hearing that that was not as convenient for many people to participate in. The reason that that was done was so that we could get the genetics back on the 2021 chum bycatch in order to see if it looked substantially different from the bycatch in previous years but we will make every effort to move that report back to April to accommodate people.

Next slide please.

This just gives you the trends in the genetic breakouts in general. Again on the left you see the trend in Bering Sea chinook bycatch in blue,

the numbers themselves, on the right, similarly, for Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch this just gives you through 2021 but, again, the numbers at the bottom, similar to earlier are the ones that show you what they are in 2022. On the left, speaking to chinook, what you -- the green and the red line then, refer to the upper and lower catch levels -- the limit numbers for the Pollock fleet and so the green is what we call the performance standard, or the performance limit and that is an annual limit that they are intended to stay below in order to retain some of the flexabilities that they have in their current system for fishing. The red number is the overall limit that closes down the fishery and, again, where you see the drop in those limits that's because we went into a lower level year for salmon bycatch, the lower limit based on the three river index. This just shows you that in 2021, again, we were in that lower level in 2019, we went back to the higher level in 2020 and then in 2021 and 2022, which isn't shown here, we've been at that lower level and, again, we'll be at that lower level in 2023 as well. And then the pie charts just show you as a snapshot, and this tends to be fairly consistent but I'll show you some other graphs after -- in terms of the genetic composition of the bycatch and so in general we see, if you're looking at chinook to the left, it's the large blue part of the pie, that's the grouping that includes Coastal West Alaska and the Yukon and that tends to comprise about 40 percent of the overall bycatch of chinook that the fleet encounters. To the right, if you look for chum salmon bycatch then, the situation's quite different and what you're looking at is the red pie that says Coastal West Alaska and that tends to be about 16 percent, what you see in green is the Asian component and that really dominates the chum that the fleet encounters so a lot of the hatchery releases from the Asian Pacific Rim hatchery releases tend to dominate the bycatch.

Next slide please.

So, again, going back to like major takeaways from Bering Sea chinook, this shows you in every year that we've done systematic sampling from 2011 through 2020 the colors represent individual years and looking -- starting with the far left, these are the breakouts that we are -- can report back on currently, genetically, so they're very large aggregate groups but we have one large group that's Coastal West

Alaska, they can break the middle Yukon out separately from that and the upper Yukon, North Alaska Peninsula is a separate stock, Northwest Gulf of Alaska is a very large aggregate of stock and then Coastal Southeast Alaska, again, a large aggregate, British Columbia and then the entire West Coast of the U.S. And what you can see is that there is a spike -- the lower level then gives you the numbers, the upper graph gives you the relative proportion so if you're looking at the numbers what you're looking at is that in 2020 then, of all the bycatch that was taken about 16,000 of it would have returned to overall Coastal West Alaska.

Next slide please.

So just to show you that a little bit more, so you can see that separately, this gives you again, the exact same thing as the previous slide, just showing you the proportion -- or the actual numbers if you break them out from the proportion of the samples that were to Coastal West Alaska, middle Yukon and upper Yukon.

Next slide please.

And similarly for chum, it's just plotted a little differently, the top is from 2011 to 2021, again, in relative proportion, in yellow the Western Alaska stock, in blue the upper and middle Yukon combined and then for comparison in purple the Southwest Alaska, same color scheme in the bottom but that just gives you in terms of overall numbers. So in general the proportion of Western Alaska and Yukon stocks have been much lower than the average proportion over the last two years and then with that large bycatch in 2021 of over 500,000 you basically had about 50,000 of those fish that would have come back to Western Alaska based on that. And the genetics -- the proportions of Western Alaska and Yukon fish vary in space and time within a year so they've been working really hard to try to break those out in time and space so we can get a better understanding on an annual basis of where those stocks are located in the Bering Sea in terms of where fishing pressure is to try to help inform additional management measures for stock specific avoidance -- obviously the goal is to avoid Western Alaska chinook and chum salmon so we're working on that.

Next slide please.

The next couple slides then just talk about what the Council action was coming out of the June meeting and then I'll get into what's being requested for December.

Next slide.

So the Council took a motion -- they're acknowledging that the Western Alaska salmon crises and obviously the impact it's having on culture and food security throughout Western Alaska while the best information we have about the climate is that it's a primary driver of the poor salmon returns. The Council is still committed to looking at improvements in the salmon bycatch management to try to minimize bycatch at all levels of salmon and pollock abundance. So the Council made a number of requests. The first is of the pollock industry, that they implement additional salmon -- chum salmon bycatch avoidance measures. So this was taken in June and in the beginning of the B season. I should have noted that the pollock fleet do not encounter chum salmon in the A season, only in the summer season, the B season. They encounter chinook in both A and B. So the Council asked that they implement additional measures. They did hear in public comments from some sectors of the pollock fleet, some measures that they were intending to put in to place for the B season to try to do a better job of avoiding chum salmon and they'll be reporting back to the Council in December on the efficacy of those measures and how well they worked. The Council also requested a discussion paper of Staff and we're working on currently, and the main goal of that is to look at what the Council was considering in 2012 in terms of management actions, cap levels and time area closures and then looking at updated bycatch and genetic stock composition information, how that varies in space and time, what the rationale was for how chum is currently managed in the pollock fishery, different trade offs that the pollock fishery encounters in avoiding PSC species. So in -- and specifically the main PSC species that the pollock fishery is avoiding, chum salmon, chinook salmon, herring. The fleet's also trying to avoid squid, while not a prohibitive species is in our ecosystem component and they can run into a great number of squid as well. And then the Council requested that we summarize some of the varying

conditions that have changed since 2012 since chum was last looked at in 2012, some of this, asked us to incorporate an overview of Asian hatchery releases as well as changes in Alaska chum salmon stock status.

Next slide.

The next part of the Council's motion then, as you're probably aware, the State of Alaska has a bycatch task force that has been meeting over the course of the last six months. It also has a -- part of that is the Western Alaska salmon subcommittee that's been meeting. So the Council wants to consider the findings and the recommendations of the overall State of Alaska bycatch task force while continue to look at how to improve salmon bycatch. And the Council also formed a committee of what is intended to represent tribal members, scientists, industry representatives or other aspects, it's called a working group here, but it is a Council committee. And the nominations for that committee were available on the Council's website and we try to distribute them as broadly as possible. The Council took nominations for that salmon bycatch committee and those members will be nominated within the next week or so and we are hoping to have a preliminary meeting on that committee before the December Council meeting. The idea is that that committee would discuss and make recommendations on the Staff discussion paper on chum salmon bycatch measures as well as evaluate and make recommendations based on the State of Alaska's bycatch task force and the Western Alaska salmon subcommittee and look at current information including local traditional subsistence knowledge and consider additional research to determine what's driving Western Alaska salmon decline.

Next slide.

And, finally, the Council indicated its continued prioritization on Bering Sea salmon research supporting that NOAA and ADF&G prioritize developments of models that would help in predicting where and when salmon stocks will be located in the Bering Sea. The ability to predict where they may be located would really help the Council in developing appropriate management measures to focus on avoiding Western Alaska salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery. And the Council also continues to support reducing the time it takes for the genetic analysis to come back. The Council

would really like to see the previous years genetics, we have that now for chum and the geneticists are working really hard to try to speed up how quickly they could provide the previous years information for chum -- I'm sorry, for chinook as well.

Next slide.

This is just my final slide in terms of what's next. So in August, again, we had the call for nominations for salmon bycatch committee. The appointments have not yet been made but will be made shortly and the nominees will be the -- the appointees will be notified and then we will try to organize an introductory committee meeting prior to the December meeting. At the December Council meeting then, the Council will review the chum discussion paper and any resulting committee recommendations as well and if the bycatch task force recommendations aren't available prior to that, they will meet afterwards to consider those. Again, we're hoping to have the first meeting of this committee in November and if the task force recommendations are also available we'll review them, if not that'll be in a follow up meeting. The chum discussion paper will be posted to the Council's eAgenda for the December meeting by November 11th.

And, Mr. Chair, that's all I have here. I do have additional slides if you wish to walk through them. I do also want to note in a separate measure, but you might be interested, the Council did take a -- the Council designated a new seat on our advisory panel for an Alaska Native tribal representative for a recurring three year term. So this is a new seat, it's the only designated seat on our advisory panel and the deadline to apply for that is February 3rd. The information is on our website. It's important to note that an individual does not need to be an Alaska Native but they must be nominated by a tribe and/or a consortia so they can speak for the tribes or the consortia in order to be qualified for nomination for that seat.

With that I'll pause for questions and if you want me to go over additional information I'm happy to do so.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions from the Council members for Diana Stram. But before we do, welcome James Landlord. So let the record show that James is here. Is there someone online that has a question.

MR. GUY: Mr. Chairman.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead.

MR. GUY: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, this is George Guy, I am the general manager for Kwethluk, Inc., would this be an appropriate time to give my input on this discussion on the bycatch?

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead if it's related to the presentation. Go ahead, George.

MR. GUY: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, thank you. My name is George Guy, I'm the general manager for Kwethluk, Inc., and I just want to make a disclosure that I am the co-Chair for the Alaska bycatch review task force for Western Alaska salmon subcommittee that was -- I was appointed in March of this year for the Alaska bycatch task force meeting. And I do concur with the report on the bycatch issues that were just presented to the Federal Advisory Committee.

Recently on October 5th we had a -- NOAA had a meeting in Bethel regarding the salmon, you know, based on the meetings I came to that meeting representing our firm, Kwethluk, Inc., and the first question I have for the Federal RAC under the bycatch is where is our customary and traditional culture rights under our Title VIII of ANILCA.

No. 2., would be the chinooks and chums have been dwindling down and now it's cohos that are in the same scenario, now they're declining. And we based on the bycatches out in the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska 532 [sic] chum salmon have been taken along with chinook salmon that are bound for the Yukon and Kuskokwim Delta Rivers along with the Norton Sound. And we're being zeroed in Okay. under the subsistence use program we're being closed off while the commercial industry has been being ongoing, where is the justice for all. One salmon on -- one salmon, under one table, without -- money on one side and subsistence food on

the other side under one salmon. And under Title VIII of ANILCA we have the right to subsist to feed our families through blood, sweat and tears we try and feed our families. And by all these closures that are impacting the Yukon and Kuskokwim Delta, why aren't they closing the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska for these commercial industries under the State of Alaska and the Federal regime, we've got two regimes under mandate for all renewable resources. And those salmon are supposed to return to their spawning areas whether it be Kuskokwim, Yukon or Norton Sound, they have a rock on their heads that they utilize to navigate to go spawn.

Where is Katie John case in this scenario where without the right to subsist -- to subsist -- to try to feed our family with salmon, king salmon, chum salmon, red salmon, cohos. They recently closed the cohos and our people are hurting, especially on the Yukon. So don't forget about the Katie John case. And the pollock industry with their bycatch of 500,032 chums where the Kuskokwim people hardly have any chums,maybe only 10 per family or less or none.

And you guys need to look at focusing on that radio active nuclear power plant that exploded four to five years ago, don't forget about that too.

So to the Title VIII of ANILCA, under ANCSA, where is our subsistence right. Again, we're under two regimes, State of Alaska and the Federal. And we're confused with the two controlling governments that tell us when to fish, how to fish, we don't have no rights while the pollock industry, or these Area M fishers are catching our renewable resources and making money off of our potential resources where we have to feed our families.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: George.

MR. GUY: So I just wanted to.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: George.

MR. GUY: .....throw my thoughts in so thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you George. Is there any questions from the Council

members regarding the presentation by Dr. Stram.

MR. PARKS: Mr. Chairman, I have a question.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If you're online can you please put your phones on mute.

MR. PARKS: I have a question to Diane. According to the reports here, I have a question, what about reds, have they ever been bycatched or cohos besides kings and chums? That's my question.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. STRAM: Hi, this is Diana. I think I understood the question, it was a little hard to hear but you're asking if other salmon species besides chum and chinook are bycaught by the pollock fisheries?

MR. PARKS: Yeah, I asked what about reds, or cohos, silvers, have they ever been bycatched because I don't see any numbers on our chart here according to your report.

MS. STRAM: Thanks for that. So technically when we report bycatch in the pollock fishery it's by chinook and by non-chinook, so we tend to just report it as chum because the fleet -- when the overall bycatch in any year, and we've done different analysis of it, it's over -- right now it's over 96.6 percent chum. It's been anywhere from 96 to 99.9 percent chum so we -- so really on an annual basis it's incredibly rare that you see anything other than chum in that category, it is technically called non-chinook and it includes all the other salmon species but the fleet does not run into any other salmon species other than chum and chinook.

MR. PARKS: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any other questions from.....

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: From Tuntutuliak.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Just a moment, let me get the Council members if they have any questions to ask questions first and then I'll go out to those that are listening.

Okay, Alissa.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. Thank you for your presentation, it was really informative and hearing numbers and what's going on currently, it kind of got me a little flustered.

First off on your presentation where you're showing trends from the history of 1991 through, was it, 2021, I'm showing that every eight and a half years there was different increases and combinations of actions that were taken in regards to the Council's developments and indications where -- It kind of made me see that was there no -- what is the word that I'm looking for -- was there no monitoring or no repercussions during the times when chum and chinook were being taken.

And then the second question is, are you showing any -- with the current information that you have from 1991 through 2021, are you showing any types of trend and relationships between trawlers, the timing of fishing, of fish trawling in both A and B seasons in regards to relationship between the decrease of salmon between the three separate rivers. I know you combine the three rivers together but what I'm trying to find out is when those peaks or those times where there's high numbers of bycatch being taken, in relation to the decrease of salmon, chum, coho in the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Unalakleet, have any timing between resulting in the report of lower index of escapement.

And then the third question is, where do you get your information to determine escapement for trawl fishing in the seasons, is that at the end of the season when we get our escapement numbers each river, or do you guys -- do you have a process or a way of finding out what escapement was done after the fishery, prior to the fish coming in to the three river index.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. STRAM: Thank you for the question. I'll try to -- I tried to take notes so I can cover all three of them, I may have to ask for clarification.

So the first ones, in terms of repercussions over history, what I was trying to show is kind of the way we modify management measures. So the repercussions are that during the area -- and which time area closures were in place, those were triggered and the fleet was moved out of those areas so that the fleet did have to move around, the fleet had to forego catch to get out of those areas. So that was occurring. For a little while it seemed like it was working and then obviously it wasn't working. I mean in general, historically based average, location isn't a great way to manage particularly in the Bering Sea. So that's why the Council kept modifying as the situation kept evolving, the Council then modifying their management measures accordingly. You know we tend to be a little bit crises management, whatever's the biggest crises at the moment is what we're trying to focus on and that's why we moved off of chum back after 2005 because chinook was more of a priority and so the Council moved to chinook and now is trying to readdress management measures for chum.

In terms of looking at trends, trawling and timing of the bycatch in relation to the three river index, that's not why the three river index was selected. So we look -- particularly in conjunction with Amendment 91 and Amendment 110, the analysis that we did for those and some NPRB (ph) studies that we did, did look at kind of what are the -- what are the causes, are there trends in bycatch, is there any correlation between fishing time, between fishing depth, day and night differences, temperature, and so we studied all of those things and the short answer is that some -- that there is some relation in all of them but none of them was a real smoking gun and so that was why we went with more blunt tools such as a hardcap versus something that might be a little bit more sophisticated.

In terms of the three river index, the three river index was not selected in relation -- oh, I'm sorry, to talk about the declines.

So what I didn't go into but in terms of the adult equivalent that we calculate, and, again,

we're forced to calculate that in aggregate for the Coastal West Alaska so it's all the rivers of Western Alaska with the exception of the upper Yukon so we do a separate adult equivalent for the upper Yukon that we do from Coastal West Alaska and because of the age of the bycatch in the pollock fishery -- so when they catch chinook in the pollock fishery those chinook range from three to seven years old and the majority of them are around four to five years old and so we use the -- we know that some proportion of all those fish are coming back to river systems in Western Alaska annually but not all of them would have returned in that year so what that means is that in a high year like 2007 you have 120,000 fish that were caught but not all of them would have returned to a river system in that year so the overall impact in aggregate is less but it promulgates forward so in years, even if you had no bycatch in the year after 2007 you would still feel the impacts of that bycatch from 2007 because a lot of those fish would have matured over the next several years. So the impact of those high years really promulgates forward and then you still feel it regardless of what the impact is -- what the bycatch is in a subsequent year.

Leading then to the three river index, we were just trying to look for something that we could use as an overall threshold of Western Alaska chinook abundance. So we looked at a variety of different aggregations of river systems. For awhile we included the Nushagak in there and we were trying to make it river systems that tended to trend up and down together so that they would be an accurate representation. When we included the Nushagak in there it kind of swamped the signal that the Nushagak was trending separately from the other three and so we chose those three because they trended together and we thought that those as an overall index would represent the best indication of whether or not conditions were good or bad, so not related to bycatch at all, but related to how the trends in those river systems were.

In order to get the information for that index, ADF&G compiles that. It's the post-season in-river chinook salmon run size. So they compile that over the summer based on information they had in that -- and that index -- the sum of those are presented in a letter to the Council every October. And, again, in doing analysis with ADF&G for Amendment 110 we looked

at different aspects of when run size is available and whether or not there would be major changes that would indicate a different aspect and so this seemed to be the most reliable and recommended by ADF&G as representing the best information possible.

And I'm sorry I didn't get a handle on what your third question was about escapement numbers if you could just repeat that.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair, thank you. Is there any indication in the post season report that you get from ADF&G where it indicates that there was heavy restrictions to practically no fishing at all and the fact that our subsistence harvest numbers over the past 20 to 40 years now have decreased significantly anywhere between 58 to 95 percent of our normal harvest that we usually take, does that play any effect into your cap? Your bycatch cap?

Thank you.

MS. STRAM: Okay, thanks for that. I'm sorry I didn't get all that the first time.

So yes and no.

So in the development of Amendment 110 that was considered and when we looked at those -- what we looked at was the cluster of the -- adult equivalent for the river system in conjunction with year sets and so they tended to cluster above and below 250,000 fish and when you're below 250,000 fish those river systems -- that was also associated with a number of subsistence and commercial restrictions so that was part of the justification for choosing that threshold as a high and a low year in terms of abundance.

On an annual basis when we get the letter, no, we just get the letter indicating whether or not we're above or below 250,000.

When we do a management analysis and -- which we seem to be moving towards possibly, we do include all that information in the analysis that goes to the Council in terms of evaluating the likely impacts of their actions and the past historical impacts but in terms of the actual letter from ADF&G,

no, but it did go into the consideration of the analysis of Amendment 110.

I believe that answers your question.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any more questions from the Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not we'll go to the village first, Tim, and then we'll get back to -- if you're calling from Tuntutuliak, if you have a question we'll go ahead and recognize you.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Hello, this is (Indiscernible) Tuntutuliak.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yes, my name is (Indiscernible) from Tuntutuliak and I've been representing Tuntutuliak in the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission for several years. Our concern was -- we didn't join the Commission but we finally joined the Commission because as chinooks are low, that's when we (indiscernible - breaking up) we teach our fellow tribal members the size of the fish, large, medium, small and chinook -- I mean jacks -- we told them that the bigger the fish the more eggs you have so they will have them swimming up river to headwaters and couple years later they will come back in abundance. We followed the restrictions throughout the season and worked with the Fish and Wildlife and Fish and Game. And then along the way we came into (indiscernible - distortion) the month of June we conserve chinook, month of July conserve chum, but go for target the red salmon and this year somehow we didn't get the Covid notice but the silver salmon was in the -- we didn't fish, it was closed to September 30th and we were (indiscernible - distortion) it was open September 15th (indiscernible - distortion) but in those years the conversation, we didn't know the amount of trawlers and then down there catching chinooks and chums and what she reported there.

But before further going on, I'm very happy the tribal committee to discuss the bycatch. The tribal committees when they sit down they will have

traditional knowledge and value and not -- scientists methods to (indiscernible - distortion) methods can be used.

My method in springtime when chinooks are going to be abandoned, my science must (indiscernible) they always come and bite while I'm going -- I'm going hunting and I say, yeah, chinooks are coming and -- and at the chum -- they take longer, they are low, much reduced and we say, yes, some of.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I hate to interrupt, do you have a question.....

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: .....but those bycatch.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....in regard to -- Sir -- Sir.....

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: .....task force, they finally.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Hello.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: .....realized that those bycatchers need my traditional knowledge -- they're catching too much. And -- but we like to see them cut down, decrease their bycatch to absolute zero. You know fishing.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: (In Yup'ik)

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Indiscernible - distortion) things will be coming down but we're going to be starving and we'll be gone here along the Kuskokwim River if we don't hang anymore fish.

Quyana.

(In Yup'ik)

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: How many tribal -- how many tribal committee members will there be, ma'am?

MS. STRAM: Thank you for that. I don't know yet because the committee itself hasn't been named. The committee's intended to be comprised of

representatives from up and down the river systems but also contain some members of the pollock industry as well as additional members that have been nominated. So because we haven't seen the appointment list yet I can't answer that, I'm hoping that we'll be able to announce that within the next week. The scientists and Staff will not be on the committee itself, they'll be there to assist the committee in their discussions and deliberations. And as I understand it there will be co-chairs that will both be members of the North Pacific Council that will co-chair the committee. So we should know soon but I apologize that I can't answer that yet.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you. Tim, do you have a question.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Okay, thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Mr. Chair.

MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to ask questions. It's not very often we get the opportunity that subsistence users and public to ask questions on issues like on bycatch issues from Council's Staff. Thank you, Dr. Stram for your presentation, we really appreciate the time you took to provide us the information out here at the RAC meeting.

The question I had was one of your slides indicated that AEQ, you're able to establish AEQ for chinook salmon on it's potential impacts on the runs on various chinook salmon stock, and I was just wondering about the chum salmon or other salmon species and why there is no established protocol for determining AEQ on those stocks, do they -- is that something in the works that the Staff are doing, or is there a need for direction for that to go forward.

MS. STRAM: Thank you for the question. It's a great question and one that we also discussed at the June meeting.

So there's a couple of answers to it. One, we can do an AEQ for chum, we have the necessary information, it's not -- it would be -- it would be more of a course estimate. Some of the information that we need to do the AEQ includes information on

maturity rates by river system and again you're talking about across all of Western Alaska so when we did it for chinook we had pretty good information for a number of rivers and off of the top of my head I think the average majority rate that we used was driven largely by the Kuskokwim and the information we had there. We revised that more recently for more updated information. We have less -- less reliable -- less information for chum on that but we do have some estimates that we could make and some assumptions we could make as similarly for natural mortality rates. So we can do an AEQ for chum and, in fact, we did do one back in 2012. What we have trouble doing is taking that adult equivalency for chums -- so we can tell you how many chums would have returned in aggregate over that timeframe, what we can't do is the impact rates, so what we did for the Western Alaska stocks, for chinook, and then for the upper Yukon separately, is we got an aggregate run size from ADF&G for all the chinook stocks in Western Alaska that compromised that group as well as the run size for the upper Yukon and using that we can divide that out so we can come up with an impact rate that would give you basically what percent per year would have more, would have returned had you not had that bycatch. And so that's what we report out. For chum that becomes more complicated because the run reconstructions are only available for a subset of those rivers and not very many -- I believe that the Yukon summer and fall, Quiniak -- and so there's a lot of large populations like the Kuskokwim, throughout Bristol Bay, Kotzebue and Norton Sound that wouldn't be representative in that so it would be a very large underestimate of it.

So we had discussions per the Council's request. We met with State and agency Staff to discuss what could we do. We could do an impact rate for Yukon fall chum, but the concern there would be that that -- while that's possible it might not reflect the trends across all Western Alaska stock so what we're trying to figure out is what's the best way to provide information on the impacts to chum stocks besides doing an AEQ and impact (indiscernible - distortion) so we're still really looking at that because we don't want to provide something that's not useful or could be misconstrued. And so it really has to do with information availability. We're comfortable with the information we have available for chinook, understanding that those things are still -- that's

still really an aggregate it's not telling you anything specific to an individual -- not to the Kuskokwim individually, or to the Yukon individually.

So that's basically the reason why -- we can do the AEQ part for chum, we can't take it further than that so then the question basically is would that be -- would a coarse estimate be useful, it might be useful and we can do it now with the information we have available, we have really good age information for the age of the chum in the bycatch we just have to make assumptions about some of the other calculations.

Hopefully that gets to your question. It's a great question and one that we're still exploring as we move forward this year.

MR. ANDREW: Okay, thank you, Dr. Stram. I forgot to mention my name for the record, Timothy Andrew, subsistence user.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, Tim. I think for everyone's information that's sitting in this room, the Yukon and the Kuskokwim River both have chinook salmon, they both have summer chums, however on the Yukon we have what they call fall chums that they say is fall chums beginning on July 15th of each year, or each summer. From what I know there's very little sockeye on the Yukon but they do have coho. In the summer, you know, the Kuskokwim River had quite a number of sockeye coming back into the river and a lot of people were able to harvest some of them but on the Yukon, the whole salmon species were all closed to September, they were restricted and not able to fish, so I do believe that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council really has a job to do to make sure that they identify each of the salmon stocks that go into these rivers to spawn. Because when we say chum salmon, for the Yukon we know we're talking about both summer and fall chums. So we got to keep in mind that North Pacific Fishery Management Council should include what Henry Parks asked, are they having an impact on coho, are they having an impact on sockeye because for many people on the river system like here in the Kuskokwim, if they can't get any chinook salmon they look forward to the coho during the falltime to replace that. Similarly, up on the Yukon too.

I've observed that over the years fishing on both rivers.

So I hope that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council identifies those stock species and do a genetic study on each and every one of those species and where they return.

They have to. Because when all fishing is closed and you can't even fish any of the stocks or species that come into the river system, we're losing our subsistence food. We're losing our opportunity to put food on the table.

So, Dr. Stram, I appreciate your report but I think that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has to work to identify all the salmon stocks that go into the river system as well as to the other spawning grounds in Western Alaska that are impacted by the bycatch, by the trawl fleet.

So that's just my comment regarding your report so I thank you for your report and I do believe we need to go on to the next agenda item.

My final question is, are you going to ask North Pacific Fishery Management Council to start putting on stock identification of all the salmon species that go into the river systems?

MS. STRAM: Thank you for that. We do -- we can identify genetically the fall chum on the Yukon. So that is a separate genetic breakout. It's my understanding that we have no ability to identify sockeye or coho because we don't catch them in the bycatch so they aren't sampled genetically because they're not present. So -- but just to be clear in case I wasn't, and I apologize if so, the fall chum is a separate genetic group so that one is identified separately. So those are the breakouts that we have from the geneticists. And in an ideal world, and we're hoping to improve on those so we can break out more river systems so that you could break out different river systems separately so you're not stuck with that giant aggregate.

But I appreciate your comments and I thank you all for the opportunity and we will continue to participate in the RAC meetings any time we're

requested to to the best of our ability. So thank you and I'll make sure that your Coordinator has the information to participate or comment in December as well.

Thank you, very much.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you, Dr. Stram. We'll go on to the next item on the agenda and it's public and tribal comments on non-agenda items.

MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke McDavid, Council Coordinator for the record. I just wanted to make a quick housekeeping announcement before we go into public comments. If there's anyone that wasn't in the room earlier please make sure that you sign in on the sign-in sheet by the door. And perhaps if there's anyone on the phone that did not identify themselves earlier if you could just please tell us your name and where you're from.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: And also if there is public comments and tribal representatives making comments we'll put a time limit on there so watching the debate last night, it started from two minute comments down to 30 seconds and we might end up with 15 seconds but I don't want to go that far.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: We'll give everyone an opportunity to at least make comment, at least three minutes and I'll ask Brooke to be the timekeeper.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And just so everyone is reminded we do have an opportunity tomorrow morning also for public comments on non-agenda items so if you want to wait and give your comment tomorrow you'd be welcome to do that as well.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Tim. Identify yourself when you begin okay.

MR. ANDREW: Yeah, for the record my

name is Kamguk, K-A-M-G-U-K. Like I indicated earlier Timothy Andrew is my taxpayer name. As I listened to all the Council reports earlier, all of you indicated that there is some restriction, somewhere around various species that we depend on in the area, from caribou to salmon to all the different species that we go out and harvest and utilize for our subsistence uses. Before I carry on and hopefully I stay within this three minutes, something very -- something very hopeful has arrived over the horizon as far as us.

Our subsistence use on the various resources.

Just a few days ago, or a day ago there was indication that a small group of people had filed suit on the State of Alaska and the case is Forrer versus the State of Alaska, et al., and the like. And what this group is alleging is that the State of Alaska is derelict in their duty to provide for sustained yield on the various resources in the state of Alaska. It's fairly new so -- you know I'm not an attorney but just looking at the name of the lawsuit and the purpose of the lawsuit, it has far reaching potential effects upon the resources that we depend on, like for salmon. Our Yukon River salmon, they're absolutely non-existent at the moment. Kuskokwim River is basically moving in that direction. Nome and even the Unalakleet River are already there. The Department of Fish and Game has not provided for sustained yield for the resources for continued viability. And same way with the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. We've seen that caribou herd drop from over 200,000 in 1996 down to less than 12,000 that we have today. You know, clearly the animals that we depend on are not being managed for sustained yield, but for some other purpose other than for the continued viability of the species and for our subsistence uses.

And we also have on the Yukon River as Norma had indicated earlier, the return of the Arctic lamprey. And I see that my nephew James is here and I'm glad to see that he's here to listen. But for a number of years we've seen that species come in very high, back in the early 1970s and 1980s, as far as I'm aware, but it was until mid-1980s it started going up and down, maybe we'd hit or miss them and then in the 1990s those runs started going way up high, way up low, way up high, way up low, and then in more recent years they're basically non-existent. These are an

anadromous species that spawn and are in fresh water for awhile, they go out into the ocean to mature and then they return when they're supposed to return. The Federal of Alaska has absolutely no information on/or very little, or no information on these species, a very subsistence species for the people of the Lower Yukon.

And several years ago, not several years ago it must have been about seven, eight years ago, if it's that, Alissa and I submitted a proposal to the Board of Game about the ptarmigan that we had i the area, we were starting to see this again with the ptarmigan and we had some weather anomalies that were occurring and questions were raised about where do these ptarmigans nest, where's their principle nesting areas, where they summer, the State of Alaska did not have any information on them.

There's a lot of things that the State does not have any information on. Blackfish, something that's really really important to us and the people in our villages, whitefish is another species. I see work being done on humpback in various places. Lush fish, or burbot. There's a lot of resident species that we really need attention -- really need to establish baseline information and research before we get into a situation that we're facing today with our salmon on both Yukon and Kuskokwim River. At least establish the baseline information, get the research ball going whoever we can get possibly to do that, it would greatly affect how we make our decisions now and also in the future. Because going at this with a shot in the dark type of process it's not doing the resources any good, it's not doing us any good, it's not doing you any good as people that make recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board.

There's a lot of data gaps and what not in different research projects but they're -- and those data gaps need to be closed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And, thank you, Brooke.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Questions of Tim.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any others from public or online. All right, Serena.

MS. FITKA: Hi, thank you. For the record my name is Serena Fitka, I'm the Executive Director for the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. And I would just like to talk about the Board of Fish Proposal 140 that's going to be coming through and it is the South Umiak and Shumigan Islands June salmon fishery management plan.

Gale Vick, she sits with the Fairbanks Advisory salmon subcommittee and she wasn't able to present the proposal so she asked me to provide some highlights and also ask the YK Regional Advisory Council for a letter of support.

So this Proposal 140, the South Umiak and Shumigan Island June fishery harvest both chinook salmon, sockeye and chum salmon in a mixed stock fishery. These stocks are salmon -- of salmon are bound for Bristol Bay and the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim region as well as other areas across the North Pacific Ocean. These salmon stocks have historically been intercepted in significant numbers along the Alaska Peninsula. To ensure that none of these salmon stocks are overharvested, it is necessary to restrain the interception of these stocks as provided in the management plan in this section and consists with the policies for the management of sustainable salmon fisheries.

So the proposal does outline a management plan to reduce the harvest, the commercial harvest of salmon. I provided copies in the back. It is, I believe the Western and Eastern Interior RACs provided a support letter for this proposal to the Board of Fisheries so we're asking for a support letter from the YK Regional Advisory Council to support Proposal 140.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Serena. I just wanted to let Council members know that we do have an item on the agenda under new business to take up any Board of Fish proposals that the Council might be interested in so when we get to that agenda item we could revisit the Proposal 140 and you all could decide if you would like to take that up and support it or not.

Thank you.

MS. FITKA: Okay, thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana. Anybody else.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Anyone online want to make comment.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. If there's no other comments I think there's opportunity again tomorrow for more public comments. Let's take a 10 minute break.

(Off record)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: We'll go ahead and call the meeting back to order again. I asked James to give a report on his village but he said he'd rather do it in the morning, okay, so following the agenda we'll go on down to Item 10, old business. And under new business -- or old business we have .805(c) report summary by the Council Coordinator.

Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'm going to present the Council with a brief overview of your .805(c) report. This is not an action item. On Page 20 of your meeting books you will find the cover letter for the .805(c) report, that's Page 20. And just as a reminder, the .805(c) report is meant to give you a summary of the actions that the Board took at their last regulatory meeting and that meeting was a wildlife regulatory meeting that was held in April.

So I'll just summarize what's in the report. There were two proposals that appeared on the consensus agenda at that April wildlife Board meeting and the Board adopted your Council's recommendations for both of those proposals. That was WP22-42, which increased the moose harvest limit in Unit 18Remainder

to three moose. And the Board rejected WP22-43 which requested delegating authority to the Federal in-season manager to increase the moose harvest quota in Zone 1 of the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 if the water levels are too low to access Zone 2.

So the Board agreed with your Council's recommendations on both of those.

There were six remaining wildlife proposals for your region that appeared on the non-consensus agenda. And for five of those proposals the Board adopted -- or took action consistent with your recommendations.

They adopted two statewide proposals, WP22-01 and 02. Those proposals clarified community harvest system regulations.

The Board also adopted WP22-41 which delegated authority to the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager for in-season management of Mulchatna caribou.

The Board adopted, with modification, WP22-44 which extended the fall moose season in the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 to October 15th and also established a may be announced winter season with a harvest limit of one antlered bull by Federal registration permit.

The Board also adopted with modification WP22-45 which created specific harvest regulations for Alaska hare including shortening the season to August 1st through May 31st and modifying the definition of hare.

For one proposal the Board's actions differed from your Council's recommendations and that was WP22-47, which sought to allow the calf harvest of caribou in Unit 22. The Board's action on this proposal is explained in more detail in the .805(c) report and that's on Page 23. So your Council supported the proposal but the Board ended up rejecting it and their justification was because the WACH management program, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd management plan -- sorry -- recommends the prohibition of calf harvest when the herd is under preservative management, which they currently are. So the Board

thought that it was a good idea to stick to the management plan.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. That concludes my report. I will take any questions that the Council members have. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions from the Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not we'll go on to the next agenda item and that's the Board FY2020 annual report replies.

Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: All right, that's me again. So you all have a copy of the annual report reply for FY2021 from the Board in your meeting book and that starts on Page 24. I'll just quickly go through each item and give a real brief update. When you have a chance, hopefully you can take the time to read through the whole replies.

But to start, the Board wants to let you know that they appreciate your effort to communicate through your annual report on issues outside of the regulatory process that affects subsistence users in your region. In FY21 there were three topics of concern in your Councils annual report.

Board members and OSM Staff read your topics of concerns and discussed them during the summer 2020 work session of the Board.

So just to go through each of the topics real quick.

The first one was concerns about Donlin Mine impacts to subsistence. And we did arrange to have representatives from Donlin give a presentation later in the meeting. They're going to talk to us about barging impacts, the rainbow smolt studies they're doing and also how to get involved on the subsistence community advisory committee.

The second topic was a request for more

whitefish monitoring. And Frank Harris from Fish and Wildlife Service will be giving us a report about a whitefish study that he is currently conducting and that was funded through the FRMP Program. In the Board's reply they highlighted all of the research that has been funded through the FRMP program about whitefish and that list is on Page 40. It's at the end of the reply.

Okay. Topic No. 3 was about sockeye salmon and your Council asked the question does sockeye salmon abundance affect other salmon species. And our Fisheries Staff provided some great detailed information in the reply and that begins on Page 27. But to summarize, increased abundance of sockeye may impact other species to some extent but each species of salmon has unique life history strategies and so they aren't necessarily competing for the same habitat and same prey at the same time. However, they also note this is definitely a topic worth further research and also attached at the end of the reply is a list of all the sockeye salmon research projects funded through the FRMP program.

No. 4 the topic of concern was record low salmon runs on the Yukon and Kuskokwim. The Board just wanted you to know that they recognize the severity of this issue and how it impacts both food and culture in your communities. And we will have several salmon reports later in the meeting where you'll have the opportunity to ask questions and receive updates from management Staff.

Topic No. 5 was about Bering Sea bycatch and Area M intercept fisheries. We already heard the presentation from Dr. Stram from North Pacific Fishery Management Council earlier. And as you recall, the Council, at the last meeting made a motion to write letters to both the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and to the Board about Bering Sea bycatch. The Board received and acted upon the Joint Council letter and I'll present some more details about that in the next agenda item which is the Council correspondence update. But for now just note that the Board did elevate and forward your concerns.

Still on reply topic No. 5 regarding Area M, or the Alaska Peninsula intercept fishery. ADF&G Staff from that region were not able to give an

update on Area M at this meeting but Fish and Game did provide a really nice detailed handout that has information on the Alaska Peninsula fishery and I will pass that out to you guys when I'm done with the update. There's also some copies on the back table there.

A couple small things to note, Fish and Game did begin a multi-year chum salmon stock composition assessment project this summer and took genetic samples of commercially harvested chum salmon and this will build on the previous WASSIP study that took place between 2007 and 2009.

Something else to note about Alaska Peninsula intercept fishery, like we heard from Serena, the Board of Fish will be meeting for this area, that meeting is going to be in February and your Council as well as several other organizations, including Kuskokwim InterTribal Fish Commission, ONC, TCC, Fairbanks Advisory Committee all put in proposals suggesting changes to the management plan for that region. So we will have the chance to talk about some of those proposals if the Council wishes later on in the agenda.

Reply Topic No. 6 was Mulchatna caribou declines and just as a reminder the Federal season has been closed for the past two regulatory years and we will have Staff from Togiak Refuge giving an update to the Council later in the meeting and they'll be able to answer any questions you have about the herd status.

Topic 7 was a request to increase moose harvest opportunity in the lower Yukon and as I just mentioned in the .805(c) report, the Board did approve wildlife proposal at their April meeting to increase moose harvest in Unit 18Remainder from two to three moose. Under this report topic the Council also brought up the need for designated hunter permit distribution and the issuance of these permits, unfortunately, it can't be delegated to community or tribal representatives but at the request of communities, Yukon Delta Staff or OSM Staff may be able to arrange to travel to communities to issue those permits. But they just have to receive a request.

And then finally the last topic of your annual report for last year was a request for

information about Snowy Owls and we will have a biologist from Fish and Wildlife Service online tomorrow, Steve Lewis, he's going to give a presentation about Snowy Owls and he's happy to answer your questions and he'd love to hear your observations about Snow Owls.

So that's all I have for updates regarding your annual report topics from last year. Again, the Federal Subsistence Board really wants to thank your Council for your continued involvement regarding subsistence matters and representing users of the Yukon Delta region.

That concludes my summary, Mr. Chair, thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you, Brooke. Any questions from the Advisory Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: No questions sound like.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One more update from me. I wanted to give you guys an update about two letters that you sent to the Board after your last meeting.

The first letter was about Council member reimbursement that you might have incurred during the teleconference meetings held during the pandemic. And if you turn to Page 41 of your meeting books you'll find the Board's reply to your letter. And just to summarize, OSM reviewed policies on reimbursement and found that Council members can only be reimbursed for internet and phone charges for those meetings, that would be in excess or greater than your normal charges. So like if you had to buy extra minutes or extra data to call in to those meetings and participate we could reimburse you for that. We would just need a copy of your bill that showed those increased charges for the meeting. And you could just

send that to your Coordinator, if you still have access to any bills from the last meeting that was held via teleconference you could send those in or if we ever have to hold a meeting in the future via teleconference just keep that in mind that you could turn in those extra charges.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions from the Board -- Council.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I only have one comment, every month with us living here in Bethel, it doesn't happen in urban areas but in Bethel, we're only given a certain amount of data by GCI. For some of us the data starts on the 5th of each month and if you have kids that are on the internet with their iPads and even phones to play games, your data is all gone by the 20th of the month, so you end up having to buy buckets. Maybe I sent my $10 buck bucket charge to Fish and Wild -- no, just kidding.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: But you end up buying buckets to add to your data and that doesn't last long if you have kids that love to play games on their iPads or the phone, that bucket can last only a couple of days. So I just wanted to explain that because we don't have the luxury of having unlimited internet out here in Bethel and in the villages.

Yeah, go ahead.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. It's quiet, is it.....

REPORTER: We've lost the speakers so.....

MS. ROGERS: So just speak loud pretty much.

(Laughter)

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. I was wondering if we could ask Brooke to get us a list of all the meeting dates, time,

and all that information passed out to all of our Council members so they can bring that information to GCI. GCI will reissue all those bills in regards to those dates and then we could just forward them on, and possibly contact information so that we could get that to you.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Alissa. That's something I can definitely do and I'd be happy to send that to you guys.

REPORTER: We need a break, just for a couple of minutes hopefully.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

REPORTER: We have no speakers, that's why it's so quiet.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

(Off record)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: We'll go back to the agenda item D, special action review for -- go ahead.

MS. MCDAVID: I wasn't quite finished.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Oh, you're not finished yet.

MS. MCDAVID: No, sorry.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Sorry, I thought you were. Okay, go ahead.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I had an update for you guys about two letters, that was the first letter that you wrote to the Board about the meeting expenses.

The second letter I wanted to update you on was the Joint Council Letter to the Board from the four Yukon region RACs regarding salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea. So the Board actually had me come to their work session in July and present about this issue

and present the letter and the request that your Councils made. And at that meeting the Board voted to elevate the Joint Council's concerns to the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture. The letter sent by the Board to the Secretaries wasn't available in time to make it into your meeting book but it was included in your supplemental materials. Those were mailed to you with your itinerary and such in the priority mail envelope. We have more copies if you didn't bring that with you. But that was Tab 1 of your supplemental materials if you have them.

So in the letter to the Secretaries, the Board relayed the concerns and the requests made by the Joint Councils to lower the bycatch for chinook salmon, to implement chum salmon hardcaps and to add a subsistence or tribal representative seat to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. And in addition to passing on your requests, the Board included the following from the letter -- in the letter on Page 2 and I'm just going to read you a short paragraph because I think it's worth reading. So the Board states:

Many Alaskans, including the Councils have opined that it is inequitable for commercial fishers in marine waters to harvest salmon bound for AYK drainages when subsistence fishing in those river systems by those who need it most is completely or severely restricted. Accordingly, the Board respectfully requests for you to liaise with the Department of Commerce to explore engagement and relationship building between our agencies with the goal of addressing salmon migratory life cycles and bycatch holistically.

In addition, the Federal Subsistence Board plans to invite North Pacific Fishery Management Council members and Staff to its next meeting in January 2023 to discuss this issue.

So, Mr. Chair, that concludes my Council correspondence updates. If anyone has questions on that second letter I could also answer those.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. Any

questions from the Council members.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead, Alissa.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Through the Chair. In regards to the Department of Commerce, are we going to be integrating or coming together to meet with them or do you mean to set up -- have us set aside date and time or even just a little mention that if they want to meet that we can have a meeting?

MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Member Rogers. I am not sure that the -- the next step for planning to meet with North Pacific Fishery Management Council, or inviting them to the upcoming Board meeting has commenced yet, just because we're still a little way aways from the Board meeting. And in regard to the Board requesting the Secretaries to liaise with the Department of Commerce, it's kind of up at the higher level and will be up to the Secretaries if they're going to follow through with that.

MS. KENNER: So you read a letter that was to DOI.

MS. MCDAVID: Yes, so that letter was addressed the Secretary of Interior and Secretary of Agriculture.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Quyana.

Yes, go ahead.

MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair.

(Pause)

MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, may I speak.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes, you may.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you. Katya Wessels for the record. I just wanted to also add to what Brooke was saying in regards to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council being invited to the Board meeting. You know the Chairs of the Councils are also invited to the same meetings, the Chairs or their

representatives so if they end up coming to the Board meeting, the Chair of your Council, or if there is a substitute for the Chair they would be able to be present during that discussion and, you know, express their position at that time.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. Any other comments related to this topic before we go on to the next one.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not we'll go on to Item No. D, special action review for FSA -- the numbers -- and we'll turn it over to our Cultural Anthropologist.

MS. KENNER: Hello, Mr. Chair and members of the Council. My name is Pippa Kenner and I am an Anthropologist at the Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage. And the materials relevant to my presentation are on Page 43 of your Council book. It's basically the news release that went out when the Yukon was closed by the Board. So I'm here today to present a brief update of four fisheries temporary special action requests. They're called FSA22-01, 02, 03 and 04 and they were submitted to the Board last spring.

All four special action requests were identical. And each requested the Federal Subsistence Board to close Federal public waters of the Yukon River drainage to the harvest of chinook, summer and fall chum salmon except by Federally-qualified subsistence users, and to further reduce the pool of eligible harvesters based on an ANILCA Section .804 subsistence user prioritization.

The Federal Board met on May 4th, 2022 and adopted Temporary Special Action FSA22-01 for conservation purposes. The Board took no action on the other special action requests based on the adoption of FSA22-01.

Specifically, the Board closed Federal public waters to the Yukon River drainage to the harvest of chinook, summer and fall chum and coho

salmon except by Federally-qualified subsistence users from June 1st through September 30th, 2022 with harvest opportunities to be determined by the Federal fisheries manager should fishery run strength be sufficient to allow a Federal subsistence fishery. In short the returns this summer were so poor that no directed opportunities to harvest chinook, summer or fall chum salmon were provided. Holly Carroll, the Federal Fisheries Manager for the Yukon River implemented the Board's action. Holly will be updating the Council on the Yukon River salmon management and can answer questions related to the implementation of the action at that time. Actually I believe it's going to be Gerald Maschmann back here. So, again, we're going to be going through over what happened on the Yukon this summer in just a couple minutes. Right now I'm just giving you an update.

That concludes my update on these special action requests and I'll try to answer your questions if you have any. This is not an action item, just an update. And, again, we're going to be going over this some more later in the meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Council.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you. Any questions from the Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If there's no questions that concludes the old business and we'll move on to the new business, the fishery reports. No. 1 will be the Yukon 2022 season summary.

MR. MASCHMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Council members. My name is Gerald Maschmann and I work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Fairbanks office. I am the Assistant Federal Subsistence Fisheries Manager for the Yukon River and I assist our Federal Manager, Holly Carroll, with Federal management of salmon on the Yukon River. I'll focus this brief update on the 2022 season.

I believe on Page 44 of your book is the handout, I'm not going to go through that entirely but I'll just summarize it. There's some figures in

there on Pages, I think 48, 49 and 50 that I'll refer to.

I guess I probably don't have to tell anyone it was another lousy season on the Yukon. You know going into the season we had some very poor forecasted run sizes particular for chinook and chum salmon, and coho salmon were also forecasted to probably come in below average. And so based on these poor forecasts we anticipated entering the season with subsistence salmon fishing closed starting in the lower Yukon on June 2nd, while also providing subsistence fishing opportunity for non-salmon species using four inch or less gillnets, manned fishwheels and other selective gear types such as dipnets. You know we entered the season -- you know going into the season it was likely that this strategy would need to last throughout the season unless the salmon runs came in better than expected. And this management strategy was discussed with fishermen, stakeholders and the public at several pre-season meetings as well as six district-wide tribal consultation meetings.

As Pippa reviewed in consultation with the Regional Advisory Council Chairs and the Office of Subsistence Management Staff the Federal manager began issuing emergency special actions to close salmon fishing in each district starting on June 2nd and moving those closures up river based on salmon migration timing. And these actions were taken in consultation and concurrently with ADF&G announcements which restricted State managed waters.

Due to the poor outlook in returns, subsistence salmon fishing for chinook and chum salmon was essentially closed for the entire season on the Yukon River. Managers provided opportunity for subsistence fishers to harvest non-salmon species using four inch or smaller mesh gillnets and other selective gear types while we did allow for the retention of pink sockeye and coho salmon. You know, unfortunately the salmon runs came in poor for a third season in a row. Looking at Figures 1 and 2 in your handout, only 45,000 chinook salmon passed the Pilot Station sonar and only 12,000 passed the Eagle sonar. This was well below expectations and well below the interim management escapement goal of getting our fish across the Border into Canada. Overall, this was probably the worst chinook salmon run on record.

Both summer and fall chum salmon runs came in poor but they were better than the 2021 chum runs which were the worst on record. Figure 3 shows that 437,000 chum passed the sonar during the summer season and Figure 4 shows that 325,000 chum salmon passed during the fall season.

And as your Chair mentioned, there's an overlap there on July 15th in the lower Yukon where the summer chum run is kind of ending and then the fall chum run are kind of entering around mid-July and fishermen tell us they can tell the difference between a summer chum and a fall chum and we've also seen that with using mixed stock genetic analysis. So using that genetic analysis and accounting for that summer and fall chum overlap it's estimated that about 521,000 summer chum salmon and 241,000 fall chum salmon passed the Pilot Station sonar during the 2022 season.

Although poor, the summer chum salmon run did come in near the top of the forecast and slightly above the bottom end of the drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000 fish. The fall chum salmon also came in above forecast but was below the lower end of the drainage-wide escapement goal of 300,000 fish. If you look at Figure 5 that shows about 92,000 coho salmon passed the Pilot Station sonar and that's below the average of 145,000 but above the record low return that we saw last year.

Just under 22,000 fall chum salmon have passed the Eagle sonar this season and overall it's anticipated that no escapement goals were met or will be met for salmon throughout the drainage in the 2022 season. However, we did see that chum and coho salmon runs increased over last year and maybe that might indicate that these runs could be improving and there's been maybe some evidence from the Bering Sea, sampling that they do on juvenile chum, that maybe there's good numbers of juvenile chum that look healthy out there so maybe that's also an indicator that maybe the chum are coming back.

Main stem Yukon salmon fishing restrictions were basically removed starting on October 1st and moving up river chronologically. Some of the tributaries are going to remain closed through December. Some of these tributaries there's still fall chum and coho spawning and so they're going to remain

closed just to protect these spawning chum and coho.

And as you know -- as some of you know on the Yukon fishermen have identified a higher than normal of prevalence of a disease called ichthyphonus in chinook salmon and they've been seeing that the last few seasons and it seems to rear its ugly head like every 10 or 12 years it seems to come back and the last couple of seasons we've seen a high prevalence of ichthyphonus. We did have a handout on a ichthyphonus, I put a stack up here if you're interested in ichthyphonus on the Yukon River you can grab one of those. But we started sampling for ichthyphonus at three sites this season, at Pilot Station, at the Rapids and at Eagle. The sampling goal of 200 chinook at each site was met at the Pilot Station and Rapid sites, however, due to the poor chinook numbers seen at Eagle, the Eagle samples were reduced to 50. And right now preliminary results from this study will be shared later this winter or spring but it does look like, just based on observations in the field, it's about a third of the chinook that we sampled at Rapids seemed to have ichthyphonus infection, that's considered very high. So this is a very important study, we plan on doing more sampling next year. And it's somewhat sensitive because we have to sacrifice some fish so, you know, some folks in these communities are a little apprehensive about sacrificing fish when they're being closed down. But a lot of fishermen have requested this study. A lot of fishermen have supported this study. And so we're trying to, as we sample those fish hand those fish out to the local communities. In addition, you know, we like to take advantage, if we're going to sacrifice fish, we need to take advantage of the opportunity so the fish are also sampled for a variety of other additional research projects addressing Yukon chinook salmon health and life history and it's been a collaborative effort between ADF&G, the Fish and Wildlife Service,multiple researchers at UAF and elsewhere, fish disease experts, effected communities and the local fishermen have been participating in this study. So we'll be continuing to assess the escapement and ichthyphonus analysis will continue through the winter months.

And to be honest, fall management isn't really over yet, like I said there's still fall chum and coho salmon are still migrating and still spawning on their spawning grounds and will be through November.

Fishermen can expect ADF&G's summer season summary probably most likely any day now, I know they're working on it. And usually the fall season summary will be available usually by the end of December and that really gives a good detailed summary of the season so I'd watch out for that.

And I just wanted to comment on Holly's commitment to government to government consultation. She takes that very seriously and so we value that knowledge that's shared during tribal consultations. It's an open door, Holly is an open door policy. If your tribal government wishes to have one to one government to government tribal consultation with the Federal Fisheries Manager please contact her or me, it's on the last page of that handout, is our contact information. We'll be happy to do all the work if your tribal government wants to have that consultation, just let her know, we'll figure out what day and time works best for your tribal government and we'll make arrangements to have it.

So that's all I have for you today, I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have. But before I leave I want to ask if the Yukon managers with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is on and if they have any additional information they'd like to share they can share that now.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. Is the.....

MS. JALLEN: Hi, yeah, thanks Gerald. This is.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead.

MS. JALLEN: Hi, thank you. So thanks Gerald for giving a great summary. We work very closely with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all season looking at all the assessment data as it comes in and having our management meetings, sometimes every day to look over the runs and look over the numbers and we work really closely together to decide how to manage the runs and then we also work really closely in-season with each other to make sure that we're talking to fishermen, that we're present at meetings, that we're available to help answer questions. And we just -- you know, my heart goes out to everybody about, you know,

for how hard this year was and especially coming kind of back to back with poor chum runs. We're really hoping that we're going to start hopefully picking up next year. I guess kind of one bright spot was that the summer chum run came in within the forecast and so hopefully, you know, once we start to see our forecast later this winter hopefully that will give us a good indication of what to expect for next year. And hopefully we'll have forecasts around, you know, January or in the spring, we'll try to get those out, mailed out to every household in the form of the outlook flier. Last year we sent a four page outlook flier to every household talking about the outlooks and about non-salmon harvest because we've had a lot of questions about that as well. So look forward to that coming to your mailbox sometime around April or May next spring, for the forecast and management strategy. There'll be a lot more discussions to discuss 2022 and looking forward to 2023 this winter and as we go into the spring meeting there'll be the Yukon River Panel meeting coming up later this winter. Also the Board of Fish meeting will be a great chance to discuss a lot of these Yukon River areas at the AYK Board of Fish meeting for both Yukon and Kuskokwim River areas.

I think Shane's got some more information about dates for those meetings.

I just want to thank Gerald and thank Holly for all the -- you know, all the work that, you know, just being such good teammates and just -- you know just helping us to all get through this really poor year and we're really all hope that the salmon start to come back next -- start to come back better next year. It'll be -- you know everyone will be really happy to see them start to come back.

With that I'll turn it over to Shane to give a little bit of update from fall season and also I'll be online but it sounds like Gerald's there and he can probably answer most of the questions you've got, so, thanks.

Shane.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank.....

MR. RANSBURY: Hi everybody, my.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....you.

MR. RANSBURY: .....name is Shane Ransbury, I'm the Fall Season Assistant Manager. And we just wanted to add that, you know, we hear your RAC's opening comments and concerns for the continuing low salmon runs. For fall chum and coho, this was the third year in a row with poor runs, even when all fishing was closed in the river.

This season we did three additional research projects in-season. We collected samples from fall chum salmon to run some stress hormone analysis on. We restarted the Sheenjek River sonar project, which was a historical project counting fall chum, an important spawning river and we worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Yukon Delta Fishery Development in a joint project to develop -- to deploy radiotags in about 350 coho salmon and we're still in the process of tracking those tagged salmon throughout the Yukon River drainage right now, as they return to spawn.

We also -- we have Alaska Fish and Game marine salmon research team studying Yukon salmon with NOAA over the last 20 years in the Bering Sea and now in the Gulf of Alaska. We share research information on our Alaska Fish and Game, Yukon River FaceBook page.

This year, as for dates kind of what Deena was mentioning, the Board of Fisheries is meeting January 14th through 18th in Anchorage to address 12 proposals for Yukon and Tanana subsistence, personal use and commercial fishery. We will be -- as well as many more for the Kuskokwim. We'll be speaking at local Advisory Committee meetings to discuss these proposals. Those AC meetings are open to the public and you can read the proposals online and submit public comments by December 30th. The Board of Fisheries is also taking up proposals for Area M in February 20th to the 25th in Anchorage. And you can read the proposals online and submit comments by February 3rd. We heard in the opening comments that your RAC is interested in this fishery to protect Yukon salmon.

And then finally in regard to Norma's question during her open comment regarding a potential commercial pike fishery. That would be treated similar to the lamprey or whitefish commercial fisheries where

a commercial processor, catcher/seller or other type of buyer submits an experimental freshwater fishery application to us. That would need to include their intended fishing dates, harvest number, location and some other information and then we would evaluate if the fishery is viable to be open. However, during these low salmon runs the Department has no plans to open up new commercial fisheries since subsistence needs are the priority.

That concludes my fall season update.

Thank you, and I'll turn it over to the Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Anybody else.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes, go ahead.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. Do we have any updates on the International Treaty and, I know we didn't meet those needs, but do you have any updates, have they met, have.....

MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair. Member.....

MS. JALLEN: Hi, through the -- okay, go ahead.

MR. MASCHMANN: Go ahead, Deena.

MS. JALLEN: Thanks Gerald. Yeah, through the Chair. Yeah, the Yukon River Panel winter meeting, the post-season meeting for 2022 is going to be taking place in December so it would be the U.S. and Canadian section meeting, so they meet separately on December 3rd and December 4th and then we'll meet together, both the countries will meet together on the 15th and the 6th, and then the public meeting for this session will be December 7th and December 8th, and those meetings are going to be in person in Anchorage and I don't have a location yet. But that'll be the winter kind of 2022 wrap-up and then at that meeting they'll probably discuss when they're going to have the pre-season meeting to discuss 2023, if there's any kind

of advice from the Yukon River Panel or changes to the inter -- the escapement goals or management strategies, those will be discussed at the spring meeting and they'll talk about when that meeting's going to happen at the December meeting.

So hopefully that answers your question.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Did she answer your question?

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, any more questions from the Council members.

MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead.

MR. PETER: On your report what causes -- when the fish moving -- mortality -- I got question for it. You know some of the fish got big wounds on their skin but the -- they're alive, strong and swimming, what causes them to die while they going up stream from the mouth of the Yukon to the end -- end of the river where they spawn. What causes them, weaken and die-off?

MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair. Thank you, that's a great question and it's a question we've been trying to figure out. We've noticed the last few seasons that we have a certain number of fish pass the Pilot Station sonar and so we expect a certain number to get to Eagle and to cross the Border into Canada and the number of fish showing up at Eagle has been a lot lower than we expected and so we're like well where are these fish going. Is the sonar off, is our genetic estimates, our proportions off but we've been through them and we think Pilot Station is operating well. We think it's doing as well as it can do. And so some fishermen in District 5, which is the middle Yukon, they've noticed that the last few seasons that there's a disease called ichthyphonus that is infecting the chinook salmon and it gets in their heart and, you know, as the fish swim up river, they're strong, they got a lot of energy but if they're also fighting a disease some of the fishermen think that

fish with this disease, they're not making it to the spawning grounds so maybe that's a reason why we're missing fish up at Eagle, is that they're dying from this ichthyphonus disease.

In 2019 we had, it was really warm in the middle Yukon, high temperatures, and some folks thought, well, maybe they're burning through all their energy in this warm water and they weren't able to make it and so at this point we're not sure why we're not seeing the fish up river that we think we should see based on what we see down river. It could be a combination of ichthyphonus, warm water, we're just unsure. So, you know, that's what we're trying to figure out with this ichthyphonus sampling and the other researchers are looking into other things like stress hormones, vitamin deficiency, percent body fat, those kinds of questions. So we're not quite sure, you know, some fishermen think it's ichthyphonus, and other people think it's maybe a combination of other things but we're trying to figure it out, yeah.

Thank you.

MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman. Through the Chair. You know on this report the escapements are pretty good, 237,000 chums, fall chums, on -- on your report it's a pretty good number 233,000 -- 237,000 even though it's short of 300,000. As long as the river has fish it's good, good number. But next year hopefully it'll increase a little bit if they're not dying off from the predators, you know. And like Kuskokwim, they're having a problem in Yukon, same as Kuskokwim, but there's fish -- but there's fish in the river but they're on restrictions if we're not fishing except -- except setnetting, setnetting a whitefish, I call that whitefish net a killer because it's not strong enough to hold the fish. You know once the king salmon or any salmon is caught in a whitefish net it jerks and then they fall off, they're dead. The only -- my concern is this -- if we're going to go for conservation, I know the Department is really fearful of our custom [sic] and traditional knowledge. Like our elders, what I said this morning, when I'm testifying, in May -- or my dad, my uncle, my grandpa, they start mending the big net, the big size net, the king salmon net just used for king salmon, not targeting the small salmon. They believe it's 15 -- 15 fathoms, long time ago it may be under 28 mesh. My dad

used to hang a 26 mesh size, 15 fathoms long same as my uncle and my grandpa. But they set their net on the eddy. We used to check them right after -- we set them in the morning, and in the afternoon we check it, it catch five, five kings, first run, five kings. In the evening same. They set there for -- only for consumption. Not for subsistence, just to eat. Those whitefish nets are really killers for all species.

So why not the ADF&G and Fish and Wildlife try to work on a solution for us to be tested out for consumption only. For consumption. Right now the nets are really good. I could hang a net, eight inch or 8 and a quarter, 8.5, 45 mesh, 15 fathoms maybe I could catch more just for consumption, we share our fish, fresh caught fish to our community, all of them. But I think we need to change the mesh size for the Yukon, just like Kuskokwim.

When I tested it out a couple years ago, I hate to set out net because I -- maybe just because I'm lazy, you know, but I hung one a couple years ago for setnetting, 5.5, 60 feet -- no, 50 feet, 45 mesh when the setnet opened in the morning a couple of years ago I set the net eight miles down river where I find the -- finally find an eddy, high water. I used to watch my uncle, my grandpa, my dad, they throw out the stick -- I keep throwing the stick out -- when you find eddy they come toward me and then goes out to that line where I hit the eddy. Cannot go out -- cannot pass that, it's still going back and forth, back and forth and it's really deep, really deep -- deep water -- deep eddy. When you set them out, I set them, I set my net, first net I set it out less than three minutes let it stay my -- what you call them (In Yup'ik).

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Floats.

MR. PETER: Yeah, they start pulling. Maybe one, two, three and then I check it, I catch seven really good sized kings for consumption and I -- and I mark that one. Put anchor and a buoy so that I could -- and when I returned home I told my (In Yup'ik) I got -- if you want to set your net go down river and you'll see buoy, set your net right there for consumption. First opening. How come we never try it. We keep on doing like this we're killing them, we're taking them, those small fish for our future generations.

Maybe they're afraid for, you know, lose -- lose the king salmon or saving up to commercial fishermen in the Area M down -- down there for money. We need to change -- change, only for testing and only for consumption and first run of king salmon. When the second one comes in we use whatever net we want to use, but if we're successful, if we're really successful -- the ADF&G and us, the Board of -- the Board of Fish -- Board of Directors -- us could change it. Boy if we use that 8.5, eight and a quarter the month of June, first opening, in Kuskokwim and Yukon, one drift if we're lucky, if we're lucky we could catch 80 -- 80 big ones, not small ones, 80 big ones not small ones. I used to drift, I used to commercial fish with that eight inch, my eight inch is still in my shack, wrap it up in the gunny sack, never using it but one time I used it in Quinhagak. I fill up my buckets.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Philip.

MR. PETER: .....four times.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Philip, let's.....

MR. PETER: Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah.

MR. PETER: But I want to see setnet in Yukon like us, 5.5 inch, 6 inch next year for consumption just like Kuskokwim, not the whitefish net.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: yeah, Quyana. Any more questions or comments regarding the report.

MR. PARKS: Mr. Chairman, I have a question. As you stated about this sickness, this disease, ichthyphonus, is that it, parasite, some kind of a parasite, so you stated that the chinooks are the ones that are being infected. What about these other salmons like reds, chums, silvers now -- and you stated that there's a sonar down in Pilot Station area and probably you guys do some catches over there and test to see if they're infected, what about down at mouth of Johnson, do you guys do some -- I mean mouth of the Yukon, I'm sorry, do you guys do some testing on these fish for parasites.

Quyana, Mr. Chair.

MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair. Thank you. There is an Emmonak test fishery and sometimes in the past they can take samples from fish they catch here but for this particular ichthyphonus.....

MR. PARKS: Uh-huh.

MR. MASCHMANN: .....Pilot Station is just a real convenient place to sample because they have the sonar, there's a test fishery that's operating every day and so there's the opportunity to get the number of samples that they need from Pilot Station. You know in Emmonak they've been -- there is a test fishery but they've been trying to minimize the number of fish that they kill out of that fishery just because of conservation concerns and so there's a possibility we wouldn't get the number of samples we need. So Pilot Station is just really a good place to get those samples from and that's why we do it there. And it's pretty clos -- I mean it's not -- you know it's all relative. I mean Pilot Station isn't really close to the mouth but when you think about how big the Yukon is, Pilot Station is really way down river compared to the size of the Yukon, so, yeah.

MR. PARKS: Quyana, thank you. Mr. Chair, one more question.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

MR. PARKS: Now, the reason why I brought that up is because who knows those salmons, especially chinooks, are they being infected on their route down there at the sea or do they get this parasite while going up stream to the Yukon?

MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair, thank you. Yeah, that's a great question. I think there's some theories that they get it in the ocean. This disease is in herring.....

MR. PARKS: Uh-huh.

MR. MASCHMANN: .....and that's a major food source for chinook and so they think maybe they're getting it from herring. But why does ichthyphonus --

why is it not present very much in some years but then in other years we just see a lot of it and then it seems to go away for a few years and then it comes back, we're not sure, but we think they get it from herring while they're feeding in the ocean and as they come in the mouth, you know, they're bright and healthy at the mouth but as they move up river they're burning through their energy stores and they're putting all their energy they can into getting to the spawning grounds, they just can't fight the infection. And so by the time they get to the middle Yukon, the ones who are infected start getting really sick and it doesn't seem like they can make it. It appears we're still answering that question, but sick fish, if they're sick enough just don't seem to be making it to the spawning grounds. And we haven't seen it -- or we haven't heard fishermen complain about it in chum or coho. So we're not sure why chum or coho don't seem to have it, or at least they're not being affected by it if they do have it. So -- and maybe they're eating different fish out in the Bering Sea that don't have the disease.

MR. PARKS: Thank you.

MR. MASCHMANN: Thank you.

MR. PARKS: Quyana, Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: James.

MR. LANDLORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ichthyphonus. I sit on Yukon River InterTribal Watershed Council. We first met in 1997 at Galena to discuss why our fish were getting sick. And we first heard of salmon getting disease and sick back then. I don't know if it was ichthyphonus but there were a lot of people talking that some of the fish had sores in their body. And just recently I went and was reading the news and internet, ocean gets warm and it's when disease affect the fish. They get disease because the ocean's warm, more bugs or whatever in the ocean, but it also gets cold and it's also due to climate and in the U.S. and in Alaska. They say when the ocean gets cold and warm more bugs affect the fish. However, I think NOAA needs to do a longterm study on how the warm waters affect the fish when they come into our rivers. And I don't know who studies those but it's part of NOAA -- so that's the first time we talked about sick fish, we started back in 1997 in Galena when the First

Nations, Yukon Territory, all the way down the mouth and we signed an agreement, I think we called it Accord to work with each other to keep the Yukon River clean. That's the first time that I heard that there were fish that were sick.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you, James. I think some of that will be answered, the comments that you're making, we have been told that the Bering Sea research group from ADF&G has to leave. So I'll request whoever from ADF&G is there, that's Item No. 5 on the new business would like to make the report regarding the Bering Sea research projects. And I'm sure the questions that have.....

MS. GARCIA: Hello, Mr. Chair, can you hear me?

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....been asked of you will be answered. Yes, go ahead.

MS. GARCIA: I apologize, I thought you were ready for me to present, I will wait.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Who's that?

MR. MASCHMANN: That's Sabrina.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yep, if you're going to give the Bering Sea report salmon research update you're on the agenda right now because I've been told that you're going to be leaving very shortly so you have the floor. Go ahead.

MS. GARCIA: Wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And is my presentation loaded on the screen for you all.

MS. MCDAVID: Hi, Sabrina, this is Brooke, the Council Coordinator. Yes, it is, we're ready for you to go and I'll advance your slides when you let me know, too, thanks.

MS. GARCIA: Wonderful, thank you, Brooke. Hello everyone, Mr. Chair and members of the Council. My name is Sabrina Garcia and I am the Marine Research Biologist for the Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim

region and part of the Salmon Ocean Ecology Program for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Today I'm going to talk to you about this relatively new research program within the Department, provide updates on research focused on Yukon River chinook and chum salmon and introduce new and ongoing projects aimed at understanding the marine life phase of our Western Alaska salmon.

Next slide.

MS. MCDAVID: Sabrina, sorry for.....

MS. GARCIA: The Salmon Ocean Ecology Program.....

MS. MCDAVID: Sabrina, sorry, I just wanted to interrupt you real quick. We forgot to let folks in the room and online know where they can find a copy of your presentation. It's on Page 101 of the meeting book, and folks online that will be meeting book, Part 1. Okay, that's all Sabrina, you can proceed.

MS. GARCIA: Okay, thanks, Brooke. So we're on Slide 2.

So the Salmon Ocean Ecology Program or SOEP was initiated about two years ago and it is currently made up of three biologists, two from the statewide region and myself from the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim region. And the goals of this program are to understand the marine life of Alaska salmon, use this information to assist in decisionmaking and answer pressing questions about what is driving salmon populations. I know these are lofty goals for just three of us. So you'll see in the upcoming slides that we rely very heavily on collaboration with the State, Federal, non-governmental organizations, universities and International agencies to fulfill our mission.

Next slide.

So one of our longterm projects is the Northern Bering Sea juvenile salmon and ecosystem survey. This project was initiated by NOAA in 2002 and ADF&G joined as project partners in 2010. For the last 20 years, this has occurred in the shallow shelf

habitat indicated by the white box in the Northern Bering Sea. This area is the primary habitat for juvenile salmon in from the Yukon River.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - news station)

MS. GARCIA: Can you hear that?

(Pause)

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - news station)

MS. GARCIA: Mr. Chair.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - news station)

MS. MCDAVID: Excuse me, whoever's speaking on the line it sounds like there's a repeat of a radio episode and.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - news station)

MS. MCDAVID: Sabrina are you still on the line?

MS. GARCIA: Yes, I'm still on the line but I can hear it sounds like a radio report.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Please standby, we might have to ask the operator to mute. For some reason there's a radio program coming through the speakers.

Everyone on the line please mute your phones, star, six. If you're listening to the radio please mute your phones.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - news station)

REPORTER: Okay, we should be okay now.

MS. GARCIA: Brooke, I don't seem to hear it anymore.

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MS. MCDAVID: Okay, one second, we're getting the mics set back up.

MS. GARCIA: Okay.

(Pause)

MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for your patience everybody, there's always some minor technical difficulties.

(Pause)

REPORTER: Sabrina, would you try it now please?

MS. GARCIA: Yes.

REPORTER: Speak a little louder?

MS. GARCIA: Can you hear me okay?

REPORTER: A little louder please.

MS. GARCIA: Can you hear me, is this better?

REPORTER: No, a little louder. Get a little closer to the mic maybe.

MS. GARCIA: How about now?

REPORTER: That's worse.

MS. GARCIA: Is that better?

REPORTER: No.

MS. GARCIA: Okay, let me plug my headphones back in. Is this better?

MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, that's a little bit better, thank you.

MS. GARCIA: Okay. I'm just going to pick up on Slide 3 since I don't know how much folks caught on that slide.

So one of our projects is the Northern

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Bering Sea juvenile salmon and ecosystem survey. This project was initiated by NOAA in 2002 and ADF&G joined as project partners in 2010. For the last 20 years, this has occurred in the shallow shelf habitat indicated by the white box in the Northern Bering Sea. This area is the primary habitat for juvenile salmon in from the Yukon River. Surface trawl gear is used to fish the upper 70 feet of the water column across a standardized grid of stations. This platform is used to study the distribution, abundance, stock composition, diet and health of juvenile salmon, specifically chinook and chum salmon. This survey occurs in September after juvenile salmon have spent a few months in the ocean and just before their first winter at sea.

Next slide.

One of the most important pieces of information we get from these surveys is an estimate of juvenile salmon abundance. As I mentioned on the previous slide most of the juvenile chinook salmon we catch during the survey are from the Yukon River, therefore we can estimate the abundance of juvenile Yukon River chinook salmon. This figure shows the abundance of juvenile Yukon River chinook salmon over time. The black bar running across the figure is the average abundance across the entire 20 years of the survey. Juvenile Yukon River chinook salmon abundance has changed over the history of this survey but you can see that their abundance has steadily declined since 2013 and it has been below average since 2017. We did see a slight increase in juvenile chinook salmon abundance in 2021 relative of the.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. MCDAVID: Are you still with us Sabrina, I'm sorry we have some open lines it sounds like.

MS. GARCIA: Yes, should I just speak over them.

REPORTER: No, please don't.

MS. MCDAVID: One moment please. Folks on the phone who have called into the Yukon Kuskokwim

Delta RAC meeting please mute your phones, it's very disruptive, we can't hear our presenter.

Thank you.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. MCDAVID: Excuse me we have someone on the line talking about our meeting for the YKDelta RAC, can you please mute your phone line, you're coming through into the meeting room and everyone can hear you.

(Pause)

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, Sabrina, are you still there?

MS. GARCIA: Yes, do you want me to start that slide over?

MS. MCDAVID: I think we heard most of what you said until the voices came on the line.

MS. GARCIA: Okay.

MS. MCDAVID: Just pick up where you're comfortable.

MS. GARCIA: Okay. If you can advance to the next slide then.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, I will.

MS. GARCIA: Thank you. Juvenile abundance is a key part of the survey objectives because it provides us with two very important pieces of information. An estimate of marine survival and it also tells us what life stages are most important to determining whether run sizes will be good or poor in the future.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. GARCIA: this figure shows the relationship between juvenile and adult abundance for Yukon River chinook salmon with juvenile abundance on

the bottom axis and adult returns on the left. This relation indicates that as we see more juvenile chinook salmon in the survey we tend to see a higher number of adults returning to the Yukon River a few years later. This strong relationship between the number of juveniles and the number of adults shows that survival after the survey is relatively stable year to year. This tells us that while chinook salmon may be experiencing.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. GARCIA: This tells us that while chinook salmon may be experiencing mortality after we catch them in the Northern Bering Sea survey that mortality is stable year to year and does not substantially change future run sizes. The stability in this relationship between juvenile chinook salmon and adult returns from those juveniles allows us to provide pre-season estimates of run size for Yukon River chinook salmon.

Next slide.

Using the juvenile chinook salmon abundance that I just showed on the previous slide, we can predict the number of adult chinook salmon that will return to the Yukon River up to three years in the future. On this figure, grey bars show the actual run abundance in each year and the black dotted line and whiskers indicate our juvenile based forecasted run sizes for these years. Our expectation for the 2022 run size was for another poor abundance year, similar to what we saw in 2021. However, the chinook salmon run size for the Yukon River in 2022 was the lowest on record and came in well below our pre-season forecast.

Next slide.

I mentioned this before but this is very important so I want to repeat it. The data from these Northern Bering Sea surveys suggest that whatever is causing good or bad run sizes of Yukon River chinook salmon is occurring very early in the life of these fish, either during the year that they spend in the fresh water, their first few months in the ocean or a combination of both. This means that later marine mortality, whether that's competition, predation,

bycatch, they're not substantially affecting future run sizes of chinook salmon in the Yukon River. Now while these factors do not appear to be driving the declines that we've seen in Yukon River chinook salmon there are still concerns from stakeholders about whether there is a right management balance among all these different fisheries to provide equitable access to salmon, particularly for subsistence use. So it is important that we continue to gather information on the harvest characteristics of these fisheries so that this information can be used for informed decisionmaking.

Next slide.

We can also use juvenile abundance information from the Northern Bering Sea surveys to better understand population dynamics and critical periods in Yukon River fall chum salmon. We are currently focusing on fall chum salmon because they are genetically distinct from other Western Alaska stocks of chum salmon. On this figure the grey bars indicate juvenile fall chum salmon abundance, and the black dotted line represents the average across the time series. Juvenile fall chum salmon abundance has been variable throughout time but we saw above average abundance in both 2019 and 2021. There was no survey in 2020 due to the pandemic and we did complete the survey this year in 2022 so we should have some updated estimates of juvenile abundance for both chum and chinook in the next few months.

Next slide.

The lowest of the data set for juvenile chum salmon when we.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - radio station)

MS. GARCIA: When we plot the juvenile fall chum abundance with the number of adult fall chum salmon we see something similar to what we saw for chinook salmon. The more juvenile chum salmon.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - radio station)

MS. MCDAVID: Hold on Sabrina. I'm very sorry about this. Folks on the line we're hearing

a radio come through again, please mute your phones, star, six or use the mute button on your phone.

Thank you.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - radio station)

MS. MCDAVID: We keep hearing, it was another season of low salmon runs -- okay, Sabrina we might have to have the operator mute the line. Standby please.

(Pause)

MS. GARCIA: Sorry Brooke, I didn't catch that, what did you say?

REPORTER: Hold on.

MS. MCDAVID: Just please standby Sabrina, we're trying to get the line cleared, we're calling the operator.

(Pause)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If we're going through the agenda, we're trying to cover as much as we can today because I know some of the people will want to head back to where they came from by sometime tomorrow afternoon or evening. So we'll probably run to about 6:00 p.m. tonight so we can cover as much of the agenda as possible.

(Pause)

REPORTER: Sabrina are you still there?

MS. GARCIA: Yes, I am.

REPORTER: Okay.

(Pause)

MS. MCDAVID: Just as a reminder to folks on the phone, please don't put the teleconference on hold, sometimes if you do that and you have hold music or maybe the radio, that could be what is coming

through.

(Pause)

REPORTER: I don't hear anything, could she go ahead.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, Sabrina, are you ready to try again.

MS. GARCIA: Yep, if you're on Slide 9 I'll get started on that one that says fall chum salmon on the top.

MS. MCDAVID: Yes, that's what we have up, thank you.

MS. GARCIA: Okay. So the dataset, when we plot the juvenile fall chum salmon abundance with the number of adult fall chum salmon we see something similar to what we saw for chinook salmon. The more juvenile chum salmon we see in the Northern Bering Sea survey, that's on the bottom axis, the more adults we see returning from those juveniles on the left axis. But then we have these two years shown by the red triangle beginning in 2016 and continuing in 2017 that are farther away from the lines than the other points in the datasets. Something changed just starting in 2016.

Next slide.

What we think these data are illustrating is that for most of the dataset whatever factor determined adult abundance of Yukon River fall chum salmon were occurring sometime before we catch the juveniles in September of their first year in the ocean. This is suggesting a critical period for survival in the same period to what we saw for chinook salmon. But in 2016 something shifted such that later marine mortality became more important to determining future adult return abundance.

Next slide.

We know something dramatically different happened in 2016 in the Bering Sea. That year marks the beginning of a major multi-year marine heatwave in the Bering Sea that lasted through 2019.

On this map the red colors are showing very warm sea surface temperatures that built over time into 2019. Like the blob in the Gulf of Alaska this Bering Sea marine heatwave was unprecedented in scale, magnitude and duration. Unlike Yukon River chinook salmon which spend their entire marine life in the Bering Sea, fall chum salmon use the Bering Sea in their first summer at sea and then they migrate to the Gulf of Alaska and the North Pacific Ocean for the winter and come back to the Bering Sea seasonally for the rest of their marine life. So chum salmon that first entered the Bering Sea in 2016 were faced with marine heatwave conditions in both of their marine habitats.

Next slide.

Now, when sea surface temperatures increase we do see changes in several aspects of juvenile salmon ecology. For example, in warmer years we see higher proportions of juvenile chinook salmon from Southern Bering Sea stocks migrating into the Northern Bering Sea. We also see juvenile sockeye salmon likely from Bristol Bay entering the Northern Bering Sea in those warmer years. We also see changes in the prey items eaten by salmon. For chinook we tend to see more sandlands in warmer years and caplin in cooler years. For chum salmon we tend to see lower proportions of high quality zooplankton. For both juvenile chinook and chum salmon we see a higher proportion of empty stomachs as temperatures increase and finally temperature also affects the health of juvenile salmon with both chinook and chum salmon showing lower condition in very warm years.

So next slide.

So now that I -- that was the chinook and chum salmon section and now I'm going to switch gears a little bit and talk about some of the ongoing research projects that we have as part of our new salmon ecology group. And the first of these projects also utilizes the Northern Bering Sea platform and this one is trying to understand the role of predation during the marine life stage of salmon. And this research has three components. The first is a salmon shark satellite tagging program where we opportunistically tag sharks that are caught during the salmon surveys in the Northern Bering Sea and also on other surveys throughout the North Pacific. So these

tags, you can see it in that bottom left picture, that chart has two tags. Those tags provide location and depth information which we can use to find out where and when salmon sharks might overlap with salmon in the ocean. The second is to document predator wounds and scars during salmon surveys. Wounds and scars give us information on who likely predators are and where predation is most likely to occur. Most of the time when we think of predators we think of big animals like sharks and marine mammals but I just wanted to show this photo of the lamprey wounds in the top left on juvenile pink salmon and we tend to see these quite a bit during our Northern Bering Sea surveys. Finally, we're using environmental DNA, or eDNA to look for predators. The surface trawl gear used during our juvenile salmon surveys is not designed to capture predators so this new technology allows us to test ocean water for DNA left behind by predators like lamprey sharks and marine mammals. We've been doing eDNA sampling for two years on the Northern Bering Sea survey and we're going to continue to do that on future surveys. And this predator research aims to understand, not only salmon, but other aspects of the ecosystem that they're a part of.

Next slide.

As part of the International Year of the Salmon Initiative, three high seas expeditions occurred to study the winter ecology of Pacific salmon. The last survey from this International initiative occurred earlier this year and as part of this expedition four research vessels sampled the area of the North Pacific Ocean highlighted by the three polygons in this figure. The goal of these surveys is to understand the winter distribution, abundance, stock composition and ecology of Pacific salmon. In collaboration with NOAA our SOEP program submitted a proposal to fund analysis using chum salmon samples collected during this winter survey. For example, we want to use genetic stock composition to see where Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim chum salmon were caught, where they may overlap with hatchery fish,what their diet and condition is like, and to look for competition between and among salmon species. This proposal was selected for funding and so we're going to begin analyzing samples from the survey this winter.

Next slide.

As part of my PHD dissertation I am planning to build a habitat model for chinook salmon in the Bering Sea. This model will incorporate many different data types, including environmental variables with the goal of being able to predict where and when chinook occur in the Bering Sea. If we can successfully predict where and when chinook occur, we can provide that information to marine fisheries so that they can avoid fishing areas where chinook salmon are likely to be present and therefore reduce bycatch. The left photo on the screen shows an immature chinook salmon being tagged with a satellite tag, that tag will record the chinooks depth and temperature every 10 minutes and these satellite data are just one type of data that's going to be included in the model. And the figure on the right shows what one of the outputs from this model is going to look like. So as an example we use temperature and chlorophyll to predict chinook salmon abundance on May 5th 2019. The areas of bright red indicate areas where you're going to have a higher probability of catching chinook salmon.

Next slide.

We are also using salmon bony structure like vertebrae and operculum and operculum is that flap of tissue that covers the salmon gills, and what we want to do is use those structures to recreate the life history of fall chum salmon using stable isotopes and hormones. So essentially these bony structures act as time capsules that record the hormone and chemical concentration experienced by the fish over its entire life and we can use those hormone and chemical concentrations to look at growth, stress and reproduction and see how those might be affected by the environmental conditions experienced by the fish. This new technology allows us to learn about the marine life of salmon without having to catch them in the open ocean. And that figure that you're looking at that's a chinook salmon operculum, and what this graph is showing is that as the fish gets older you can see that there are peaks in its -- in both the stress and reproductive hormones so this is just an example of what we're going to be doing with fall chum salmon.

Next slide.

And while the majority of our research focuses on the marine environment we have a new project

that is trying to tie together the conditions experienced in the marine environment with those experienced during their fresh water migration. We want to figure out if female chinook salmon are less equipped to make it to their spawning grounds or are producing eggs that are less equipped to survive because of changes in their diet, heat stress experienced during their long migration or disease. Particularly for chinook salmon that migrate to the upper part of the Yukon, it's like they're running an ultra marathon every day for a month to get to their spawning grounds and they're doing this without eating. And then the females have to lay eggs, and if those eggs are going to survive they need to be packed full of vitamins. And so the spawning runs that these chinook salmon are doing, it's an incredible journey. And if they contract a disease in the ocean then that makes that journey even harder and if they don't have enough nutrition then that journey becomes that much harder. And we believe that changes in chinook salmon marine diets may be causing female chinook to have reduced nutrient levels at the start of their migration, which means that they may not have enough nutrients to reach their spawning grounds or to pass on to their eggs. And increased river temperatures and diseases like ichthyphonus may cause further stress to an already long migration. We're working with, within Alaska and in the Canadian Yukon to obtain samples from female chinook and their eggs to assess them for nutrient and stress levels. And I want to point out that this project is getting these samples from fish that are already on the spawning grounds that have laid eggs so it's specifically designed to avoid additional mortality to collect samples. This proposal was selected for funding and we're going to begin this work next summer. And we hope that this research will help pinpoint the factors that are affecting chinook salmon productivity on the Yukon River.

Next slide.

That's all I had for today. My email is on the screen as are Jim Murphy and Katie Howard who also are collaborators on this marine research. We do have a FaceBook page. The QR code for that FaceBook page is on the screen. Also the work that I presented on here today, we post updates regularly on our FaceBook page so if you're ever wondering -- if you ever want updates that's one of the best places to

look.

Thank you for inviting me to speak today and I'm happy to take any questions.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Sabrina. Any questions from the Council members.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. This is Alissa Rogers. I wanted to ask you -- I couldn't overhear when you were just having a discussion and the radio was kind of talking over, the juvenile salmon from the eggs to when they're three months in the ocean, you -- I just want to make sure that I heard you correctly, that you were saying that the mortality of those juvenile salmon was happening in fresh water and not in the ocean?

MS. GARCIA: Thanks for that question. What I was trying to say is that when -- if you look at that relationship between the juvenile chinook salmon and the adults that returned from those juveniles, it's a pretty straight line so it means that more juveniles that we see in the survey, the more adults that come back from those juveniles. So that means that what's happening after we catch those juveniles in September, so what's happening to them in their later marine life, it's pretty consistent year to year. So that means that whatever is deciding -- whether the future runs are going to be good or bad is happening before we catch those juvenile chinook salmon in September. Now what we don't know is if those factors are happening during the year that they spend in the fresh water or the first few months in the ocean of a combination of both of those life stages. All we know is that by the time that we catch them in September, the number of juveniles that we see in the ocean is a really good indicator of how many adults will come back to the river three -- you know, two, three, four years down the line.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you. And one more question I had for you, in the research in regards to the upcoming project that you're going to be doing, are

you guys also taking into consideration the mining effects on the spawning grounds in Canada in regards to the eggs and salmon survival rate?

MS. GARCIA: This project, I believe you're referring to the last one I presented on on the nutrients and heat stress work, we're not explicitly incorporating anything in regards to the mining. I do believe that that's something that gets brought up quite a bit at the Yukon River Panel meeting but it's not something that we're considering in this project. This project is mostly trying to link the food that the salmon are eating in the ocean and the amounts of nutrients that they have at the start of their migration and how heat stress and disease during the migration might make female chinook salmon less able to reach their spawning grounds, or if they do reach their spawning grounds and lay their eggs, if they're not leaving their eggs with enough nutrients. So what we're doing is when those females get to the spawning grounds we take a few of their eggs and a piece of muscle from the female and we try to find out how much nutrients did she have stored and how much did those eggs get. But not anything with mining.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. I just have one question. I've heard reports from our good friends from up north saying that chinook salmon are beginning to show up in their river systems and I know that -- and they told me that they never had chinook salmon in their river systems before, this must because of the cold weather or the cold water, but is there someone taking a look at that aspect to find out why they're moving up north?

MS. GARCIA: When you say up north, do you mean in tributaries -- northern tributaries of the Yukon or do you mean north into the Arctic?

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Into the Arctic, like Colville, what's that called Colville River and the North Slope area?

MS. GARCIA: Oh, yes. There is a group, I think it's actually through the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and then there's a Canadian group that is monitoring salmon into the Arctic and I can't

remember the name off the top of my head but I can find out and send it to Brooke so she can pass it on to you but they are monitoring salmon expansion into the Arctic and trying to figure out, you know, which species of salmon are showing up in places where they haven't been before. I haven't heard that chinook salmon are entering those farther north areas but if you're getting reports of it, I'm sure that these groups that are focusing on salmon in the Arctic would be really interested to hear about it. So I'll pass it along to Brooke and she can pass it along to you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thank you. Any more questions from the Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Tim, did you have a question.

MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sabrina, thank you for your presentation. I was just wondering about one of the food fish out other, caplin, and I was just wondering how susceptible are caplin to potentially be caught in bycatch fishery and if it is a -- if it is harvested in the bycatch fishery, any idea what the metric tons would be like, or the amount or if it's quantifiable?

Thank you.

MS. GARCIA: Yeah, thanks for the question. In terms of bycatch in the pollock fishery, I'm not too sure if caplin are getting caught as bycatch. What I could do is I can look on the NOAA website and pass it along to Brooke if I find anything. The only forage fish that I know of that is monitored as a prohibited species in the bycatch is herring but I'm not too sure about caplin. Caplin kind of have these dynamics where they're really, really abundant when the water is very cold so we typically only see caplin in colder regimes of the Bering Sea and not really during warmer years. Interestingly when we went into the Northern Bering Sea survey this year we did end up catching lots of caplin so it was a good sign to see caplin, that waters are maybe getting a little bit less warm than we've seen them in the last few years. But I'll follow up with Brooke and let you know what I find out about caplin caught as bycatch in the pollock

fishery.

MR. ANDREW: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Quyana. Jackie.

MS. CLEVELAND: Hi, thanks for the presentation. I found it very interesting and it reminded me of one of the fish I caught after a flood at home and I'm from Quinhagak, and I'm Jackie Cleveland by the way. And then we noticed there was activity in this freshwater pool that was an old gravel site pit so from the flooding we know that there are pike in there so we were trying for pike but we actually caught a landlocked jack that looked like a trout, maybe even a lake trout. So people were confused whether it was a lake trout or a landlocked jack. But are you guys finding, or is there research that finds more crossover breeding or if that's even something that exists from these floods and fish getting landlocked, I guess?

Thanks.

MS. GARCIA: Yes, no problem. Thanks, Jackie. You know I'm probably not the best person to ask about freshwater side of things. My focus is really on the marine realm. I would expect that the managers, maybe Gerald or Deena might have a bit more information on what's happening on the freshwater side of things. Sorry I don't have an answer to your question.

MS. CLEVELAND: It's okay, thanks, I'll ask later.

MS. JALLEN: Yes, this is Deena Jallen with Fish and Game. I might just add one little thing unless Gerald wants to add some more. But, yeah, thanks for that question, Jackie. It's not something that we have heard about a lot.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - on hold)

MS. JALLEN: .....you know we did have a lot of high water this spring so that could have stranded fish in different places. There is a project

that's going to go on that's going to start next season, it's going to be a chinook salmon radiotelemetry project where they're going to tag chinook salmon in the lower Yukon and then they'll have towers along the Yukon to see where those fish go and so that will be super interesting. And I think they're also going to try to pair that with genetics and with other information that they can collect from those fish before they get tagged. So, yeah, stay tuned next year for some really good chinook salmon travel and distribution information.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any more questions for Sabrina.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not I thank you for your report and the questions asked. So with that we'll take a five minute break.

MS. GARCIA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Make sure it's five so we can keep moving on the agenda.

(Off record)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: It's the Kuskokwim River 2022 season summary, Fish and Wildlife Service. How many fish did you catch?

(Laughter)

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have Spencer introduce himself first.

MR. REARDEN: My name is Spencer Rearden, I'm the Supervisory Biologist here in Bethel and I was part of the group that was with Fish and Wildlife Service and the InterTribal Fish Commission tried to help make decisions this last summer.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. And my name is Aaron Moses again. I'm the Subsistence Resource Specialist for Yukon Delta, and I'm also part of the Kuskokwim River Fisheries Team. Our team, on the Fish

and Wildlife side is comprised of Spencer, Boyd Blihovde, our in-season manager. He had prior family commitments and he said sorry for that, he'll see you guys in the spring. We have Chris Tulik, our RIT from Nightmute and Emmitt -- our new one is Emmitt Nicori originally from Kwethluk and now living in Napakiak.

So for the 2022 season we work closely with the InterTribal Fish Commission and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage chinook and chum salmon on the Kuskokwim River. In the spring Yukon Delta and the Fish Commission continued its joint river salmon management strategy and harvest strategy. These strategies were developed according to the following guidelines and guiding principles; avoiding collective overharvest of chinook and chum salmon populations within the Kuskokwim River watershed due to application of a precautionary approach to harvest management -- oh, sorry, all this is in your book on Page 52 -- sorry about that.

Also to integrate meaningful local and traditional knowledge into the fisheries management decisionmaking process. Strive to provide continued customary and traditional subsistence harvest. Substantially [sic] manage other currently healthy salmon populations within the Kuskokwim River watershed. And uphold Federal fisheries conservation and stock diversity mandates.

For the 2022 season, we issued five emergency special actions during the June 1st and June 11th front end closure, three 16 hour setnet gillnet opportunities were provided. After the front end closure there were four 12 hour set and driftnet opportunities and four setnet only opportunities resulting in 200 hours of fishing during the June and July fishing season. All fishing opportunities were limited to six inch or less gillnets to conserve larger chinook salmon which are predominately female. And then going all the way to August, on August 15th the Alaska Department of Fish and Game managers closed the Kuskokwim River main stem and all salmon bering tributaries to all methods and means for coho salmon based on the available information on the date of the closure. The Bethel test fish CPEU was the slowest in 22 years and the Kogrukluk and Kwethluk River had record low coho salmon passages. On August 16th Yukon Delta and the Fish Commission met and there was a

consensus to continue monitoring the coho salmon run but to not issue any Federal restrictions. The decisions were based on Alaska Department of Fish and Game closure was more flexible to the local subsistence user, users were allowed to fish in areas traditionally used for whitefish which was different than originally proposed. The number for coho salmon were so low both parties were not able to justify announcing a subsistence opening during the closure dates.

Also subsistence management in September had lead to the realization that managing the fishery from June 1st to September 30 may become the new normal on the Kuskokwim River. Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge needed more Staff and resources to effectively manage these salmon species for this new duration of time.

For in-season subsistence harvest. Federal subsistence fishing opportunities resulted in the harvest of 57,790 salmon from 996 interviews from the portion of the Refuge from the Fish Commission and Orutsararmiut Native Council conduct in-season harvest monitoring surveys. Most of the estimated harvest for 2022 was chinook salmon at 51 percent, at 29,300 followed by sockeye salmon 43 percent, 24,840 and chum salmon which was six percent at 3,650. All this harvest information is at the end on Page 59 where it's detailed from each opening.

Some new information from the three river index from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, a preliminary run total came out to be 143,622 chinook salmon with a total escapement of 105,774 with a harvest drainage-wide for the whole Kuskokwim to be 37,848.

Just a little bit in to how each species managed on the Kuskokwim, or how it went.

For chinook salmon, it met all of its -- they met all their weir based escapement goals which were the George River, Kogrukluk and Kwethluk. Chum salmon did not -- no, wait, where is it -- oh, the chum salmon have one escapement goal on the Kogrukluk which is 15 to 49,000, at the end of the year the weir count was 15,471, that's different from what is on here, just updated. For sockeye salmon, the Bethel sonar counted 606,400 sockeye salmon passed the Bethel sonar. And

there's one weir-based escapement goal on the Kogrukluk with an escapement of 4,400 to 17,000 and it ended up being 10,278. For coho there are two weir-based escapement goals, one on the Kogrukluk and Kwethluk. The Kogrukluk towards the end of the season was inoperable due to high water so they weren't able to go through the whole season. And on the Kwethluk River at the end of the season there was a count of 6,291 and the escapement goal for the Kwethluk is greater than 19,000 so both weirs did not meet their escapement goals for coho.

With that I'll be glad to answer any questions.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions from the Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. If not anything to add there Spencer.

MR. REARDEN: Just a little description of how we go about trying to make some decisions with our in-season management. So obviously Fish and Wildlife Service has assumed jurisdiction and we work closely with the InterTribal Fish Commission. And what they bring to the table is the local voice from up and down the river, which is very important, right, we need the buy-in of the local people to help us make good decisions.

I feel fairly fortunate that the 2022 season that we've had relative to what I'm hearing on the Yukon, we had openers, you know, we had some satisfaction. We know it's not enough. We know fish are getting smaller. We know opportunities, in general, they're getting fewer. And our biggest worry now are chum and coho, I mean those are new things. Chum two years in a row, coho the first time. So we got a lot more challenges ahead of us but I think we've got a good recipe for the right people. With the Fish Commission, they bring in expertise, they bring in other university fish biologists that are pretty high caliber people that give us a new way to look at things. We got local knowledge introduced into these meetings through the Fish Commission. We have that on our agenda each time we meet to make sure that we don't

skip over it. We try to reach out to the general public with our meetings. We had meetings set up most likely towards the end of winter is when we start hitting the road, kind of getting to the villages. We know the pandemic kind of stymied some of our efforts but we look forward to getting out there and doing the same thing again. And one of the questions we often ask and we want people to keep thinking, is what did you like or what you didn't like about how we've been doing things, good or bad, you know, we're always looking for ways to improve.

And so we kind of have an open door policy and we hope that people will still engage with us whenever we can. This is a very high priority for the Refuge. We come together and we look at what are our highest priorities but we got a very short Staff, we don't even have a fish biologist yet, we're having trouble trying to hire a fish biologist. It's over six months and we still don't have it advertised. We had -- we borrowed a fish biologist to help us with some of the interpretations of the data but we're looking to build. We're trying to hire a Deputy Manager right now. We just recently hired an assistant manager. So we feel we need to gear up a little bit because the challenges are just going to keep on building, but at the same time we look forward to what the Fish Commission has brought to the table. They get us to look at things a little differently with their expertise and different views and that's what we're here for and that's what we're supposed to be doing. And the local component is what makes it work as best we can.

But there will be more challenges, I'm afraid. I haven't seen any real good news coming our way yet and that makes me worry, but we're in it together, we got the right people, so thanks.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, Quyana. Any comments from the Council members.

MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman. A little bit comment. Concerning fishing in the Kuskokwim, you know from the mouth to the end how many setnets are set in the river. I always get curious, you know, maybe a few -- a few setnets are in the river and the other concern I have is the opening. When the ADFG opens the Federal wild -- wildlife opens we need to fix that. You know,

when I was a commercial fishermen the State of Alaska set the nets -- sent us the hours, set hours. When there's no runs they gave us six hours commercial fishing. But when the run is heavy they gave us 12 hours in the days, Monday, Wednesday, Friday we used to fish in the river, commercial fishing.

Like in the morning 6:00 a.m., opening, 12 hours, before 12 hours all the Kuskokwim River is empty. Empty. Drifters in my hometown, nobody fishing. Even though we have another six hours, but nobody going down to fish. Maybe from the Y all the way to Tuluksak, maybe the river is empty. Six hours wasted. Because of -- you know this year the weather's different. Really different. Really calm, really sunny. But in the morning it was all right, we got cold weather, sometimes -- sometimes we hit into fog and we need to start talking about controlling the Kuskokwim just like commercial fishing, a lot of boats in the morning were fishing, crowded. Sometimes I think about my elders when they're -- sometimes I think about my elders. If they see so many -- long time ago when our elders were here, when they tell us to fish, we fish. When our limit is done, we're done. We don't use dog teams no more. But only few recreations for racing in wintertime. But so many fishermens first opening, so many fishermen.Even though so many fishermen are out there it depends on their nets. If you make them good you catch, if you mend them, hung them, wrong way you will not catch fish.

So the escapement. I wonder how many escapements this year for chinooks and chums and sockeye totally going into tributaries. You know we have high water all summer long, I know. Raining. Raining all the time in July. Start raining and the high water comes in in the Kuskokwim and some of the weirs didn't work so well. I wonder when the high waters, you check out the weirs how many fish are going through or just idle for not checking.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, Phillip.

MR. MOSES: Yeah, through the Chair. Quyana, I could address a couple of those questions and I could address one of the questions that Mr. Parks had about the 6:00 a.m. I'll start off with the setnet

numbers. If you look on Page 59 on the effort, the most setnet numbers that we've seen on the Kuskokwim were 146 and that's the most that we've seen on the Kuskokwim since we've been doing this. And if you look at the top -- the top of it, when you see those 457, these are the driftnet boats, these are the amount of boats that are out during these opportunities that we are estimating with the Fish Commission and ONC, and so you could see that in the beginning there were about 457 boats, 473, 572, and then when it gets into July it gets -- it went way down to 147. But for a lot of the setnets we're consistently seeing about 70 or 80 setnets on the Kuskokwim during those openings.

As for hours, that's one of the things that Spencer talked about when we went to the villages and asked what's going good and what's going bad, a lot of the villages stated that they wanted the elders to fish early so they wanted to have it at 6:00 a.m., so that the elders could go out before all the young people wake up they said.

(Laughter)

MR. MOSES: And so that's one of the ones that we go to the villages and ask what's right, what's going right and what's going on, what would we'd like to change. And so I don't remember when that was, I think it was around 2018, that's when we started going from 6:00 a.m., to 6:00 p.m.

And as for this year, escapement again, the total escapement for chinook was 105,774.

So.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, Quyana. John.

MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is John Andrew from Kwethluk. We are changing the way we fish nowadays. Most of my friends and the people about my age, or pretty close to my age or younger they rather fish early in the morning before the heat of the day. They all said they do better the first few hours. I always like it that way so I can get done with my fishing and get my relatives they could come down and cut the fish before noon. And some of us, for this year, didn't fish setnet or driftnet in

June, our elder waited until July 3. On July 3, like I mentioned before, I did good that morning. It was a short setnet. I think I got lucky but I got up early before my other relatives could borrow my boat or run away with my setnet.

(Laughter)

MR. ANDREW: I got 82 in that morning in about three hours and I was done for the day. And I called my relatives and said the fish is waiting to work at the camp and they came down to help and gave some of them away too and then they borrowed my setnet and boat same day and then the rest of July I didn't bother to -- I didn't go out to fish no more, until I was hoping to fish for silvers because a lot of us like to salt them, freeze them, jar them and they keep longer that way because -- and if you work on fish on a rainy day they get moldy easy. And we were disappointed because one of those working group or -- or, yeah, the working group meeting we asked the State -- or the mangers there to have the Feds take over the -- because there was a conservation concern on the coho run too. We were just a little -- because we wanted at least a chance to fish for a taste of fish. And under Title VIII our people that subsist are guaranteed subsistence priority and you know we didn't see that this summer. And usually the four villages, when we met, they were talking about this one and they even asked -- I think they even asked the InterTribal Fish Commissioners the same question and they didn't follow up on it. I know they didn't -- the Department then gave it to you folks and you folks did not -- I heard -- I heard it around that the Refuge refused to take the management over (indiscernible) conservation. That was one big disappointment for us at the villages. But the people that work in there along with the State Staff, we want to (indiscernible) right now, thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana, John. Quyana, gentlemen for your report. The Kuskokwim River salmon summary. On the agenda we have the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission. Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission.

MS. SCHOMOGYI: Good afternoon.....

REPORTER: Push the little.....

MS. SCHOMOGYI: .....my name is.....

REPORTER: There you go.

MS. SCHOMOGYI: Good afternoon. Now you can hear me?

(Council nods affirmatively)

MS. SCHOMOGYI: Maybe it's good evening at this point. Through the Chair. My name is Terese Schomogyi. I'm the Programs Manager with the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission. I've been here about two years now. I'm really happy to be at my first RAC meeting in person and meet you all. So I will be providing the Fish Commission's fall update on behalf of our Commission.

So the InterTribal Fish Commission represents the 33 Federally-recognized tribes of the Kuskokwim River in fisheries management, research and monitoring. And we do this to protect the health of the salmon fishery on the Kuskokwim as well as to protect all of your traditional way of life. You can find our report on Page 60 of your meeting packet.

I'll be brief.

The first bit of the report shows our leadership and Staff, our Executive Council that was voted in in April. There are some updates to our Staff. Kevin Whitworth is our new Executive Director. He took this position in an interim role in April after Mary Peltola left to run for Congress, and since September 1st he has been our formal, official Executive Director. Andrew Magel is in the back of room, Andrew if you want to give a wave, he's been with us since August. He's our new Fisheries Technician and he's a Jesuit volunteer. And as of a week or two ago we hired an operations manager, Nikki Pollock, she was born and raised in Bethel and she's an enrolled tribal citizen at ONC. We're really happy to have her onboard.

I think Aaron Moses and Spencer Rearden from Yukon Delta gave a really good overview of our salmon management this summer. The 2022 season was the seventh season of collaborative management between the Fish Commission and Yukon Delta. We are really

grateful for that partnership. And at this point, with the model that we've established for a collaborative management we're really hoping that that can be taken up between tribes and Federal agencies throughout the state of Alaska. As Spencer said it's really good that we have local voices managing the fishery. We're really grateful for those who are involved, many of you RAC members are involved in different ways with the Fish Commission.

In April, our Commissioners elected five in-season managers, up from four in previous years, to manage the fishery with Yukon Delta. Those in-season managers are Betty Magnuson from McGrath, Megan Leary from Napaimute, Mike Williams, Sr., from Akiak, Avery Hoffman from Bethel, and Paul Cleveland from Quinhagak. So that's riverwide representation that was sitting at the table with the Federal government to manage Federal waters of the Kuskokwim River.

Aaron and Spencer gave an overview of the Joint Salmon Management Strategy that our teams worked on before and during the salmon season. And I'll give a couple updated numbers for salmon harvest that have come out just this past week. I've been working with some other members of our team on finalizing that report and we'll send it out to the public as soon as it's available.

But in Federal waters of the Kuskokwim River, specifically between Tuntutuliak and Akiak, we estimate that about 58,940 total salmon were harvested, 29,920 of these were kings, 25,400 of these were reds and 3,630 of these were chum. We don't have in-season harvest estimates for coho salmon at this time and these numbers will be expanded and refined with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's post season household survey.

During the 2022 salmon season we operated several salmon research and monitoring programs. These included a smolt out-migration or screw trap on the Kwethluk River that counted and identified salmon smolt as they were leaving the Kwethluk system. We partner this program with the Kwethluk River weir which counts the adult salmon that go into spawn so we can get a sense of how many fish leave the river and how many come back. We also

operated the Takotna River weir. We operated our community based harvest monitoring program in eight villages in the lower river. And with some other information provided by ONC and by Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge we're able to produce in-season harvest estimates after different openers with that information that we got directly from local fishermen in those villages. We also piloted an environmental DNA project at the Kwethluk River weir. This is also known as eDNA and essentially what it does is takes water samples from the river and filters out different fish DNA found in fish slime, fish excrements, things like that and then we can analyze that DNA in the lab after the season and get a sense of how many fish were in the river at that time. We're hoping to expand that project in coming seasons and hoping to analyze those samples at UAF this winter.

As for advocacy work, we've been involved at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council pushing for reductions in bycatch in the Bering Sea Aleutian Island pollock fisheries as well as for increasing tribal involvement and the involvement of indigenous knowledge in their processes. We have also submitted some proposals to the Board of Fish. Serena Fitka mentioned Proposal 140 about reducing commercial fishing time in Area M. That will be discussed further at this meeting, I think. That's something that we have supported. And we're also now a part of the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Tribal Consortium with the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission, AVCP, TCC and Kawerak. And this tribal consortium represents 118 tribes in Western and Interior Alaska with the goal of restoring, maintaining and conserving the health and diversity of the Bering Sea ecosystem from rivers to the ocean. This tribal consortium has been doing a lot of work, for example, helping organize the tribal consultations that the Department of Interior and NOAA put on earlier this month here in Bethel and also in Fairbanks. That's something we're actively working within and with those tribal partners to push for restoration of our salmon populations.

And I also wanted to give a brief overview of our Kuskokwim River salmon situation report, which looks like this. It's not in your meeting booklet but I believe Brooke gave it to you all ahead of time, and if not -- oh, she'll give it to you now and for members of the public it's on the back

table, you can grab a copy if you'd like. We didn't finalize this before our meeting materials were due but we're happy to have this first version of our situation report right now. And I'll let you look it over in your time, but to be brief, it discusses the multi-species, multi-year salmon collapses that we're experiencing on the Kuskokwim with the declines of chinook, chum and now coho salmon. And it walks through the data, the Western scientific data but also indigenous knowledge and local observations and uses all of this information to build a story of what's going on on the Kuskokwim. Some things that we note in this report are that because of the continued sacrifices and conservation efforts by Kuskokwim subsistence communities, we've been able to meet chinook salmon escapement goals, but those sacrifices mean that subsistence harvesters are only meeting about one third of their long-term subsistence -- chinook salmon subsistence harvest needs. Chum salmon remain continually low on the Kuskokwim River. The 2022 chum salmon returns at the weirs that they have monitoring chum were down 70 to 84 percent of long-term averages. And 2022 is the third year of an alarmingly steep decline of coho salmon. 2022 abundance of coho was down 57 percent at the Bethel test fishery and data shows that these declines began around 2019.

There are lots of sockeye in the Kuskokwim it seems, which is something we're grateful for but it is difficult for our subsistence communities to harvest those with all the different gillnet restrictions that go on while the sockeye are running.

In this situation report we also talk about some of the factors causing these salmon declines. We know there are lots of different things at play. But it's very clear to us that the intercept of chum salmon in the South Alaska Peninsula, also known as Area M, as well as bycatch of chinook and chum salmon in the Bering Sea pollock fishery definitely have a hand in these salmon declines. And, moreover, they're something that we can control directly through management actions. So we focus on these. There's some new data in this report that shows that about 57 percent, on average, of the chum salmon caught in the Area M June Fishery were bound for Coastal Western Alaska rivers which includes the Kuskokwim River. That's almost 10 times the impact that the Bering Sea pollock fishery chum bycatch has on intercepting chum

salmon bound towards our area.

I think I'll wrap up there. I have some more I could share but I want to be respectful of everyone's time and give you all time to look over the situation report. So with that, Quyana, and I'm happy to take any questions you might have.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Quyana. Any questions from the Council members.

Go ahead, Jackie.

MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana, Chair. I might be asking too soon but I remember we spoke of documenting the local knowledge and is that for the near future to start or has it started yet?

MS. SCHOMOGYI: Thanks for the question, Jackie. Through the Chair. What Jackie is referring to at a strategic planning retreat that the Fish Commission had earlier this year, our Staff was directed to begin documenting indigenous knowledge which is something that we're really excited to do. We have applied for a grant with Indian Collective to begin planning for some of that, have yet to hear back. We're actively pursuing more funding to try to figure out what we want to do. So if you all have suggestions about indigenous knowledge you think would be useful for the Fish Commission to document and how that might look, come find me, I'm very interested to hear what you have to say.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Through the Chair. Some of that traditional knowledge is already being started. If you want to get a hold of Janessa Esquible, she's currently working on a project called Kusko (In Yup'ik) where she gets historical knowledge, past history knowledge of how fishing was conducted, how it's being done now and what our future is going to be looking like and how we're going to be -- changes of our traditional practices. There's going to be a meeting this November that you might be participating in so just to let you know there's -- if you want to partner with them they would appreciate all the help

they can get.

Thanks.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Response -- no -- okay, Quyana, Alissa. Any other questions.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not, thank you very much for your update and report.

MS. SCHOMOGYI: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Going down the agenda we have a missing person, meaning that one who was going to give the report on the -- okay, I was looking at a note that she had disappeared but she's back, the humpback fish project update -- whitefish project update.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. I believe Frank Harris is on the line and he's prepared to give that update.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

MS. MCDAVID: Frank, are you with us.

MR. HARRIS: Yeah, I'm here, can you hear me.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead.

MR. HARRIS: Okay. Yeah, good afternoon, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. For the record my name's Frank Harris, I'm a Fisheries Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kenai Fisheries Resource Office.

And I just wanted to present a little bit about the -- it's actually a broad whitefish project that we're conducting. It's an effort to collect the baseline information and address subsistence fishery concerns about seeing fewer broad whitefish than in the past. The Orutsararmiut Native Council, the Native Village of Napaimute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have begun a four year study of broad whitefish spawning in the Kuskokwim River near

McGrath, Alaska. So broad whitefish have multiple spawning areas but this is just the one area that we're studying and it's near McGrath. This project was funded by OSM during the 2022 FRMP funding cycle.

The purpose of this study is to estimate the number of broad whitefish on the spawning grounds between McGrath and Medfra, estimate harvest rates of the spawning aggregate in the Kuskokwim River and describe population demographics, such as age and weight.

To accomplish this U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with the help of ONC will be using electrofishing techniques to capture, mark and recapture these tagged broad whitefish. Since most broad whitefish spawn every other year, so they'll spawn multiple times throughout their life but usually it's every other year, it will take several years of sampling to estimate the total number on spawning in the area. Tagging will occur in the fall and last about six to eight weeks.

During 2022, this fall, we began on August 22nd and tagging ended October 11th, just as the ice started to run. In 2022 we had one tagging crew and we tagged 628 broad whitefish. In 2023 we will have two crews sampling to maximize the number of fish we can tag. We anticipate similar timing for the remaining three years.

Excuse me one second here.

These tags, they're long and grey and they are located near the dorsal fin. They have a tag number, each one is individually -- has an individual tag number and then each one has a 1 800 phone number listed on it to call the Fish and Wildlife Service to report the tag. Additionally, tags can be reported to ONC, NVN, and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

After these broad whitefish are done spawning in mid- to late October, broad whitefish will drop back down stream of McGrath and overwinter. Some of these fish will travel as far down stream as Tuntutuliak and we know from previous tagging studies that some of these fish will be harvested down stream of McGrath. As part of our study we will need to estimate mortality from the harvest and this is where

the help of the subsistence fishers come in. When you catch a tagged broad whitefish, we would ask that you call that 1900 number and we'd like to know the date caught, location, tag number, your name, the village you live in, and a phone number so we can call you back if we need to and we're going to enter this into a monthly drawing for a gas card. Additionally, there will be a yearly grand prize gas card. It's going to be a substantial amount.

The data from these tagged recoveries will be used to estimate from this population and inform researchers how many tags are no longer in the population and are available for recapture in the future. So getting all the tagged fish reported is very important for accurate estimates and we appreciate everyone's help on this.

I thank you for your time and I'm available to answer any questions you may have.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions from the Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: If not thank you for your report. It would be nice to have a frozen.....

(Laughter)

MR. HARRIS: All right, thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....whitefish -- it would be nice to have a frozen whitefish right now.

(Laughter)

TUNTUTULIAK: (Indiscernible) from Tuntutuliak.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, go ahead Tuntutuliak, make it short please. Thank you.

TUNTUTULIAK: (Indiscernible) people that are studying on the whitefish and they're -- the beavers are making dams where they're going to spawn and there are lots of pike -- the pike predators, there

are -- they're good for -- the pikes are good for fishing springtime, we eat them around -- and them black fish, they got good eggs, when we eat them, we can eat them raw, cooked or frozen. And I like the study right now. I haven't heard about that -- but the pikes are really (indiscernible).

Quyana.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you for that information.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, Quyana. If there's no other comments regarding the humpback whitefish project we'll go on to the next agenda item and that's the proposal presentation procedure and I'll ask Brooke to provide that.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we're at the point of the meeting where the Council is about to take up the Alaska Department of Fish and Game fisheries proposals. Just as a reminder there is a procedure for each proposal that we follow. That could be found on Page 119 of your meeting books. There's also a handout of the procedures, standalone, on the back table back there. Just as a reminder to the Council, for your regional proposal, there's only one so you have to take that one up. But for the crossover proposals, if we -- I guess the Council needs to sort of decide before Staff presents the analysis if those are something you do want to take up or if you want to defer to the RACs in those regions. If the Fisheries Staff does begin to present the analysis, at that point we will have to go through the whole procedure for those proposals. So just a little housekeeping announcement about the proposals.

Thank you.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead, Alissa.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. I propose an agenda change that we start taking up proposals first thing in the morning. I'm a little bit brain fried right now and we're going to get bogged down and we're going to be sitting here all night trying to figure out what we're -- what

process that we're just now hearing. So I think if it's okay we take up the proposals in the morning and move on to the next agenda item.

(Pause)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, we'll go into the proposals tomorrow morning when everybody has had a chance to dream about them all night.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: So let's go on to the temporary -- Agenda Item No. D, on Temporary Fisheries Special Actions.

(Pause)

MS. ROGERS: What page is it on?

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Page -- it doesn't say.....

MS. ROGERS: It doesn't say.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....but it will be before -- 213.

(Pause)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Whenever you're ready.

MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. Good evening. My name is Kevin Foley for the record and I am a Fish Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. This is my first time appearing before you and I want to say thank you. I would be lying if I didn't say I was a little nervous right now but I am very humbled by the amount of collective knowledge that this Council represents. So thank you.

I'm here to provide you with information and bring to the Council's attention a temporary Federal special action that OSM is in the very early stages of our analysis. This is just a briefing and is not an action item for this meeting.

The temporary Federal special action request, FSA23-01 was submitted by the Native Village of Quinhagak and requests to limit the harvest of chinook and chum salmon on the Kanektok River in June to only Federally-qualified rural residents until the next regulatory cycle. The request notes that chum salmon throughout Western Coastal Alaska are in serious decline with the poorest returns on record and escapement goals through the AYK region are largely being unmet. They also state that chinook salmon have been in a long period of decline statewide.

This request was originally received by OSM as a proposal to modify Federal subsistence fishing regulations during the 2023 and 2025 fisheries regulatory cycle. However, the application was received after the application period closed and could not proceed during this cycle. In June of this year, OSM Staff worked with the Native Village of Quinhagak to have the proposal resubmitted as a temporary special action request for the 2023 and 2024 seasons.

(Pause)

MR. FOLEY: We are just starting the process of analyzing this request and don't have additional information to provide you at this time. As it is a temporary special action request there will be public hearings to seek input. There will also be tribal and ANCSA Corporation consultations. As we received this request so early the Council will take up this at your winter 2023 meeting and provide a recommendation to the Federal Subsistence Board.

Once, again, for the record, I'm Kevin, a Fish Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Members of the Council for your time. This concludes my presentation on FSA23-01. And I'm standing by for any questions you may have regarding this agenda item.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Go ahead.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. Do you have any paper documentation on this or justifications and all the analysis of this yet or is this just an introduction that this has came

about?

MR. FOLEY: Through the Chair. Ms. Rogers. This is just an introductory information for the Council to be looking out for in the future.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any other questions.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Going down the agenda items we're going to take the fish 2024 fisheries tomorrow morning too as well, so we'll go down to Item F, Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program updates. Is someone online or someone in person going to provide the update.

(Pause)

MR. FOLEY: One moment, Mr. Chair.

(Pause)

MR. FOLEY: We're taking the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Update, is that correct?

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. Again, this is.....

MS. MCDAVID: Sorry, Kevin. Just to jump in. We're going to skip the FRMP update and the PIN update because there'll be more discussion for that and we'll do that in the morning if that's okay, and move on to the Partners update if that's okay.

MR. FOLEY: Okay. Yeah, that's fine.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you.

MR. FOLEY: Thank you. Let me just find that please.

(Pause)

MR. FOLEY: All right. Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. Once again my name is Kevin Foley and I'm your Fish Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. On October 20th the Office of Subsistence Management posted a notice of funding opportunity for the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program. This is a competitive grant for Alaska Native and rural non-profit organizations. The intent of this program is to strengthen Alaska Native and rural involvement in Federal subsistence management by providing salary funds to organizations so they can hire a professional biologist, social scientist or educator. The grant also provides funds for science and culture camps and paid student internships.

More information on this funding opportunity is available on grants.gov and grant solutions. You may also contact Karen Hyer by way of email of phone and Karen's contact information is at the bottom of Page 222 of your Council booklet.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. This concludes the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program update.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Thank you. Any questions from the Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I just have one question. So the grant can be for anything to monitor projects, other than fish, or just fisheries related?

MR. FOLEY: Perhaps my colleagues in the room may be better informed to address that question.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Kevin. Yeah, this is Pippa Kenner with OSM. I'm not the most familiar person with the Partners Program but I do know that basically what it does is funds positions, like for instance in our non-profits, so ONC and Napaimute, those organizations both have Partners, their positions are funded through our Partners Program, it's like an internship. Then the other part of it is the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and that's where they apply for funding to do research.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Follow up question. Most of the fishery monitoring programs are in the in-river systems, yet there's very few out along the Coast where people also harvest fish and salmon and they don't seem to have an opportunity to work on monitoring fisheries other than the test fisheries that some of the villages have been involved with, Fish and Wildlife, or Fish and Game in trying to monitor the fish that are heading to the Yukon River and I think that there should be some opportunities created for those on the Coast, not just for salmon but for other fisheries like halibut, whitefish, tomcods and other fish that they harvest for subsistence purposes.

So that's just my comment regarding this here.

Okay, thank you. And we'll go on to the next item, Item G, Joint Meeting North American Workshop.

MS. ROGERS: It's 6:00 o'clock.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I know, just one more item, if we go through one more item I can say that we almost went through the full page of the agenda.

(Laughter)

MS. MCDAVID: This will be quick.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. My name is Tom Plank and I am a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. And I am resenting an announcement about a caribou and ungulate conference next year that hopefully will be of interest to Council members. I'll also be seeking your input on a couple matters related to the conference. An informational flyer about the conference can be found in your meeting books on Page 223.

A joint meeting of the North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate Conference will be held in Anchorage from May 8th through the 12th of 2023. The meeting will bring together an international

group of managers, researchers and indigenous and local knowledge holders who will want to share their knowledge of caribou, muskoxen, Dall sheep, moose and reindeer. The theme for the meeting is crossing boundaries. Arctic ungulates regularly cross landscape boundaries connecting ecological processes between different systems. This necessitates collaboration across geographical boundaries and also calls for crossing boundaries between Western Science and local and indigenous knowledge. The conference will include preliminary sessions on co-management, the status of caribou globally, integrating Western science with indigenous knowledge and the effects of climate change on caribou. Field trips, workshops, research talks, symposiums and a poster session will also be part of the conference. The conference web address is included on the flier in your meeting books and I encourage you to visit that website, and also for more detailed information about abstract submissions that are due by December 15th, 2022.

So before I move on to my two topics to discuss are there any questions.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any questions from the Council members.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: I just want to share you a story that I heard last week. I got a relative of mine that owns reindeer up at Stebbins area and he says that people come around hunting for caribou and occasionally they shoot one of his reindeer that he owns so he's trying to get people to recognize that there's a difference between a reindeer and a caribou but for most of us that have never seen them they all look alike. So I just wanted to share that story and I thank you for your presentation. And with that we'll break for tonight and come back tomorrow morning.

Yes?

MS. MCDAVID: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I'm ready for dinner too, but we have to.....

(Laughter)

MS. MCDAVID: I believe Tom needs the

Council to do one small action, at least, and that is to potentially choose a member of this Council and an alternate or two to potentially attend this conference next year. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Oh, okay.

MR. PLANK: Also I had a second topic to go over as well.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, go ahead.

MR. PLANK: Go ahead, thank you, Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: And then address that appointment of Council members to participate in the May conference.

MR. PLANK: All right. So the first topic is we're asking for input, as a Council, one of the events that will take place during the conference is a facilitated discussion on Alaska State and Federal ungulate management. This session is intended to be a neutral forum for Council members, such as yourselves, State Fish and Game Advisory Committee members, Federal and State agency Staff and other interested parties to discuss ungulate management in Alaska specifically regarding harvest regulations.

So my question for the Council is, what topics and issues would you like to be discussed during the session and it could be anything of concern related to harvest regulations and ungulate management.

So, Mr. Chair, now I'll turn the discussion over to you on this topic before I move on to the second topic and your suggestions would be very important in setting the discussion agenda.

(Pause)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: (Inaudible - no mic)

REPORTER: Turn your mic on.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Oh, sorry about that. I was just having an executive session with our

elder -- with Phillip here.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Talking about moose, caribou with anglers, that's what they call ungulate animals but I know moose is not necessarily that but (In Yup'ik)

INTERPRETER: When they talk about the caribou during the meeting, he's asking him if he wants to attend.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: What about you Jackie.

MS. CLEVELAND: About what, our suggestions?

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah, I'm recommending or asking if you would want to represent the Council.

MS. CLEVELAND: Maybe.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yeah.

MS. CLEVELAND: I'll say yes but it's so far away. Quyana, through the Chair. And, Quyana Chair for (In Yup'ik), I would accept it.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: What about you Phillip.

MR. PETER: Yeah. Yes.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Good. So you got two names already.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, let's go on to your next topic.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was actually my second topic. A critical component of the conference is making sure that local knowledge holders are able to attend and participate. The Office of Subsistence Management is able to provide financial

support to send one member of each Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to attend the conference. So we're asking the Council to nominate a member to attend and participate. Again, the conference will be held May 8th through the 12th in Anchorage and OSM will cover all expenses such as travel and conference registration. One expectation of the nominated Council member is that they will be an active participant in the State and Federal Ungulate Management Symposium for which you just provided -- you know, for the input.

So you're going to go with those two.....

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

MR. PLANK: .....with Jackie and Phillip.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

MR. PLANK: Okay.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: You could write my name down because I'm sending myself over anyway.

(Pause)

MS. ROGERS: You could put my name down too, I'm going to send myself over, I'm going to be at your conference.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay. Three names. One volunteering and two that's been appointed. So if one of them doesn't make it then the volunteer will.....

MS. ROGERS: I'll be there.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: .....will be there.

MS. ROGERS: I'm not missing it.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Any other.

MR. PLANK: Unless there's any more questions that concludes the agenda item. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Council and I'm certainly looking forward to it.

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, thanks for the report, and the Council members will be there. The appointed ones and the one volunteer.

With that I think that we're going to start moving along with the agenda faster tomorrow, so we'll take a break for tonight and be back here at 9:00 to start over. So we'll probably take care of the faster ones first before we go to the proposals, that might take some time. So if there's no objections from the Council members.

(No objections)

ACTING CHAIR NANENG: Okay, with that, thank you very much we'll see you tomorrow morning.

(Off record)

(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
)ss.
STATE OF ALASKA)

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered ___ through ____ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I taken electronically on the 27th day of October;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 10th day of December 2022.

_____
Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/26