YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

TELECONFERENCE - Alaska
October 7, 2020
9:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alissa Rogers, Chair
Thomas Alstrom
John Andrew
James Landlord
Carl Maxie
Raymond Oney
Phillip Peter
Richard Slats

Regional Council Coordinator, Eva Patton

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Teleconference - 10/7/2020)

(On record)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: So it looks like we have everyone here this morning we'll go ahead and call this meeting to order at 9:03 a.m., October 7th 2020. I want to welcome you all to the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Advisory Council meeting. We are going to start today with a public testimony. We're going to be keeping it from 5 to 10 minutes at minimum.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, sorry, 5 to 10 minutes maximum, as much as possible, we're going to be trying to get through our agenda today since this is our last day to meet. So our next meeting, which will be in the wintertime after -- so if we would -- before you start go ahead and say your first name, your last name, your affiliation or if you're representing yourself. And then we'll go ahead and get started. But before you guys, I just want to remind everyone please star six to mute your phone or doublecheck on your mics on your touchtone cell phone. If you see your cell phone, go ahead and push the mic button with the line across it that will mute this phone. We really want to be respectful to those that are speaking and to those that are trying to listen to the conversation. We want to keep those side conversations to a minimum and try to keep the lines clear for everyone who are participating.

Thank you, I greatly appreciate it. We'll go ahead and get started with public testimony, the floor is open.

MR. OWEN: Good morning. This is Moses Owen. I'm from Akiak Native Community. I'm a tribal council member.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I'm sorry, can I get your first and last name.

MR. OWEN: I thought you were listening. This is Moses Owen from Akiak Native

Community, Akiak Tribal Council.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Moses.

MR. WILLIAMS: Mike Williams, Chief Akiak Native Community. Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Do you guys have any public testimony you want to do this morning. We were asking folks who wanted to do public testimony or tribal testimony on non-agenda items.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Good morning. For those that just joined us we are currently doing public testimony and tribal testimony on non-agenda items this morning. We will have another opportunity at lunch time. If we don't have any more comments from the public or tribal comments.

The floor is open.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Alrighty, so I'm going to go ahead and call it. The public and tribal comments on non-agenda items will be available again at lunchtime today, and we'll go ahead and do another one then.

All right. We're going to start and pick up where we left off. Item No. 10B, which is on Page 2. It is the 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program by OSM fisheries anthropology which is found on Page 100 of your Council book. I believe this would be going to Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Yes, hi, Alissa. This is Pippa Kenner with OSM.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Yeah, you're welcome. I'm sitting here at my home in Anchorage, and I want to start out by saying this morning was -- I'm feeling how I would so much rather be meeting in person and how much easier this would be so I just wanted to thank that how much I've enjoyed being with you all.

Given that, I'm going to start my presentation. Yeah, the presentation begins on 110 of your meeting book. It's also posted at the web page. But I'm going to read these materials to you beginning on Page 110 and at the end of my presentation we're going to ask the Council to approve priority information needs for the Kuskokwim region and the Yukon region.

So the Office of Subsistence Management administers the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and funds research that helps manage subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands in Alaska. The Monitoring Program also supports collaboration and cooperation among Federal agencies, the State of Alaska and Alaska Native and other rural organizations.

Every two years the Office of Subsistence Management announces a funding opportunity for projects that address priority information needs identified by our Regional Advisory Councils. The Office of Subsistence Management works with the Councils to identify issues of local concern and knowledge gaps. This information is used to develop regional priorities that guide research in proposal development. Three primary types of research are -- I'm sorry, I'm actually getting some messages on my phone at the same time and I'm not quite sure how to turn them off so just a second -- here we go -- okay.

Three primary types of research are requested. Harvest monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge and stock, status and trends. Harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge projects provide information directly from subsistence users, including descriptions of fishing effort and harvest and use patterns. Stock, status and trend projects address fish abundance, migration and behavior in specific fisheries. Research priorities that fall outside that scope of the Monitoring Program are not considered, or not funded, and they include projects focused on habitat protection, mitigation, restoration and enhancement, hatchery propagation, restoration enhancement and supplementation, and contaminant assessment evaluation and monitoring. These kinds of projects are most appropriately addressed by the local land management or regulatory agencies.

Since 2000 the Office of Subsistence

Management has funded 113 projects in the Kuskokwim region and 126 projects in the Yukon region through the Monitoring Program. These lists are in your meeting materials so they're also in your books starting on Page 111.

So last Wednesday and Thursday volunteer members from the Eastern Interior Alaska, Western Interior Alaska and the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Councils met to exchange information concerning priority information needs for the upcoming notice of funding opportunity. We started by reviewing the most recent list developed by the Councils and we revised the list by adding and removing items. The revised list was faxed or emailed to all the Council members on -- I think on Friday and Monday. And these materials are also posted to the website.

So volunteers from your Council were Trapper John Andrew, Alissa Rogers, Ray Oney and Carl Maxie for the Yukon [sic] region, and Ray Oney, Richard Slats and Tom Alstrom for the Yukon region. So usually we'd be handing these out at the Council meeting but, instead, I'm going to go ahead and read them to you. This is the list of 15 items for the Kuskokwim region and I'll go ahead and read them to you.

So this is for the Kuskokwim and these are the 15 priority information needs that were put together by the group of Council volunteers.

1. Impacts of climate change and continued harvest and use of fish and impacts of climate change on fish. For example, on fish migration, spawning and life cycle.

2. Knowledge of population, reproduction and health of spawning habitat for declining humpback whitefish populations.

3. Documentation of oral histories describing salmon harvest methods in the Kuskokwim River drainage, specifically in the period before the development of the modern commercial fishery.

4. Reliable quantitative and/or qualitative estimates of salmon run size, escapement and harvest in the Kuskokwim River drainage, including Kuskokwim Bay tributaries.

5. Exploring new and cost effective methods for conducting in-season salmon run and harvest assessment in the Kuskokwim River drainage with an emphasis on community based monitoring.

6. Estimates of quality of escapement measures to help inform salmon stock assessments, for example potential egg deposition, age, size and sex composition spawners advancing genetic baselines.

7. Improved Kuskokwim River drainagewide and sub-stock specific salmon run size and timing forecasts.

8. Distribution, abundance, conditions and survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon in the Kuskokwim River drainage.

9. Traditional ecological knowledge of fishes.

10. Information sharing between stakeholders and agencies concerning salmon conservation in the Kuskokwim River drainage, for example outreach to villages using the media and other methods.

11. The meaning and significance of sharing, barter and/or customary trade of subsistence foods in the context of the social, cultural and economic life of people in the lower Kuskokwim drainage.

12. Effects of environmental stresses such as heat stress on salmon mortality during adult up river migration and/or pre-spawn mortality within spawning tributaries.

13. Effects of ichthyophonus infection on chinook and chum salmon mortality and spawning success.

14. Assessment of incidental chinook salmon mortality with gillnets with particular consideration for delayed mortality from entanglement or direct mortality from drop-outs, for example loss of chinook salmon from six inch mesh nets.

And the final one is collect baseline

information on the resident fish community to better understand potential impacts and to assess impacts of proposed development projects.

We are seeking your comments on this list of priority information needs. We will repeat this process with the Western Interior Alaska Council at its meeting next.

Thank you, Madame Chair, members of the Council. I'm ready to discuss this list with you. After the Council has approved its priority information needs for the Kuskokwim region we'll move on to the Yukon region.

Thank you, Madame Chair. That's the end of my presentation.

So to reiterate this is an action item and we are looking to change, add to and remove from this list and then have the Council approve it.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Pippa. Do we have any comments or questions or discussion at this time with Pippa.

MR. MAXIE: Good morning. This is Carl Maxie in Napaskiak.

MS. KENNER: Hi.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Carl.

MR. MAXIE: Yeah, good morning, I have a question with Kuskokwim region. Carl, John, Phillip and Alissa were on for the Kuskokwim River. Thank you.

MS. KENNER: Thank you. This is Pippa, thank you very much.

MR. WILLIAMS: Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Hi, this is Pippa.

MR. WILLIAMS: Mike Williams, Akiak Native Community. Yeah, thanks for the report. I think, you know, we've been overly concerned about the

Yukon River and also, you know, we haven't been meeting our subsistence -- annual -- you know, subsistence needs on the Kuskokwim for quite some time. And I'm wondering how these impacts are, you know, I'm just wondering how some of the families are going to survive in the winter when the returns are not there in the Yukon and the Kuskokwim. And I know that we have concerns for our chums this summer. And I think -- you know other has been, you know, less dog teams to feed with our dog salmon and -- but -- but we're trying to look at, you know, what the returns were and how, you know, how is it -- how are the communities going to deal with that, you know, possible climate change impact, impacts of the high seas fishery or other commercial fisheries. And, you know, we're -- we've been severely impacted on the Kuskokwim for quite some time now, especially since 2012/2013. And we're just, you know, wondering how those impacts are going to affect all of our villages in both rivers.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Williams. At this point we need to have a motion on the floor to begin discussing 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, if we could go ahead and get a motion on the floor to open up for discussion and justification. That'd be greatly appreciated.

MR. PETER: Madame Chair, this is Phillip. I'd like a motion for discussion on this 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Peter. Can we get a second.

MR. ONEY: Second, Ray Oney.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Mr. Oney. The floor is now open for continued discussion. We'll go ahead and hear from Council members and then we'll probably open the floor later for public.

Do we have any Council members who have questions about the projects that we discussed.

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr.

Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Yes, this is John Andrew in Kwethluk. Last few years -- last few years when we're fishing out here, every year we get more jacks, the chinook are getting smaller, same way with the red. When we're allowed six and under when I go out six inch 25 fathoms, I can see them -- on a calm day I can see them hit when -- hitting the net but when we pull up -- pull in our nets there's hardly any, only a few. And if I switch to 5.5 I get more small reds and small jacks. That's what we've been noticing the last few years. And we've been catching fish that have sores and white puss in them, mostly in the chums and some in -- chums and reds and some in kings. This climate change is really making a mess out of them.

And then on those intercept fisheries I always say trawl fisheries are the biggest predators out in the ocean, the same with False Pass area. And we think to think about how it's affecting all our tributaries where they come back to -- when they come back to their river of origins to spawn. Most of them don't make it up there anymore when the water's warm and low.

Yeah, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Andrew. Pippa, I had a really quick question. For the project numbers for the Kuskokwim River are you needing a specific amount of numbers, projects that you want us to pick out as what we believe is a priority or do you -- or are these are already in a priority of what you believe are most important.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Alissa for that question. This is Pippa Kenner. So the list isn't in any specific order and we do it that way, that means that these are considered the priority. These are the priority information that we need to collect. And I'm not -- I'm asking you to either add to or remove from the list and then approve it. Then what will happen is that when we send out the notice of funding opportunity for people to start applying for this money they will be addressed to address one of the priorities in this list.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

MS. KENNER: So the short -- yeah, yeah, so the short answer is we're not trying to prioritize them within this list.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. So we're just adding or removing items for projects that we think are important to the Kuskokwim region, correct.

MS. KENNER: Exactly. And, of course, it's not actually projects, it's actually -- this is the information we need and we're looking for people to develop research that will get us this information.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Ah, okay, now I understand. All right. Kuskokwim folks on Page 111 and on Page 112, continuing on Page 113 you will see the Kuskokwim region projects funded, these are line items or subjects that we need information on for the Kuskokwim River so.....

MS. KENNER: Oh, oh, oh, Alissa, I want to back you up a little bit.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MS. KENNER: I want to back you up. The -- I see what you're saying now because these are the materials that are in the book, right. So in the book are the projects that have been funded since 2020. So these are actual -- you are right, thee are actual projects that have been funded and that we already have the results from.

What I'm talking about what we're doing right now is we're putting together a list of priority information needs that the Council puts together this list about what it thinks we need to know about in order to manage the subsistence fisheries. And this list was emailed and/or faxed to you. And because not everybody might have it in front of them, I read that list to you, and it's the list that I read that I'm asking you to approve.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Standby.

(Pause)

MS. KENNER: The deadline for getting materials for the book was quite a long time ago and so

we don't have this list together in time to get it into the book. And normally at the meeting we'd hand it out to you but we can't do that right now.

(Pause)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. It's so much easier having it right in front of me.

MS. KENNER: I know.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Does the Council, do you guys have the 2022 draft Kuskokwim region priority information needs list in front of you guys. It should be about four pages long and it was sent from Pippa Kenner on Monday.

MS. KENNER: And it was faxed to John Andrew and Mr. Maxie, and I had spoken to them and we faxed it to the tribal office in their communities but that doesn't mean that they're able to have it right in front of them.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS:

MS. KENNER: So one of the.....

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair.

MS. KENNER: Oh, go ahead, sorry.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair, this is Eva.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, Eva.

MS. PATTON: I'm wondering maybe if you would be able to repeat that list since we went through it quickly, if it would be possible to repeat that list or go through it one at a time for the Council to consider.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, do it one at a time. That's a great idea, Eva, I'm totally down with that.

MS. KENNER: And I also think that the Council -- this is Pippa. And the Council members who

volunteered to be in this group they're also with us right now, Alissa you were one of them, so it would be great for you to, you know, contribute to the conversation about what you heard discussed at that meeting with Western Interior Council members.

Okay so the first one is:

Impacts of climate change and continued harvest and use of fish and impacts of climate change on fish. For example, on fish migration, spawning and life cycle.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Council, the first bulletin that's on there, I guess, do you feel this is important or do you want to have this one removed.

MR. PETER: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead.

MR. PETER: Yeah, this is Phillip.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Phillip.

MR. PETER: You know this is really important.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MR. PETER: And we need to clean out the tributaries, rivers where fish were spawning. When I travel to these three tributaries, Kwethluk River and Kasigluk River and Kisaralik River I see a lot of debris in those rivers. Like in -- especially in spring break up, a lot of debris going out -- fills up the river with debris where fish can't swim. And also increasing a lot of beaver dams. When you clean out, you know, travel for moose hunting or summer for fish, it's really, you know, a lot of mess, some of them are a lot of mess of debris. We need to do something about those tributaries where fish are spawning.

Is there some way we could get the funding for hiring people to work on the tributaries. I seen it on TV in Anchorage, all over, big states.

That's my question.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Peter. This is Pippa, through the Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Pippa. I was just going to say do we have any line items for tributary research.

MS. KENNER: Well, we do for tributary research but it's tributary research of fishes. And these obstacles to river travel from beaver dams isn't in the purview of this Program. At the beginning of the Program, around 2000, the Federal Subsistence Board put together some guidelines about where this funding should go and we determined that the priority should be research on fish and people's harvest and use patterns rather than, you know, habitat protection or blockages in streams and that kind of thing.

So the answer, Mr. Peter, is unfortunately no, that's not generally where this funding goes.

MR. SLATS: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead.

MR. SLATS: Yes, this is Richard. Are we considering both the Kuskokwim and the -- the draft Kuskokwim and Yukon region priority information needs?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes. Richard, they're just asking for the Kuskokwim region first. And the email it will be the second attachment.

MR. SLATS: Yeah, I received the email, both of them, I believe, and I'm looking at them, I wasn't able to print them out. But I was just wondering which one we're looking at now.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: It would be the second attachment in the email, the Kuskokwim region one.

MR. SLATS: Okay, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yep, no problem.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair, Ray Oney here.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Oney.

MR. ONEY: Thank you. Thank you, Madame Chair. F or the record Ray Oney, Alakanuk.

I think you hit the nail right on the head at the beginning of this first paragraph, first bullet, impacts of climate change. Climate change is impacting a lot of the thing that we rely on from fish to just about everything we depend on. Climate change is affecting everything. We see it in our nation, we see it in our state. And we see it happening right before our eyes. Climate change has contributed to a lot of the things that are dying off.

As we heard from those comments that we heard at the YRDFA teleconference over the summer. Where there used to be bears that rely on these salmon, we don't see no bears there anymore.

Climate change is here it's going to stay with us for a long, long time. That's the number 1 thing that's contributing to the loss of habitat, everything that we talked about as we're trying to address these things. Climate change is the cause for things like we're seeing happening right before our eyes. I don't know how we're going to try to study these fish when they're dying off and there's nothing left to study no more. We're at that point and we're seeing the results already happening. Commercial fishing on the lower Yukon has been happening since the late 50s, early 60s and this is the first time that we've seen commercial fishing on the Yukon not happen. A lot of our people depend on this so they could continue their way of life, continue their subsistence activities to provide for the winter.

Again, there's nothing. There's nothing to put away. There's no more. It's gone. That's what we need to address to those people that are raping and pillaging the resources that we depend on to sustain our way of life. We're fighting it. We're fighting it every year and it's going to get worse until we know exactly how we're going to change the impacts of this climate change. It's going to affect the spawning grounds, it's going to affect the fish

migration and the life cycle and we're part of that cycle as in-river users and we're crying out and who's going to listen to us.

We need to make known to those people, especially the high seas fisheries that are the most, because we know that's a contributing factor to the loss of salmon on both the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers.

And again, climate change is the cause for everything that's causing these domino effects that we see like the bears that aren't there, the fish that aren't there in the spawning grounds. Who's going to listen to us. Who's going to hear us. Time and time again we talk to National Marine Fisheries, fisheries are still going on, bycatch is still high. How much more time have we got to save these runs. To let people know what we're going through on both the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers.

Those are my comments.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Ray.

MR. ALBERTSON: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: First and last name.

MR. ALBERTSON: Lamont Albertson.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Lamont, we're taking up Council member comments first. I have you listed as public as the first item -- first person on the public comments.

MR. ALBERTSON: Thank you, very much, Alissa.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: You're welcome.

MR.ALBERTSON: Thank you, Ma'am.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: You're welcome. Thank you, Lamont.

MS. KENNER: Madame Chair, this is

Pippa, shall I go on to the second one.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I was just trying to read through here but maybe you could help me. Do we have a research line item for out-going juvenile salmon?

MS. KENNER: We do, great, good question. Let me find it for you. It is the one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eighth bullet. And it says:

Distribution, abundance, conditions and survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Do we also have one for research on incubating eggs?

MS. KENNER: Just a minute. Cory, if you find one -- Cory Graham participated with me in these meetings and developing these priority information needs. Cory, if you find the information, please -- I think it's the -- could you be more specific, Madame Chair. Do you mean.....

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Research. Well, it would be pretty much researching the survival rates of incubating salmon, salmon eggs in the spawning tributaries and I guess that will also fall under juvenile salmon research but this is specifically for the survival rate of incubating salmon eggs.

MS. KENNER: Yes, thank you, Madame Chair. I understand what you're saying now. We actually have several and one is the one -- yes, you're right about the survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon. We also have estimates of quality of escapement. And quality of escapement in terms of this research is about characteristics of salmon such as egg deposition, the age, sex and size composition of spawners and advancing genetic baselines. So that one also addresses it.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. I just want to see if we actually have some type of research study for a couple months as the incubating -- during the wintertime as the eggs are incubating and what the survival rate of that incubation over the period and -- because we can put as many fish as we want up on the

spawning ground, but understanding if they're surviving or not of how many fish we're putting up there will help us understand actually how much fish are coming back down out to the ocean. That's what I was trying to think about, like survival rates of how -- where, in turn, are the main points of survival rates of salmon in order to understand the out-migration and survival rates. And then another study where we have the Bering Sea study of the juvenile survival rate to where they become adults, to the sixth year, to the seven year olds and then they migrate back up to our spawning grounds, and then we can have at least some type of quantitative and qualitative information that we could have something on hand to research and report back.

That's the type of research that I'm asking for.

I think that was like six different things in one.

MS. KENNER: No, you're doing fine. While you're talking I'm reading. So we have those two. Yeah, so we have those two and I believe they capture what you're asking. They're written in a more general way. In order to put that research in terms of a more holistic approach of looking at different aspects of egg and salmon survival there's a couple of indices that -- there's certain types of information that are collected. And one is comparing the escapement and the run size -- escapement to a certain run site to look at eggs per spawner or salmon returning per spawner going up. I think what you're talking about is actually going up and collecting eggs and/or observing eggs to see how many of them actually produce fingerling, produce smolt and I don't think that is the specific type of research that is considered most helpful in management.

And maybe Cory or someone could help me with that.

MR. GRAHAM: This is Cory, through the Chair.

MR. RISDAHL: Madame Chair.

MR. GRAHAM: I just wanted to.....

MR. RISDAHL: Go ahead, Cory.

MR. GRAHAM: I'll agree with what Pippa just said.

MR. RISDAHL: This is Greg Risdahl, the Fish Division lead. There are studies that have been done and there is an interest by both scientists and managers also to study smolt out-migration. And for instance some of that had been done on the Kwethluk weir for a couple of years but that study then was not funded for one reason or the other. So there is an interest in that.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. RISDAHL: And, Alissa, you are absolutely correct, being able to compare the survival of the juvenile salmon, the smolt in this case to the escapement numbers is an important element of management.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

MS. KENNER: So, Greg, this is Pippa. So, Greg, I believe that what Madame Chair, Alissa, has brought up is captured in these bullets.

MR. RISDAHL: Yes. Again, this is Greg Risdahl. I agree, Pippa, I think what she is asking for is captured in the PINS that the working group or the volunteers have put together.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

MS. KENNER: This is Pippa Kenner again, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Yeah, so just while people are thinking about this, maybe a little bit more information. While many of the bullets for both the Kuskokwim and the Yukon, these priority information needs, in the past, did focus almost exclusively on chinook salmon, and now we're looking at the wording includes more than -- just salmon, recognizing that other salmon types, the coho, sockeye, and chum runs

also need to be.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. KENNER: .....and assessed and so that's one change I see from previous years.

The other thing I notice about this list is that it is focused on salmon. We do have one bullet, the second priority information need concerning humpback whitefish population and that was suggested by OSM. We had a researcher going through all the Council's reports to the Board, annual reports to the Board and their transcripts and found that the issue of declining humpback whitefish populations came up several times and we suggested including that, and the subgroup agreed. There aren't priority information needs or many priority information needs for other types of fish, it is very salmon centered, and I think that's what the volunteer group had in mind, that salmon is a focus right now, of concern, and, therefore the priority information needs reflect that.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Pippa. Council members, on the Kuskokwim River do you guys have any more concerns specific, direct concerns about any fishery on the Kuskokwim River.

MR. SLATS: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Slats.

MR. SLATS: Yes, I think all of the priority needs are important because I guess what I was doing is when I was reading my packet I was looking at some of those tables from 19 -- comparison of 1976 until 2019 and there's a comparing the runs, and it states -- and their totals. On Page 79 I was looking at runs of (indiscernible - cuts out) and then in 2019 the run was 226,987 but the total for 1976, the total was 90,547, but in 2029 [sic] 38,504, just looking at those kind of tables leads me to believe that something is -- just like maybe something would fit here, if something is going on out there at the Bering Sea. Even with, you know, numbers of escapement. And then

Page 59 even when there was no commercial and no sport the numbers were -- bottom line on 1976, 90,547 and then 2019 the bottom line was 38,000. So even without the commercial fishing and the sportfishing in those times. So it leads me to believe that they're escaping but their runs are not even half of what they used to be back in '76 so I don't know if I'm reading those tables wrong, but then it's my -- if I'm correct and something is going on out there when they -- when they get off of our rivers to swim out to the sea and they're not coming back as much as they used to back then.

I think all of the priorities are important and we need to continue with as much study as we can. And also looking at all of the fish. Because it's an ecosystem that we need to look at because of the climate change. All of the fish. Because they need to, you know, study, as much as we can while we can because while the fish are still with us.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr.Slats. Pippa, did we capture Mr. Slats' concerns in any of those projects that we have?

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madame Chair. This is Pippa for the record. Yes, there is the -- yes, we did, except there is the issue about marine -- excuse me -- marine residency of a salmon and how we can assess what's going on in the marine environment. And we -- the monitoring program generally doesn't fund research in marine waters, it's the -- the funded is directed at funding research in fresh waters. So that is the one thing that Mr. Slats said that I don't think was picked up directly in our priority information needs but I don't think we can.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Is there a possibility that we could hire someone.....

MR. SLATS: Madame Chair. I was.....

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, go ahead, Mr. Slats.

MR. SLATS: Yeah, Madame Chair, I was leading up to trying to justify that all of those

priorities are important. And I was just using the escapement and the returns for out in the marine as, you know, that these studies need to be made a priority.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Slats, for that clarification. I just wanted to -- I was trying to be respectful to your comments but I understand what you mean. All of these projects that are related to salmon concern survive -- ocean survival and measurements of what's coming back, yes, wonderful. Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. All right. Does the Council have more additions or any more concerns about any type of fishery on the Kuskokwim River?

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, I'll go ahead and move to Lamont Albertson.

MR. ALBERTSON: All right, Madame Chair, and I'm under the understanding that I'm going to be talking about the community based monitoring program; am I correct there?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: No, we're talking about priority and needs for the 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program with OSM anthropologists.

MR. ALBERTSON: Yep. I agree basically with everything that I've heard.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MR. ALBERTSON: I certainly appreciated Ray's comments earlier about climate change. The community based monitoring program, our monitors are aware of that also and the information we get from those communities reflect all the changes that I think are going on in the marine environment.

One of the priorities, or one of the things that I'm very concerned about this year is the increased intercept fishery that's gotten more kings this last year than they've got for a good while. And

I'm concerned also that the three river index, the Unalakleet, the Yukon and the Kuskokwim, that they use to compute -- the strategies that they use to justify the type of fishery out there did not reach the standards at the North Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission wanted it to reach this year and so I'm hoping that through the influence of our organization, or your organization that we can talk to the right people and let people know that we are very concerned about that intercept fishery.

The intercept fishery taking three or four, or 500 fish is not a big deal to them but that's more kings than we'll take in a lot of the rivers on the Kuskokwim, a whole community, some of our smaller communities, and so it's very significant to us.

But I certainly support everything that I've heard said here and I just hope we could, this year, again, start calling attention to the intercept fishery of our kings on the high seas.

Thank you, very much, Alissa.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Albertson. Any further comments or questions, if not I'd like to move on.

MR. WILLIAMS: Alissa.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mike.

MR. WILLIAMS: I mean, Madame Chair -- sorry. Mike Williams from Akiak. I applaud the Monitoring Program that Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission the past few years and partnered with Bering Sea, and I think it is very, very important. You know we have 33 villages that are members of the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission and we have started the Kuskokwim River Monitoring Program to engage our young people to make sure that we have accurate counts on our subsistence take in each community. And it has proved well. And, you know, I commend those that work on our Monitoring Program the last few years, but unfortunately, you know, funding has really been cut, you know, by our State government and also our Federal government -- to make sure that accurate counting takes place in each community when we have those subsistence openers. And I think it

continues to be important to our villages so we can really know and have accurate counts on our salmon on our river. Because, you know, we just rely on Bethel test fishery and sonar right now so I just wanted to say that in the future that the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission be considered to increase the Monitoring Program so we can really do -- have credible numbers on the river.

So I'm just making a comment from my observation on the river. And, again, the weirs and those projects have been scaled back in recent times but I think we need to continue to have those accurate numbers.

Those are just my comments.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mike. Any further comments, questions, discussions, if not we'll go ahead and move on to the Yukon River.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madame Chair. While people are thinking, I would like to ask you -- this is Pippa, if we should approve the Kuskokwim priority information needs first before moving to the Yukon or we can do them both at the end of the presentation.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, we can do it both at the end of the presentation.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: There might be an addition somewhere someone thinks about it, that way it gives them opportunity to continue thinking.

MR. OLICK: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead.

MR. OLICK: Going back to that monitoring, can I say something on that. Anthony.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead.

MR. OLICK: On the monitoring, do we collect water samples of each tributary, starting from the mouth of like say the mouth of the Kuskokwim River and on into the tributaries because in recent years, in the '70s, there was not much traffic going on and there wasn't that much pollution in the water that was going down river and before the fish hit the tributaries -- usually springtime the river would be cleansed by spring waters and I'm thinking that it'd have to do with climate change and also villages, from their -- what do they call that, human waste being dumped out on the river, that could affect their sense of -- what they call it, to go to the tributary, because they don't -- from my knowledge and from my father, he used to tell me that the fish would stay near to the mouth until a certain time and they go. And my thinking is the pollution that we humans are causing on our rivers, that sometimes doesn't -- probably affects them. And in the ocean, you know, the Fukushima, may have affected the smaller fish that are going out in the ocean.

If those tests can be -- if there was any tests on the water quality. I know it's warming up every year. Our rivers seem to be warmer every year because of climate change.

And that's all, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Anthony. Could we get your last name and who you're representing so we can capture that on record.

MR. OLICK: Okay. Anthony Olick, I'm with Kwethluk Incorporated.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, I greatly appreciate it. I just want to check in with Eva after thinking about it. On that motion that we made we discussed putting a motion on the floor for 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Was it specific just to Kuskokwim River in that motion or did we just do the whole entire 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair and Council, this is Eva. So what I have here in my

notes is the Council made a motion to support the 2022 FRMP priority information needs. So I don't believe it was noted specific to the Kuskokwim.....

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MS. PATTON: .....but as the Council wishes, if you want to take them up individually or as you noted to take them up together then the motion works for that.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you. We'll go ahead and keep it open until the end. If there's no more Kuskokwim interest, we'll go ahead and move into the Yukon. Any more Kuskokwim fisheries projects.

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, John.

MR. ANDREW: I move that we support the priority needs for the Kuskokwim River on the salmon projects.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Eva, would that be a motion inside of a motion.

MR. ANDREW: Yes.

REPORTER: Yes.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. So we will.....

MS. PATTON: Hi, Madame Chair, yes, that could be.....

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

MS. PATTON: That could be an amendment to the original motion to take up Kuskokwim priority information needs first and then a separate motion for taking up the Yukon priority information needs if the Council would like to address it that way.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you. Thank you, John. Can I get a second to John.

MR. MAXIE: I second, Carl.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Maxie. Now, we're open for more discussion or justification, if none, can a question be called.

(No comments)

(Pause)

REPORTER: This is Tina, the reporter, Alissa. I'm sorry, did somebody call the question and I missed it.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Sorry, Tina, no we haven't had a question been called yet.

MR. LANDLORD: Madame Chair, this is James.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, James.

MR. LANDLORD: Call for question.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Question's been called by James. All those in favor of supporting the Kuskokwim River Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All those opposed, say nay.

(No opposing votes)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you. Pippa, we're moving on to the Yukon River.

Thank you.

MS. KENNER: Hi, Madame Chair, this is Pippa. I think that's a really good list of priority information needs and I really appreciate all the help we got putting it together from Staff and Council members. So I'll go ahead and we'll talk about the

priority information needs developed for the Yukon region. There's 12 items. The first one is:

1. Impacts of climate change in continued harvest and use of fish and impacts of climate change on fish, for example, impacts to fish migration, spawning and life cycle.

2. Effects of environmental stressors, such as heat stress on salmon mortality during adult up river migration and/or pre-spawn mortality within spawning tributaries.

3. Effects of ichthyophonus infection on chinook salmon mortality and spawning success.

4. Knowledge of population, reproduction and health of spawning habitat for bering cisco and humpback whitefish.

5. Reliable estimates of chinook, summer chum, fall chum and coho salmon escapements and/or harvest, particularly sub-stocks that are large contributors to the total run.

6. Estimates of quality of escapement measures for chinook salmon, for example potential egg deposition, age, sex and size composition of spawners, percentage of females, percentage of jacks, and spawning habitat utilization with an emphasis on Canadian origin stocks.

7. Reliable in-season harvest of salmon harvest in the lower, middle and upper Yukon River subsistence fishery.

8. Reliable estimates of age, sex, length and genetic composition of salmon harvested in the subsistence fishery with emphasis on chinook and fall chum salmon.

9. In-season estimates of genetic stock composition of chinook, summer chum and fall chum salmon runs and harvest.

10. Reliable methods of forecasting chinook, summer chum, fall chum and coho salmon run abundance.

11. Assessment of incidental mortality with gillnets, dipnets and seines with particular consideration for delayed mortality from entanglement from dropouts and live release of chinook salmon, for example loss of chinook salmon from six inch mesh net during chum salmon fisheries and the live release of chinook salmon from dipnets and seines.

So that one was about incidental mortality, and the final one is:

12. Traditional ecological knowledge of fish.

So, again, we're seeking your comments on this list and priority information needs, and we will repeat this process with the Western Interior and Eastern Interior Alaska Councils at their meetings next week.

Thank you, Madame Chair, Members of the Council. And I'm ready to discuss this list with you and after we can approve a revised list of priority information needs for the Yukon region.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I guess we'll take up a motion on the floor to accept the Yukon River.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair. I move to accept the 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for the Yukon region. Ray Oney for the record.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Oney.

MR. PETER: I second. I second, Alissa, this is Phillip.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Phillip. All right, we'll go ahead and move into discussion. Do we have.....

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Ray Oney for the record. Pippa, I was looking through my booklet for -- to find the table that was published for the Kuskokwim River chinook salmon run size escapement and harvest from 1976 to 2019, I don't know if that's included in this book, I want to compare what the years might be from 1976 to 2019.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Oney. Through the Chair. You mean a comparable table in the Yukon region?

MR. ONEY: Yes, the one that is in our books now that Richard Slats had mentioned, comparison from 1976 to 2019.

MS. KENNER: Yes, and that table was for the Kuskokwim. So -- oh, I see what you're saying, you're saying collecting information that provides us with this information -- the table.

MR. ONEY: Yes, I was thought there was one similar for the Yukon.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Oney. This is Pippa, again, through the Chair. Yes, I think the purpose of many, if not most of these bullets is to do exactly that, collect that information to get an attempt to estimate what the overall run size was. So thank you for that comment.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Pippa, this is Alissa. I had a question in regards to do we have any Monitoring Program in partnership with Canada for the spawning grounds for the Yukon River.

MS. KENNER: We don't. The Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program doesn't do that funding, but, yes, there is a lot of cooperation and collaboration and research between the agencies in America and the agencies in Canada. I am personally not completely familiar with that research but there might be somebody on who can help if you want a more detailed answer.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MR. MASCHMANN: Pippa, this is Gerald in Fairbanks.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi, Gerald.

MR. MASCHMANN: Madame Chairperson. What was your question again.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I was wondering if any of our Monitoring Program had any partnership with the international salmon harvest monitoring that they do up in Canada, to find out what our studies are on the Yukon River spawning grounds.

MR. MASCHMANN: Madame Chairperson. This is Gerald Maschmann with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Yeah, there's some international work that we do. The Yukon River Panel, which is basically the U.S./Canada group that discusses our Yukon River Treaty goals and happenings. There is a research fund involved with that and a lot of discussion with agencies and the public and the Yukon River Panel that answers some of those kinds of questions. We do have, you know, like the Eagle Sonar, there are Fish and Game Staff that work that project, as well as Canadian Staff and then there's projects in Canada that also do escapement monitoring and various other kinds of research.

So that is ongoing.

You know it's a little different sort of funding pot than what you have with the FRMP but that is going on.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you. Do we have any studies of humpback spawning grounds on the lower Yukon River side?

MR. MASCHMANN: Madame Chair. If you're discussing the U.S. Panel stuff, most of that research and money would go towards Canadian origin fish so chinook and fall chum. There's not a lot going on with pink salmon on the Yukon, it's not particularly a big subsistence used fish. It is used but it's not a big subsistence used fish and there's a little bit of a commercial interest lately on it, but, again, we don't know much about the pinks except that what we see that goes up the Andreafsky and past the sonar.

MS. KENNER: Madame Chair.

(No comments)

MS. KENNER: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, Pippa. Sorry, I was on my mute button.

MS. KENNER: Oh, yeah, got it. This is Pippa again, Madame Chair. So you were talking specifically, remind me, did you talk specifically about humpback whitefish?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, sorry, no, salmon. Pink salmon.

MS. KENNER: Oh, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, I was referring to pink salmon. I was getting some pictures and some information about pink salmon spawning at the mouth of the Alakanuk River right below the island where that sandbar was starting. There was a big pool of white and milky stuff with bubbling water.

MS. KENNER: Oh.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: And I had called Fish and Game to find out about what that was because I was trying to figure out what it was, so they can help identify it. But they came to the conclusion that there was a pink salmon -- there was a whole bunch of pink salmon right there at the mouth and they were spawning in the most unusual spot ever and they thought that was an anomaly.

MS. KENNER: Oh.

(Pause)

MS. PATTON: Hi, everyone, we may have gotten cut off there, do we still have folks on line.

IN UNISON: Lots of yes.

MR. DECOSSAS: The weather is starting to really pick up out here in Bethel so I imagine along the Coast it's pretty bad too. It's gusting pretty good right now. So I wouldn't be surprised if people get kicked off.

MS. KENNER: Or they just could be thinking.

MS. PATTON: Thanks for the feedback. We may have lost, Alissa, are you still on.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Maybe I'll just check in and see if we have -- it sounds like maybe Alissa got cut off there. We'll just check and see if we have our other Council members on line.

John Andrew, are you still on line.

MR. ANDREW: Still here.

MS. PATTON: Wonderful, thank you, John.

Phillip Peter, Sr.

MR. PETER: Here.

MS. PATTON: Wonderful, thank you, Phillip.

Richard Slats.

MR. SLATS: I'm here.

MS. PATTON: Great, thank you.

Thomas Alstrom.

MR. ALSTROM: Yes, I'm still here.

MS. PATTON: Great, thank you, Thomas.

Ray Oney.

MR. ONEY: Hi Eva.

MS. PATTON: Hi, Ray. Good.

And Carl Maxie.

MR. MAXIE: I'm here.

MS. PATTON: Okay, great, thank you, Carl.

And James Landlord.

MR. LANDLORD: Still here.

MS. PATTON: Wonderful, thank you. So I think it sounded like maybe Alissa got cut off there so we'll give her a moment to try to get reconnected.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi, I got back on. Sorry, I got disconnected.

MS. PATTON: No worries, thank you. Just wanted to make sure we had everybody. It got really quiet for a minute so, okay, wonderful, everyone's back and it sounds like we still got public on line as well.

Thank you. Madame Chair.

Pippa.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Pippa, I had one more question. Do we have any studies out in the area -- thinking back to these notes and rereading my notes, maybe Richard Slats can help me on this, there's been some fisheries that happen out and people go out to the Hooper Bay area, hearing back their fishing wasn't that great and usually it's hit or miss depending on time and the season. But do we have any qualitative like a test fishery that we could put up for a monitoring system to find out when and where a qualitative and quantitative information out in the Hooper Bay region.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madame Chair. This is Pippa. I'm just pausing a moment.

(Pause)

MS. KENNER: The Fisheries.....

MR. MASCHMANN: Pippa, this is.....

MS. KENNER: Go ahead, Gerald.

MR. MASCHMANN: This is Gerald Maschmann with the Fish and Wildlife Service,

Fairbanks. Some years ago.....

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi Gerald.

MR. MASCHMANN: .....Fish and Game did -- Madame Chair person -- Fish and Game, years ago did try and get a Hooper Bay test fishery going I think particularly for chinooks. It was just too difficult to fish out there. It's like you said, it's hit or miss, you know, the fish kind of can move around to different channels along the Coast and the weather and the waves are bad so they just had a really hard time getting a good, consistent test fishery going in Hooper Bay but, yeah, it would certainly be nice if, on the Yukon, we had just a little bit of an earlier indicator of what was coming up. I don't know if a test fishery is possible due to just the conditions out there or not.

Thank you.

MR. ALSTROM: Madame Chair, this is Thomas Alstrom.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Thomas.

MR. ALSTROM: Yes, this is for the prioritize the Yukon region. I see here on the project funding since 2020 we cover a big vast region all the way from Hooper Bay to the Yukon, the Andreafsky River, all the way up to Western and Eastern RAC Committee, all the way up to the Canada First Nations People up in Canada. So I'd just like to put it out there that with, again, like the Kuskokwim region, the concern of climate change, the development of the biological study of diet and genetic juvenile salmon. I'd like to prioritize that concern from all the way up from Canada down to the Eastern and Western RAC Committees, all the way down to the Yukon Delta and not only that what will be the Coastal region. So what I'm saying is basically I'd like to prioritize the -- what do we call it -- the biologist's study of juvenile salmon up and down the Yukon.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Alstrom. Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madame Chair. Yeah, I'm going to ask for help from Cory and Greg and maybe Gerald, if that is on the list, or how we may put it on the list, what it would look like.

MR. MASCHMANN: Pippa, this is Gerald with Fish and Wildlife in Fairbanks. Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Gerald.

MR. MASCHMANN: Could you restate what he was asking.

MS. KENNER: I think what he's talking about is -- this is Pippa. I think on the Kuskokwim side we have priority information needs specifically for research into juvenile salmon and genetic stock composition. And making sure that those are a priority information need in the Yukon drainage also.

I guess one way we could approach that is just by repeating those Kuskokwim bullets. So let's see, distribution of abundance, condition and survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon.....

MR. RISDAHL: Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Yeah, go ahead.

MR. RISDAHL: Pippa, this is Greg, yeah, I was just going to suggest that so you're doing just fine, go ahead. That's exactly what I would do, is I would just repeat those PINS that are on the Kuskokwim list for the Yukon list and then you'd have those added and then the Council can determine what they ultimately want to do with them.

MS. KENNER: So this is Pippa. So one of those would be distribution, abundance, condition and survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon. Add that to the Yukon list.

And just a minute please.

(Pause)

MS. KENNER: Just a second I'm looking for it here.

(Pause)

MS. KENNER: We do have -- we have in-season estimates of genetic stock composition of chinook, summer chum and fall chum salmon runs and harvest. So one of the reasons for collecting that information is to get an idea of where fish are headed, either into Canada or into American tributaries. I'm not sure that quite gets at what the gentleman was asking.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Tommy, do you want to -- what you were requesting, or were asking for so that.....

MR. ALSTROM: Madame Chair, this is Thomas here. That was my question, or maybe my suggestion there is to prioritize the biological -- biologist's study of juvenile salmon exiting the Yukon, that should be prioritized all the way up from Canada all the way down to the Yukon Delta and the coastlines as well. The exiting of juvenile -- biologist's research and study and their information to gather in order to present more accurate information on exiting juvenile salmon leaving the Yukon. That pretty much answers -- that bullet that goes for the Kuskokwim should also be prioritized and looked at here on the Yukon.

MS. KENNER: So if it's okay with the Council -- this is Pippa -- I've gone ahead and added that to the Yukon list of priority information needs.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. Ray Oney for the record. I just received in a packet last week before we had our teleconference with the Eastern and also the Kuskokwim RAC, and in the packet there was going to be a presentation, I believe, by Jim Murphy, from the Fisheries Science Center and Sabrina Garcia from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in regards to addressing the ecology of Western Alaska juvenile salmon, and I think that -- actually what we're trying to do is their research in the Northern Bering Sea, I don't know if that's similar to what Thomas is addressing.

Thank you.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Eva.

MS. KENNER: Madame Chair, this is Pippa.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair.

MS. KENNER: Oh, sorry.

MS. PATTON: Hi, Madame Chair, this is Eva. I just wanted to quickly respond to Ray Oney's comment there. Yes, that's correct so at the Council's request we have a presentation that'll be coming up towards the end of the day from NOAA Staff, Jim Murphy and then also ADF&G Sabrina Garcia. And that will be focused on their juvenile salmon research work in both Yukon and Kuskokwim and also their Bering Sea research. So there is some work being done. But I think Pippa would probably concur that it is still a priority and one of the things that's looked at for these priority information needs is kind of a review of the data gaps and where there's still research that needs to be done. So if the Council believes this is a priority and would like continuing information and research then we think that's good, but we will be getting some updates to help fill in those information gaps. So that'll be coming up at the end of the day.

Thanks, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Thank you. Madame Chair. Again, for the record Ray Oney. I would support in-river study of the Alaska juvenile salmon, I don't know if that's -- if this presentation is going to address that, and if it does then I think we just need to at least see if we can address the in-river juveniles that are going out into the Bering Sea. If that's my understanding, Thomas.

Thank you.

MR. PETER: Madame Chair.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair, again, for the record, Ray Oney.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I had someone right before you Ray, who was that? Tina, who was that?

REPORTER: Phillip Peter.

MR. PETER: Phillip.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, go ahead.

MR. PETER: I got question on the monitoring. I see they tag the fish and put the radio or signal beeper and where do they tag them, in the Bering Sea or where? Tagging the fish, is it included in the monitoring system?

MS. KENNER: Thank you, this is Pippa. Thank you, Mr. Peter. Good question. There's fish tagging studies going on on both the Yukon and the Kuskokwim. For the Yukon, maybe Gerald Maschmann, our Yukon manager would be in a better position to answer that.

MR. PETER: Madame Chair, this is Phillip again.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Phillip.

MR. PETER: I forgot to include, you know, I catch one time they got colors on their things, those tags, one is green, the other one is pink (ph). And when I -- when my wife take that tag off on the signal beeper how lasted -- how long does that signal beeper works, that's my curious question.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, I see what you mean. So a couple years ago we used to have a tagging station down in -- below the Johnson River on the other side of -- do we have any Bethel Fish and Game people on line, they would know the exact coordinates, but it's on that island on the other side. They used to have a tagging station there and they did that study for a couple years. I don't know -- I think they discontinued that study. I call it Goose Island but I think there's definitely a different name for it.

MR. DECOSSAS: Hey, Alissa, it's Fish Camp Island.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, Fish Camp Island.

(Laughter)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: There's so many names for that island. Yeah, there's so many names for that island. And, maybe, Gary, Gary do you remember when the last time we had a tagging station down there?

MR. DECOSSAS: 2017.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Does that answer your question Peter.

MR. PETER: Yeah, it looked like.....

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MR. PETER: .....I want to find out what Pippa mentioning, they tag it in the Bering Sea, one for the Yukon River and one for the Kuskokwim.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: So I know that they did -- yeah, the tag them in-river, inside the Kuskokwim River and inside the Yukon River. Maybe, Gerald, you can help me remember if we're doing any radiotagging and collar tagging on the Yukon side. But they don't tag out in the Bering Sea.

MR. MASCHMANN: Madame Chair.

MR. PETER: Okay.

MR. MASCHMANN: It's Gerald Maschmann.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Gerald.

MR. MASCHMANN: Yeah, we haven't really done much tagging on the Yukon in a few years. I do believe we had gotten funded to do a coho radiotagging study for this year until Covid hit so I think in the future we'll be doing some more tagging on the Yukon but we haven't had anything tagged in awhile except for maybe some -- Lisa Stube with Fish and Game did that burbot study and there's been some various whitefish tagging going on but not with salmon, not lately.

MR. PETER: Madame Chair, this is

Phillip again.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes.

MR. PETER: We recognize those fishes, especially those chinooks. Our fish in Kuskokwim, it's more different than the Yukon. Yukon fish got more dots on their head, they're really fat and the chinooks here in Kuskokwim are just right, they're not really fat when we smoke them. And that's my comment.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Let's get back to the Yukon River priorities. Is there any more priorities or projects, or any type of fishery projects you guys can think of for the Yukon River.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Oney.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. Pippa, I know we had a teleconference last week and Bassich, I believe from Eastern Interior mentioned about including for discussion what he had relating to the Monitoring Program that he wanted to see for this funding cycle.

MS. KENNER: Yes, Mr. Oney. This is Pippa Kenner. Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Yes. The group, the volunteers that got together for the Yukon bullet. a priority information need that came up was studies that advance understanding of the geographic distribution migration pattern and feeding habits of chinook salmon during marine residency. So these questions are around what chinook salmon are doing in the marine environment. And I think Ray Oney mentioned that we are going to get a presentation on the status of that kind of research later this afternoon. But for the Monitoring Program it's been determined -- the side bars for what the Monitoring Program funds that was determined back in the beginning of the Program by the Board and the agencies was to restrict this funding to

research in fresh waters. And so within the Program we were talking about it and we felt like we had to take that priority information need off for that reason. And I'd be more than happy to answer any followup questions.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Pippa.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, Ray Oney, again, for the record.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Pippa, how do we make that available to -- how do we address the impacts that are caused outside of what we're doing as far as harvesting the resource. I know the cycle -- we have to be considered in the cycle as in-river users and to consider spawning areas and to consider the whole ecosystem as a cycle of salmon, and we need to be part of every step that monitors the salmon, whether it be out in the Bering Sea or out in the spawning grounds, or how do we make that available to those areas if we're just going to do in-river fresh water monitoring or studies, how do we reach outside the box to let them know what they're doing out there is affecting us too.

Thank you.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Oney. This is Pippa, through the Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Yeah, you know, Ray what you're saying is really meaningful and applicable, that looking at each of these, where fish go between fresh water and marine waters is kind of this artificial demarcation about the lives of fish, right, there just as alive in marine waters as they are in fresh waters and their behaviors are just as important in marine waters as they are in fresh waters to their survival. So I think there was concern at the beginning of the Program, that a lot of these funds would be taken up by looking at questions that were outside of the drainages themselves and for -- and the idea was that agencies

that are responsible for fisheries in marine waters would do that research and so we do have like a presentation by NOAA, which manages some of the fisheries out in marine waters. Maybe the person who is in the lead of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program is Greg Risdahl and he is on the line and he might want to add to that explanation.

MR. RISDAHL: Thank you, Pippa. I hate to say it but I had to take a short baby break. The son is home today because there's issues at daycare. Anyway.....

MS. KENNER: No problem, Greg, thanks for being on at all.

MR. RISDAHL: Yeah, it's tough with the teleworking and everything. Anyway, Mr. Oney, is absolutely correct, that the entire ecosystem of where these salmon live and grow and die is important to study, as you have also reiterated. And the FRMP Program is established to specifically study the fresh water habitats, although we agree 100 percent that the knowledge and research in the marine environment is equally as important. Unfortunately we don't fund that through the FRMP Program, but there are lots and lots of studies going on out there. Some of them are really difficult and very expensive to conduct as you might imagine and that's why there are information gaps existing out there, especially in the marine environment. There's lots of things that we don't know. Scientists have theories about what's going on in the marine environment, but getting the kinds of information that tell us exactly what's happening is very difficult. And there's a lot of interactions going on. You know everyone hears about the warming waters of the ocean as well as the warming waters in the fresh water streams, we know about the blob, and we know about the giant garbage patch in the ocean and there's actually many garbage patches and all of the different things that are going on as a result of climate change are interacting with one another and fish are going different places, and we really don't know is it starvation, is it just warm water, are there diseases.

But, anyway, there are other studies taking place and we just simply have not been able to monitor everything that's going on in terms of studies

that, for instance, fisheries -- the North Pacific Fisheries Management Program is involved in, but those things are available if people really dig into it. And we have been asked by the Councils, several of the Councils to look into some of the other studies that are taking place and we're trying to do that as we can. We've been short Staffed for awhile, we're trying to get Staffed back up but that's a whole 'other issue.

But the bottom line is that, Mr. Oney, is absolutely correct, research in both fresh and marine water, every step of the salmon cycle is important to study to find out what's going on and just realize that things are going to continue to change and there's really no great way to predict without doing this kind of research. But at the moment the FRMP is designed to fund only projects within the fresh water ecosystems of the State of Alaska.

Sorry for that long-winded explanation but hopefully that will kind of people an understanding of what we can and cannot do.

Thank you.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Eva.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair and Council. This is Eva. And just wanted to followup to Ray's question as well, and respond to the Council's interest and concern to get more information about salmon and fisheries in the environment. And so there actually is a lot of research going on in the marine environment and a lot of information that we can help bring forward to the Council in terms of reports, written reports and continuing to invite researchers to present to the Council. So we do have those couple at the end of the day today, both looking at juvenile salmon and then Ellen Yasumiishi from NOAA really focusing more on the Bering Sea ecosystem and environment and looking at some of the climate change that's going on in the region.

And we will continue, so I'll keep working with the Council to -- at each meeting to try to bring up the current marine research that's going on so that we can integrate both the in-river projects and

the marine system projects. And we do -- the Council has been very engaged throughout the years with the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, has written letters and made recommendations on the Bering Sea bycatch. They were invited to this fall meeting, their schedule overlapped with this particular meeting so we'll try to ensure that at the winter meeting we can invite North Pacific Fisheries Management Council as well. They've been very responsive to providing information to the Council.

So while the FRMP Program doesn't address the marine environment, that research is ongoing by those agencies that do and so we'll keep working to bring that information to the Council's meeting and -- and get that marine research information back to the Council as well.

And, of course, all of your observations, your knowledge and observations and way of life on the Coast and fishing in the Bering Sea is incredibly important too, so thank you for all that you bring, the information, to the Council.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Do we have any more suggestions or any more project ideas for the Yukon River?

MR. SLATS: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Slats.

MR. SLATS: Okay, yes, on this -- while we're on that topic that was just brought up, on our next item on the agenda, Item 5, might be in line with what we're talking about now, is that -- and the response from the Board encourages us to work with the Council coordinator to invite experts from NOAA, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Department of Fish and Game and other entities to present specific topics of interest at our meetings.

So we could probably take this up and then look for experts to have them brought in to talk to us some more about this or start developing a working relationship with the people that work on the

marine environment integral to subsistence.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yep, we definitely can sure do that, Mr. Slats.

MR. SLATS: Okay, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: You're welcome. All right, do we have any more Yukon project ideas?

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing none, if there's no more project ideas, could we go ahead and close out the motion on the floor.

(Pause)

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: I call for a question on the motion.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thanks, Mr. Andrew. Question's been made by Mr. Andrew.

MR. ONEY: Second, Ray Oney.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All those in favor -- oh, thank you. Hold one. We had a motion on the floor made by Mr. Oney to support the priorities for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for the Yukon River seconded by Mr. Phillip, question called by Mr. Andrew. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All those opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, sounds good. We'll go ahead and move on to the next agenda item. If it's okay with the Council to make an amendment to the agenda, that we move identify issues

for the FY2020 annual report towards the end of the meeting, right before we get to the future meeting dates, that way after we hear all the agency reports and all the information from this past year 2020/19 season we could make a discussion of what we want to bring forth as issues to the Federal Subsistence Board.

Would that be okay with the Council?

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair, so moved. Ray Oney for the record.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Motion to move Item No. C to the end of the meeting right before Item No. 11 future meeting dates. Motion made by Mr. Oney. Can we get a second.

MR. MAXIE: Carl, second.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Maxie. All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All those opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Let's go ahead and move on to request for delegation of authority to the National Park Service for individual customary and traditional use determinations.

Eva, who do we have for the.....

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair and Council.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

MS. PATTON: And for that we have Marcy Okada who will be joining us from the National Park Service to address that with the Council. And this will be an action item, this came at the request of the Board for all the Councils to review and make a recommendation on this.

Thank you so much, and thanks for

joining us.

MS. OKADA: Hi. Good afternoon, Madame Chair and Council members.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Good afternoon, and welcome to our -- the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. Thank you for being here with us today and making time.

MS. OKADA: Thank you. My name is Marcy Okada and I am the subsistence coordinator for the National Park Service. I realize that your region does not have National Park Service lands but in keeping all things equal, the following information will be presented to all 10 RACs and we are asking the RACs to take action on this request.

The Federal Subsistence Board is considering a delegation of authority to the National Park Service, which would grant the National Park Service Alaska Regional Director the authority to make individual customary and traditional use determinations, otherwise known as individual C&Ts.

The draft delegation of authority letter can be found on Page 193 of your meeting materials and the draft standard operating procedures can be found after the letter.

So in preparation for this requested administrative change, Staff with the National Park Service have developed operating procedures for both the 13440 subsistence eligibility permits and for individual C&Ts.

I will be presenting you with an overview of both topics. The National Park Service suggested changes to existing processes and the reasons that this is being pursued.

So if folks have the letter in front of them I will go ahead and get started.

To begin, it is important to recognize that eligibility to engage in subsistence activities in National Parks and National Monuments in Alaska is different from that of National Preserves and other types of Federal public lands. To be eligible in these

units one must not only be a Federally-qualified subsistence user, but also have his or her primary permanent home located within a resident zone community or have obtained a 13440 subsistence eligibility permit. Additionally, the hunter must also have a customary and traditional use determination for the area and species that they intend to hunt.

Customary and traditional use determinations acknowledge an existing pattern of subsistence use. The Federal Subsistence Board frequently receives requests to evaluate or reevaluate these predominately for inclusion of communities or areas. For lands managed by the National Park Service, determination can also be made for individuals pursuant to the 50 code of Federal regulations, 100.16 where areas managed by the National Park Service where subsistence uses are allowed the determinations may be made on an individual basis. Requests for individual customary and traditional use determinations have been rare in the history of the Program and less than a dozen requests have been made so far. We have no reason to believe that this will change. So given this rarity and the applicability to only National Parks and National Monuments, Park Service feels that the Program and its stakeholders may be better served if the Agency's Regional Director is given the delegated authority to make the individual customary and traditional use determinations. If delegated to the Park Service, the process would alleviate burden on the Office of Subsistence Management and the Federal Subsistence Board and this will provide more of a substantive role for the Subsistence Resource Commissions as well as allow requests to be acted upon outside of the normal regulatory cycle, and provide better mechanisms for documenting and archiving these decisions.

So if the Board delegates authority for individual customary and traditional use determinations, the Park Service intends to follow the procedures outlined in the standard operating procedures. And these procedures are listed behind the letter in your meeting material.

The standard operating procedures show the responsibilities of all involved are clearly defined, they provide consistency and continuity across Park Units, they streamline both the 13440 permit

process and the individual C&T process, and they provide mechanisms for evaluating and documenting the request and subsequent decisions. These procedures are consistent with Title VIII of ANILCA and with existing regulation.

So I'm not going to walk every step and document outlined in the standard operating procedure, but I would like to point out that the eight criteria for evaluating individual customary and traditional use determinations is the same as those for community and area C&Ts. The Park Service would continue to analyze these criteria in a consistent manner with the Board's policies.

Delegation of authority on these matters is considered an administrative action of the Federal Subsistence Board. But before approving the process, the Board has asked the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to review the proposed procedures and to offer feedback, especially given that the responsibility for making recommendations on individual C&T requests will shift from the Regional Advisory Councils to the Subsistence Resource Commissions. The Park Service believes that the Commissions are perhaps best equipped to evaluate patterns of subsistence use in their associated Parks and Monuments, and each includes representation -- each Commission includes representation from the associated Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

And so as Eva had mentioned this is an action item and we would appreciate any feedback you might have on these processes. And we specifically request that your Council vote on whether to endorse this change. And I'd just like to say thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you so much, I greatly appreciate it. I do have a few -- couple questions for you. Going back to where you where you were saying -- what will happen to OSM if this goes through?

MS. OKADA: So as of right now the standard format for C&T proposals still -- they use the eight factors and that's prepared by the OSM Staff in combination with Park Service Staff, and so it would

change to -- it would continue to use the C&T eight factors but this would be -- the work would be prepared by National Park Service Staff.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: For subsistence customary and traditional uses done by Park Service instead of Office of Subsistence Management?

MS. OKADA: That's correct. But it would be -- we would be passing on any outcomes and we would be passing on any outcomes to the Office of Subsistence Management. And essentially the decisionmaker was the Federal Subsistence Board, they would take this on their agenda at their annual regulatory meetings but this would be turned over to the National Park Service, Alaska Regional Director.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Do we have anyone from the Office of Subsistence Management, head honchos on line.

MR. RISDAHL: Madame Chair, this is Greg Risdahl. I'm not exactly a head honcho but I'm not sure who else is all on, I would try to answer a question, maybe if you have one.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you, Greg. How do you feel about this?

MR. RISDAHL: Well, to be absolutely honest I have not had a chance to review that so I actually didn't know that this was coming up. Now, there may be other folks that have been working in the field that have, but I have not reviewed this yet so I do not know the details of the Park Service plan to change the individual C&T process -- to take over the individual C&T process.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. RISDAHL: And I know we, as a group, have not talked about it in the leadership team.

MS. KENNER: Hey, Greg, this is Pippa.

MR. RISDAHL: Yeah, go ahead, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: I also am not a head

honcho and quite seriously -- but I am with the Anthropology Division and I do know the history of this. The process for gaining an individual C&T determination has not been clearly laid out in policy and, therefore, the few times it has come up it creates a -- we have to have a lot of conversations about it, particularly with the Park Service, National Park Service, so the National Park Service has taken the lead in developing a process that's clearly written down and so everyone can follow, and in general OSM has been following as in support of the process.

So, thank you, Marcy, and thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Pippa. So, Pippa, this process that you guys have been discussing it hasn't been brought up to leadership and leadership hasn't made a yea or nay or if they're in support or not support, prior for it to come to the Council, is that my understanding?

MS. KENNER: Um, Um, Ah, okay, so, we are all working from home and since the teleworking situation has started, there were some processes that were already moving forward before that, and because of our situation they haven't -- these processes haven't come up a lot at our, you know, meetings with leadership at OSM, but previous to this it was being discussed at that leadership level and the leadership from OSM working with the National Park Service in this endeavor is through our policy coordinator, who, right now we have an acting Policy Coordinator, Lisa Maas, and so it started several years when Jennifer Hardin was there, but Jennifer Hardin is no longer there, but the policy coordinator is working with our InterAgency Staff Committee that represents the five Federal agencies on the Federal Subsistence Board in developing a new process. And the Park Service is taking the lead because the issue about individual fish -- customary and traditional use determinations is most applicable on Park Service lands. It's a Park Service process. So we really appreciate the Park Service taking the lead.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I'm just -- this just comes as kind of like a shocking, not shocking but this -- under the assumption that this had already gone up through the chain of command, gone through the

leadership process and is talked about in this levels so that we could hear back from the leadership at OSM on this discussion of moving C&T -- individual C&T from OSM to the Park Service, because Office of Subsistence Management is where -- it's in the name, it's the Office of Subsistence Management and C&T falls under subsistence management. So if this has not gone through the leadership process and they haven't made their discussion on it I don't feel comfortable saying yea, nay, support, not support, this doesn't feel right. It feels like it's under-developed. It feels like it's being thrown into our pockets for us to make a decision. And I personally do not feel safe making any type of recommendation on something that has not been fully discussed with the people about this. And if this is such a huge significant change for the subsistence rural users, they should have the right to make a recommendation on this prior to our Council making recommendations on stuff like this, especially if it's a huge impact to subsistence.

MS. KENNER: Hey, Madame Chair, this is Pippa again, may I respond?

(No comments)

MS. KENNER: Did we lose Alissa?

MR. SMITH: Pippa, this is Nick Smith with Fish and Game. I know that I just got a message from a couple of people that said they had just got kicked off the meeting.

MS. KENNER: I wonder what we should do, should we call back in?

REPORTER: We should just hold and let these people see if they can call back in, and if we don't get them back.....

MS. KENNER: Thank you.

REPORTER: .....we'll continue.....

MS. PATTON: Hi, Alissa, this is Eva, was that you joining us back on teleconference?

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Yeah, I just heard a few beeps so I think maybe just a few folks got cut off so we'll give Alissa a moment to call back in.

MS. KENNER: This is Pippa, Eva. I'd really like to say some more because I think I misled the Council in where OSM is with this.

MS. PATTON: Sure. Yes. Yes, absolutely and I -- I think that your response would be of great interest to Alissa, so if we could wait a moment for her to be able to join us back on line and.....

MS. KENNER: Is Marcy Okada on line?

MS. OKADA: I'm still here, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Marcy, I might have put my foot in it, do you have a better explanation. I know this has gone right up through to the top of OSM, who at the time would have been Thomas Doolittle. Do -- do you have a better explanation maybe about where we are in this process?

MS. OKADA: I don't know as far as those types of conversations that might have happened but I think I can clarify some things for Alissa once she gets back on.

MS. KENNER: Okay. Because we are very appreciative of the Park Service taking the lead and your work on this. It is such a complicated topic I think I might have just made it more complicated.

MS. OKADA: Yeah, I think once she gets back on and the rest of the Council members get back on I'll try and hit some of the key points of this request.

MS. KENNER: Yeah. And how it's so applicable to the National Park Service, and that this isn't really creating any change at all. People need to have a C&T before they can get an individual C&T, they have to have already achieved a permit for an individual C&T from the Park Service.

MS. OKADA: Yeah, and the fact that we can do two processes at the same time just to make

it.....

MS. KENNER: Yeah.

MS. OKADA: .....easier for folks out there.

MS. PATTON: Pippa and Marcy, I just got a text from Alissa and she's back on line.

Madame Chair.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair Rogers, Alissa Rogers have you been able to get connected back on teleconference.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Okay, she's on and trying to get off mute so we'll just give her a moment here but it sounds like she's back on line.

MS. PELTOLA: Hey, Eva, this is Mary Peltola. I have some clarifying questions about this as well.

MS. PATTON: Sure, thank you, and we'll make sure we have our Chair back and connected and then she can recognize public for asking questions and comments as well.

Thank you, Mary.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - typing)

MS. PATTON: And we do have somebody typing in the background so if we could have everybody check their cell phones, their phones to mute for the background noise and we'll see if we can get Alissa back on line here.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, maybe while we're waiting, Ray Oney here for the record. Maybe if we could give me some ideas of where this National Park Service is, where -- I'm trying to figure out where that National Park Service may be. Maybe I'm sitting

on it right now but if you could give me some ideas what we're talking about so I could maybe even connect to it for C&T, whatever, if you could give me ideas where that area might be.

MS. OKADA: Okay. So we have National Park Service Parks and Monuments in the Kotzebue region. And so this individual C&T would be just affecting National Park Service Parks and Monuments, not National Preserves. So we have Parks and Monuments in the Kotzebue region, in the Western Interior region, down in the Southcentral region, also in the Aniakchak/Katmai Area and then the Lake Clark, so that would be like the Nondalton area, and so all of these Parks and Monuments have a Commission that's called a Subsistence Resource Commission, and these are made up of -- membership on this Commission is made up of folks that reside in rural communities that are nearby Parks and Monuments. And so because of this representation there would be feedback from a group of folks that would help to make a decision on whether we would give individual C&T to whoever is applying for C&T.

And I realize you probably don't have a map in front of you but there are Parks and Monuments spread out throughout the State of Alaska. Just there happens to not be any in the YK-Delta region.

MR. ONEY: Okay, thank you. I don't know if any of the other RACs have taken up this?

MS. OKADA: So as we speak the Southcentral RAC is meeting today and tomorrow. I believe the Kodiak/Aleutians RAC met sometime last month and then next week the Western Interior and Eastern Interior RACs are going to be meeting, and then there's a few more meetings in October and them first week of November. So your RAC is one of the -- is pretty much the second RAC to have heard this information.

MR. ONEY: And followup, is there a timeframe as to when we need to respond to this request?

MS. OKADA: So it was the Federal Subsistence Board that met in April and they -- Park Service shared information with the Federal Subsistence Board and then at their April meeting they decided to

have this information shared with all 10 RACs so it's with the hopes that as it's presented to each of the RACs a decision is made by the end of this meeting cycle, by the end of this RAC meeting cycle, ideally.

MR. ONEY: Thank you.

MS. OKADA: And then once the RACs have put in their input then that would be, in turn, shared with the Federal Subsistence Board when they meet.

(Pause)

MS. OKADA: Are there any further questions?

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair. This is John Andrew with Kwethluk.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, John.

MR. ANDREW: I don't like the way it's written -- written in this, request for delegation of authority National Park Service, the way it's written -- individual customary and traditional use determination, and we never have discussion on this one on the village level. We never take it to the villages yet. And, personally, I don't like this proposal too -- I mean this request. We're not ready for it. And I think we don't have no Park Service lands right in our Refuge land. Simply something that's out of our -- out of our hands right now.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Andrew. I apologize for -- I had got disconnected and tried logging back in and for some reason it wasn't connecting properly so I apologize for that.

I believe Pippa or Ms. -- sorry, I don't want to butcher your last name, is it Marcy.....

MS. OKADA: It's Marcy Okada.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, Marcy Okada.

MS. OKADA: And I -- I don't know -- this might be an OSM question, I don't know if the RAC

would be able to remain undecided or whether they would be able to defer to other RACs because they don't have any National Park Service lands in their region.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair and Council, this is Eva.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi, Eva.

MS. PATTON: I can answer that. Hi, I can answer that question. Thank you, Marcy. Yes, as always the Council has an option to support or oppose a proposal, or support with modification and the Council always has an option to take no action for the reasons stated or take no action directly but defer to other Councils that have more relevant or are closer to an issue in their region. And in this case with there being no Park Service lands within the YK-Delta RAC region, understanding the Council isn't as familiar with the process, so the Council has all those options, to support or oppose, take no action or defer to other Councils within the National Park Service region.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Eva. Ms. Okada, for all the National Park Service's that are located, we do have some type of systematic relationship with the Park Service land areas, and if they're going to be being used, is this going to be open up to all Alaskans and all U.S. that have lived here for a year and have -- they have gained their subsistence rights, would they be eligible to apply for an individual C&T even though they're not Alaska Native?

MS. OKADA: So this would be opened to all Federally-qualified users so under the umbrella of Federally-qualified user. That would mean that they would need to live in a resident zone community and they're also -- they don't need to be Alaska Native, they just have to be a Federally-qualified user.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Ms. Okada, would you please state the definition of a Federally-qualified user?

MS. OKADA: So that would be someone who lives in a rural area, they can't be living in what

we consider the classified urban areas that are listed in the Federal subsistence book. So for instance they can't be living in Fairbanks or Anchorage or the Kenai Peninsula, they would have to be living in a rural area.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - typing)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: So a Federal-qualified subsistence user is defined as a person who lives in a rural area who does not have a dual home, meaning they cannot live in rural Alaska and have a homestead in Anchorage or any other city, and this does not only apply to Alaska Natives but it also applies to the whole entire United States, correct?

MS. OKADA: So they would have to be a rural Alaska resident, you know, it's a rural Alaska resident, which doesn't depend on being Alaska Native, it would just be a rural Alaska resident that's qualified to harvest wildlife on Federal public lands.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: And currently right now, do people currently hunt on National Park Service lands or is that not -- they don't do it right now?

MS. OKADA: Yes. So people do hunt on National Park Service lands, so Parks and Monuments, the qualification is that you live in a resident zone community. So each of the Parks and Monuments have listed communities, rural communities that qualify and then for National Preserves, on National Preserve lands, both subsistence and sporthunting occurs.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Do they need a special permit for that?

MS. OKADA: Before hunting on Parks and Monument lands they don't need a special permit, they qualify automatically because they come from one of the rural communities or they live in one of the rural communities that automatically allow them to hunt on Parks and Monument lands. And if they do not live in one of those resident zone communities, that's when they apply for a 13440 permit. Let's say they live on private land just outside of a Park or a Monument, and they want to be able to hunt within that Park or

Monument, that's when they apply for a 13440 permit.

But on -- for the most part, folks that hunt in Parks and Monuments, they live in what we call a resident zone community. So they're already living in a rural community.

MS. KENNER: Madame Chair, this is Pippa.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Marcy, if you don't mind I just wanted to add some clarification that might be helpful. As has been mentioned in the Yukon Delta region there isn't any or much Park land, so I wanted to explain that before our Federal Program began, the National Park Service anticipated ANILCA Title VIII and they had already started their Federal Subsistence Management Program for the National Park Service and they were already recognizing customary and traditional uses the priority on Park lands and Monuments. And so when Title VIII was written, it incorporated this National Park Service process into our regulations. So our Council is familiar with the way the Federal Subsistence Management Program manages subsistence on Federal public lands that don't include Park lands and Monuments. What Marcy is talking about is the process that the National Park Service uses and has always used, even before our Program on Parks and Monuments. So it is a different process that you're not familiar with. What they do is they identify resident zone communities, which are rural Federal subsistence users in certain communities that have been approved for customary and traditional uses in the Park, in the Hard Park and on Monuments. And that's what Marcy is explaining. And so you wouldn't be familiar with this process.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Pippa.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair, if I may, this is Eva.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Eva.

MS. PATTON: Maybe I could help clarify

just a little bit more, too. What is unique about the National Park Service is that sometimes -- so as Marcy mentioned there's resident zone communities and they are approved for C&T for hunting and fishing, subsistence activities within the Park but on occasion there are individuals that live in very remote locations, not directly associated with an actual community, but they're still within the Park Service zone and the rural residents to be considered for C&T and so that's where the individual C&T comes in and Marcy could help elaborate further there. So it's kind of another step for individual C&T.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I apologize, Eva. For those of you on teleconference can you please star six to mute your phones we're getting some background noise and some banging on tables and people talking and it's overriding the people that are currently talking. If you could please remember to star six to mute your phones while you're not talking, star six to unmute your phones, would be greatly appreciated, and go ahead and push your mute buttons on your telephones and that way we're respectful to those that are talking and to those that are trying to listen. We want to ensure that we are giving our full and undivided attention to those that are speaking, with as much respect as possible.

Thank you.

Sorry about that Eva.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair. That was it. Just to help distinguish between the C&T that communities have and then there are some individuals that live near Park Service lands and are rural residents but not directly associated with a community, and that's where the individual C&T comes in that's at question here.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Eva. Marcy, here's one more question.

MS. OKADA: Okay.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Since I live out here in Bethel and I'm a Federally-qualified user, can I apply for an individual C&T use determination on Park Service lands?

MS. OKADA: Seeing that you, you know, being out in Bethel and seeing that -- I'm not sure where the closest Park Service land would be, you would have to show that there has been generational use of that particular Park Service land. I mean all of that's incorporated into the application in order for us to process it. But it's.....

MS. KENNER: So, Madame Chair, this is Pippa. So, yes, you could apply. You are a rural resident of Alaska and you could apply for an individual customary and traditional use permit in Denali National Park for instance.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. And a followup question. Do you guys have a limitation on how many people you guys are going to be allowing to be harvesting in National Park Service so we do not deplete those resources?

MS. OKADA: So as of right now we haven't received many applications for individual C&T and we don't anticipate to receive that much more should we take on this responsibility, but, yes, the.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not static)

REPORTER: Okay, hold on, could we hold up just one minute.

MS. OKADA: Okay.

REPORTER: So if everybody could check their phone and see if they're on line -- or I mean muted or not muted.

MS. PATTON: Hi, folks on teleconference, maybe if everyone would just take a moment and look at your phone and cell phone and mute button and see if that might take care of the static.

REPORTER: I will check in with the

operator, and if I can't have that go away we may have to -- I may have to dial back in to reconnect, so we'll give it a minute or so.

MS. PATTON: Thanks, Tina. Standby everyone, we'll see if we can address the static.

Thank you.

(Pause - contacting operator)

REPORTER: I'm on hold for the operator still, sorry folks. I think a faster way would be for me to disconnect the line and reopen it.

MS. PATTON: We're going to disconnect, folks, and we'll reopen up the line. So just take a.....

REPORTER: Oh, wait a second, hello. Hello, Eva.

MS. PATTON: Yep, I'm on Tina.

REPORTER: Okay, so I'm not going to reconnect the line because there's nothing wrong with the line, it's just somebody's line, you know, went out for some reason. So I'll just hold while everybody comes back on line. Okay, sorry.

MS. PATTON: Yeah, thank you, Tina, appreciate that.

REPORTER: Yep.

MS. PATTON: Sometimes the connection cause static and there's nothing to do.

REPORTER: No, nothing anybody can do. Okay, stand by.

MS. PATTON: Okay, maybe we'll just touch base and see if we have our Council members still on.

Alissa, are you still on.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Phillip Peter.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Mr. Slats.

MR. SLATS: I'm on if you can hear me.

MS. PATTON: Wonderful, thank you.

And do we have Thomas Alstrom.

MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, hello, Eva, this is Thomas, I'm still here.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Thomas.

And Ray Oney.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, I'm still here.

MS. PATTON: Okay, thank you, Ray.

And James Landlord.

MR. LANDLORD: I'm still here.

MS. PATTON: Wonderful, thank you, James.

And Carl Maxie.

MR. MAXIE: I'm still here, there was a lot of static.

MS. PATTON: Great. Thank you, Carl.

John Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Here.

MS. PATTON: Great, loud and clear, John.

And Phillip Peter, Sr.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: We're still waiting for Phillip Peter and Alissa Rogers are you back on line with us.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Still waiting for Alissa Rogers and Phillip Peter. And Marcy were you able to stay connected.

MS. OKADA: I called back in.

MS. PATTON: Okay, great, thank you, Marcy. You're loud and clear. And do we have Alissa Rogers on yet.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Okay. We'll just give another minute for Chair Alissa Rogers to join us.

(Pause)

MS. PATTON: Hello, do we have Phillip Peter on line. And Alissa Rogers.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Okay, folks, we'll just give one more minute here for our Chair to join the Council. And for the public attending, too, we'll conclude with the Council's questions and take care of that and then we will have time for public comment as well so we'll still get to that.

Thank you.

MS. PATTON: Okay, Alissa's trying to dial in now and hopefully she'll be able to join us shortly.

Do we have Phillip Peter on line.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: And just one friendly reminder again now that everybody's dialed back in, to check your phone and hit star six to mute or hit your mute button, and make sure we're all muted again now

that we're all called back in on line.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, Eva, did you want to check in and see if we have everyone or should we.....

MS. PATTON: Hi, thanks, Alissa. We've got everybody on.....

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MS. PATTON: .....we didn't have Phillip yet and then you were the last to join here so, yeah, we can continue with the discussion. And then we did have -- when we had gotten cut off before we did have some folks from the public that had questions too, so let them know we would get to public questions after the Council had an opportunity to have their questions and answers taken care of.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yep, thank you, Eva. Do we have any further comments or questions from the Council.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Ms. Okada, have you guys done any public consultation with the tribes near these National Park Service's like Nome, Kotzebue, King Salmon, Naknek?

(Teleconference interference - participants not static)

MS. OKADA: So we have not done tribal consultation with the communities but we have been presenting the same information to our Subsistence Resource Commissions.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Did you get any public feedback?

REPORTER: Okay, hold on, hold on. This is Tina, the court reporter. While we might be able to hear a few words while we're on line, the static is interrupting the recording. So whoever just signed in, it's their phone that has the static, of

course, I don't know who that is, but if you just signed on could you please mute your phone or hang up and redial.

Thank you.

MR. PETER: Hello, this is Phillip - (static)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Mr. Peter, we can't -- we can't hear you.

MR. PETER: Hello. I got that -- that telephone.

MS. PATTON: Phillip, I think it might be your phone that's pretty staticky. Do you want to hang up and try calling back in and see if it's better.

MR. PETER: Okay, I'll do that.

MS. PATTON: We can barely hear you.

REPORTER: Okay, thank you. And I'm sorry about that, for the interruption, Alissa, but it wasn't recording. So I hope Mr. Peter can get back on.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: No problem.

Eva, did you want to wait for Mr. Peter to get back on line?

MS. PATTON: I think, Alissa, if you want to continue with your question, I'm afraid actually it might be Phillip's phone that's causing the static, so we'll see when he calls back in if that static picks up again and we might see if there's another phone line that he would be able to use.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Yeah, this storm's coming down on us pretty hard out here.

MS. PATTON: Yeah, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Let me see if I remember my question, yeah, public. Were you guys able to get any public feedback, Ms. Okada?

MS. OKADA: Madame Chair. We have been

presenting the same information to each of our Subsistence Resource Commissions as they've been meeting. We've also been presenting to each of the RACs as they've been meeting and have been able to receive public feedback that way. So those are the two avenues we're using at this time.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Will you guys be presenting these to the tribes and the communities themselves that will be highly affected?

MS. OKADA: So as each of the Park coordinators, you know, reach out to their affiliated communities, I can't speak for them, but I know for the two Park Units I work for, that does provide an opportunity for us to share this information. Meetings with tribal councils have subsided a bit because of hunting season, but as they pick up again we will be sure to share it with the tribal councils that are affiliated with each of our Park Units.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Ms. Okada. Those are all my questions. Does anyone else on the Council have any questions for Mr. Okada.

(No comments)

MS. PELTOLA: Madame Chair, are you asking for the public or Board members?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Council members.

MR. LANDLORD: Madame Chair, James Landlord.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Landlord.

MR. LANDLORD: So, Marcy -- thank you. So Marcy is this information is for informational purpose only for the YK-Delta?

MS. OKADA: No, Mr. Landlord. We'll be sharing the same information at each of the 10 RAC meetings and requesting from each of the 10 RACs as an action item, a decision to be made.

So, you know, I apologize for -- you know I know there's no Park Service lands in the YK-

Delta region so there's some confusion about all of this, but it was requested that we share this information with all 10 RACs equally so it's being done at each of the 10 RAC meetings.

MR. LANDLORD: Okay. So if there is no National Park Service in the Yukon Delta we still need to vote on it?

MS. OKADA: Yep. As Eva had stated, you can either support, take no action or defer to the other RACs.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Or oppose.

MS. OKADA: Or oppose.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, do we have any more Council questions, any more questions for Ms. Okada?

MR. PETER: This is Phillip.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Phillip.

MR. PETER: I got cut off a lot of time, finally I go to -- I got a phone problem.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, I think we all are having issues. This weather came in is not being nice to our cell phones.

MR. PETER: Yeah. This -- what we're talking about, proposal, it's -- it looks like it's not to the Kuskokwim region and Yukon region, and I'm thinking that I want to hear from those people who have already been using this system in their area, community. And it looked like, when I read it, I note on this draft on 196 on the last page, I got question on this one, the permits will be issued for lifetime of the applicants so long as they retain their eligibility as a Federally-qualified subsistence user, and who's going to review the permit eligibility and make their -- audited by subsistence coordinator at least every five years. What will happen if that person is not reporting, is it going to be losing this permit if it's not reporting to this Park Service coordinator, or Superintendent or whatever?

MS. OKADA: So we would be kindly requesting that the permittee keep us updated on whether they still live in a rural area and because we have their contact information we would be reaching out to them every five years or so just to make sure that they still qualify.

MR. PETER: And how many permits issued for this -- what we're talking about? How many?

MS. OKADA: So currently we only have maybe about a dozen or so and most of those are for the Southcentral region, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. So right now we don't have too many permits in existence and we don't anticipate too many applicants since most folks already live -- they already live in a rural village.

MR. PETER: Okay. Maybe what I'm thinking is my question will be if we deferred it to Norton Sound or Western it will be okay.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Peter, we could definitely do that, it's definitely on the table for us if we want that.

We actually do have Eagle National Park that runs, I believe up on the northern Yukon River, Ms. Okada; is that correct? The high water -- or not the high water, the upper ends of the water by Eagle?

MS. OKADA: So we have -- that's correct. The upper parts of the Yukon River is Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, it's a Preserve Unit so in this instance this doesn't pertain because we're just speaking to National Parks and Monuments. But there is National Park Service lands on the farthest region of the Yukon River currently.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Ms. Okada. Any more Council questions.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing none I'm going to open the floor to the public. We have Mary Peltola.

MS. PELTOLA: Thank you, Madame Chair.

I just had some basic questions to try to help me get a better understanding of this request. Marcy, because this is the Park Service and because it's going through the Federal Subsistence Board, do you imagine that other Department of Interior land agencies like Fish and Wildlife Service would, at some point, adopt the same practice?

MS. OKADA: Ms. Peltola. I wouldn't really know the answer to that in regards to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it's -- going back to the Park Service, as Pippa had mentioned, we were already set up through .808 of ANILCA to -- you know we have Subsistence Resource Commissions in existence for our Parks and Monuments and on a smaller scale they're similar to the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. So because we have these Commissions, you know, Park Service is trying to move forward with taking this type of action. But I can't really speak to what U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would do.

MS. KENNER; Madame Chair, this is Pippa.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Yeah, the other agencies have shown no interest in developing an individual customary and traditional use permit so the answer -- to answer -- Ms. Peltola, the answer is no, there's nothing on the horizon for developing this process on other Federal public lands.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PELTOLA: Okay. So this is not the same kind of circumstance, Madame Chair, like all -- you know, subsistence users in the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, we live within the Refuge so I'm just trying to understand better, it sounds like you have to still be a rural person and a Federally-qualified user but you don't live on the Park Service land; is that correct?

MS. OKADA: Yes. So if you -- if you don't come from one of those resident zone communities and you live on private lands just outside of Park or Monument, that's when the opportunity would arise for an individual to apply for a 13440 permit and

individual C&T.

MS. PELTOLA: Okay. Thank you, Madame Chair. Those are my only questions.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mary. Any further public comments or additional Council comments.

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: If they ever get this one passed or vote for it the question will be will it affect all the Federal agencies too and you need to -- all the individuals need to apply every five years.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: They will be under review. If they apply and they get approved, they will be under review every five years to determine if they're still eligible or not.

MR. ANDREW: So everybody needs to apply every so many years or every year?

MS. OKADA: Nope, they don't have to -- once they apply every five years it would be reviewed whether they still qualify as a rural resident.

MR. ANDREW: Quyana.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, do we have any more further Council comments or questions, or public comments or questions.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair, this is Eva, did we lose you?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I'm still here. I'm just waiting to see if anyone else had.....

MS. PATTON: Okay.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: .....something to say before we close the motion on the floor.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair.

MR. PETER: Madame Chair, this is Phillip. If we're going to vote, by voice vote or we could vote it together.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Well, it's up to you guys what you want to do. I personally -- I want to hear what you guys think first before I let you know what I think.

(Laughter)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Anybody think what we should do with this proposal.

MR. OLICK: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I'm sorry, go ahead, who was it?

MR. OLICK: Under public comments. Anthony Olick from Kwethluk Incorporated.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Anthony.

MR. OLICK: Yes. Since Kuskokwim area and our brothers and sisters close by on the Yukon don't have a Park Service or any kind of Monument thing that we're -- we have a Park Service, no we don't -- I don't feel comfortable as a Federally-qualified subsistence user around this Kuskokwim area to move forward with this, I'd say I'd give it to whoever has those Park Service to go ahead and do what with what they want to do with this one. But as an individual Federal-qualified user, I, myself -- if I wanted to hunt somewhere, this, I would have to fill out whatever necessary paper to hunt in that area like Denali, that's if I ever have enough money to go there and get whatever I want. That would be okay. Since my -- we don't have Parks, Reserves here, I don't feel comfortable accepting what this represents.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you Mr. Olick for your public comment.

(Pause)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Alrighty Council what say you. What do you guys want to do with this one?

(Pause)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing no takers, may I suggest that we take no action on this item and then I'll tell you my reasoning why. But if you guys want to -- that's my suggestion that we take no action on this.

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: I move that we take no action on this proposal.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Andrew. Can we get a second.

MR. ALSTROM: I second, this is Thomas.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Alstrom. Now, further discussion and justification.

I do not believe that this adequately written out with all the significant details. It's a little too vague. I understand it's the beginning process but all beginning processes need to go through a specific process and the chain of command prior to being brought out. I understand why they would send it out to the Councils to see what's going on and possibly give input and add or delete from what's being proposed in front of us but due to the lack of information and time given to reach out to -- for the Council members to reach out to their public and then also not being able to have adequate information from other regions who will be highly affected by this and not hearing what they have to say first, prior for this to becoming in front of us, I do not feel comfortable making a stance on supporting or not supporting anything without adequate information to make a sound judgment.

Those are my justifications.

Anyone else.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Anyone else on the Council have any more comments or justification.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing none, could we get a question.

MR. ANDREW: Question on the motion.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Question made on the motion. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All those opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you guys. If it's okay with you guys I'd like to break for lunch, anyone want to break us out for lunch and then we'll meet back here let's say 1:30, is that okay?

MR. PETER: Yes, Ma'am. Yes, Ma'am.

MR. LANDLORD: Okay.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Awesome, you guys are doing wonderful. Thank you so much for your participation and patience for this morning. We'll see you all back at 1:30.

(Off record)

(On record)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Let's go ahead and call this meeting to order, 1:34 p.m. And we're going to start with agency reports this afternoon. They have a limit of 15 minutes. If you need more time go ahead and just let us know. We'll go ahead and start with the tribal governments, 11A, Orutsararmiut Native.....

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: .....Council. Before we.....

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: .....get started -- I'm sorry, Eva, go ahead.

MS. PATTON: Oh, I'm sorry, Madame Chair and Council. I would like to make an update. We -- because we did have some topics that were added to the Council agenda at the request of the Board that took a little bit more time this morning, and we have a lot of people that we are looking forward to hearing everyone's reports this afternoon, and I apologize I know people spend a lot of time to put together the presentation and information for the Council, but if we could ask everyone that's presenting this afternoon -- I know normally we give folks 15 minutes or less, if we could ask each of you to try to expedite that just a little bit so that we're able to make sure that we get to everybody today, that would be very helpful.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Eva for the update.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Alrighty folks. I know we would have public testimony at lunch but due to the time constraints we're just going to jump right into tribal governments and have the public participate in between sections. All right, let's go ahead and get started with the tribal governments, 11A, Orutsararmiut Native Council with Janessa Esquible and Avery Hoffman and their crew.

Janessa.

MS. PATTON: And just a quick reminder to folks on teleconference, please mute your phones, there's a lot of background noise so if everybody could just take a moment, look at your phone and hit the mute button or star six so that we can hear our presenters.

Thank you, so much.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Hi, can you all hear me?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, Ma'am.

MS. PATTON: Yes, much better now, thanks Janessa.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Thank you. Avery is right down the hall and he'll be able to join me soon. Do you mind if we just wait for one minute.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Sure we can.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Thanks so much.

(Pause)

MS. ESQUIBLE: Okay, he's here. All right so I'll start off, I'm Janessa Esquible and living in Bethel, originally from Detroit. I've been working with ONC for four and a half years now as the partners biologist but I most recently transitioned into the Natural Resources Director position and with me I have Avery Hoffman.

MR. HOFFMAN: Hi. My name is Avery (Indiscernible) Hoffman. I graduated from Bethel Regional High School and now attend Oregon State. I've been with ONC Fisheries for four years now. As of July 20th I am the ONC representative on the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission.

MS. ESQUIBLE: And I'll move over to slide No. 2.

MR. HOFFMAN: This year in the photo of our crew, from left to right, sitting in the chair is Arles Andrew, his first year with us. In the back we have Matthew Van Kapsner, he's been with us for three years. There's me in the middle. Then we have Elijah Lindly with his third year. And the two women are Lilly Rickard, her second year, and lastly Danielle Lowrey with her third year with us.

MS. ESQUIBLE: And I did just want to give a quick update, Danielle Lowrey on the far right, she did recently accept the opportunity to work with us so she'll be our new Partners biologist and the tribe's first Yup'ik biologist. So we're really excited to

welcome her on board with us.

And now we'll move into Slide 3.

MS. PATTON: Yea, congratulations.

MR. HOFFMAN: Subsistence harvest surveys are conducted at the Bethel boat harbor and at the local area fish camps. Towards the end of the season our crew also does surveys for fish camps that are on the BNC property. We partnered up with ADF&G test fishery and when they bring back fish we take the otoliths out of the king salmon and place them into little vials, this is supported by Daniel Schnidler with the University of Washington Schools of Aquatic and Fisheries Science. Along with the kings and the rest of the fish, the fish are given out to the community, mainly elders, widows and disabled.

One of our newest partnerships (Indiscernible - muffled) and ONC Staff joined with the operation activities for a month in August.

On to the next page we had the subsistence harvest surveys. They are around May 13th and July 12th during the main part of the chinook salmon run. This year at the Bethel boat harbor the crew recorded 436 unique fishing trips and 108 unique fishing trips in the local fish camps. On weekly average we go to 26 fish camps. This number has been declining over the years for a variety of reasons. The data collected from the fishing trips are compiled into a report and is given at the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group meeting.

MS. ESQUIBLE: And then on to Slide 5, ending season results. I won't go over all this since we're short on time today. But every visit that we have, every interaction we have with fishers at Bethel area fish camps and then at the boat harbor we do ask if they have any comments or concerns that they want to share about the fishery or the health of the fishery or the management of the fishery and so these are some of the comments compiled at the end of this season.

Many requested more opportunities to fish and structuring the fishing opportunities at different times to accommodate higher tides. And we've been hearing this for years that these 12 hour fishing

opportunities are too short, stressful and can result in combat fishing. There were also concerns about the entire river not being closed during times of conservation and towards the end of the season the majority of respondents had not yet met their harvest goals for kings, reds or chum salmon, but many families were still actively fishing and some had already transitioned on to berry-picking. So hopefully we'll get a better picture of where people are at with meeting their needs through the post-season work that's done.

And now I'll move on to Slide 6.

MR. HOFFMAN: The king salmon age, sex and length sampling program this season. This season we were a crew of 19 samplers and got about 1,200 samples. They get paid $5 per sample (indiscernible - cuts out) last year due to less chinook.

On to the next slide we have the otolith sampling. We sampled less otoliths this year than last year. We sampled about 325 (ph) chinook. The crew also helped Gary DeCossas with the egg fecundity project removing eggs from a variety of lengths of chinook. Otoliths are sent to the University of Washington to be analyzed to better understand changes in relative productivity from year to year in the Kuskokwim tributaries.

MS. ESQUIBLE: And then moving on to Slide 8. These are a couple of the programs that normally we'd be happy to share with how they went but this year they were cancelled due to Covid19. So the annual science and culture camp was cancelled back in April due to in-person school closures and the fact that we weren't able to house students here in Bethel safely. But with that being said, we were successful in working with the Kuskokwim Campus and University of Alaska-Fairbanks to get the camp accredited so that if and when we proceed with the 2021 camp that all of the eligible high school students will be able to receive two college credits for completion of the program.

And the Aniak and Salmon River Math Science Expedition that's led by Kuspuk School District along with Excel, Native Village of Napaimute and we weren't able to participate in that expedition this year because it was cancelled.

And the moving on to Slide 9 for our 2020 fall and 2021 winter projects we're continuing to work with Fish and Game on the post-season subsistence harvest surveys. So we're actually working on that project right now. We just hired eight local fisheries technicians in Bethel and we'll be doing our first post-season training this weekend and began surveys Sunday October 11th, of course, adhering to Covid19 best practices, social distancing, wearing PPE when interacting with the public. And we're also going to be using an abbreviated survey form, which will likely only take one to two minutes to complete the survey with randomly selected households.

And then for the Indigenizing Salmon Science and Management projects, so this is a partnership project with the University of Alaska-Fairbanks that I think I've mentioned to you all before. We're unable to conduct interviews right now so instead we're working on coding interviews, which really just entails looking through the interview transcripts and identifying major themes that have emerged from all the wisdom and knowledge that was shared with us from this project within the Kuskokwim region and we hope to continue this work with the continued funding we recently received come winter and spring.

And then on to Slide 10. Just a few updates from our department. So, I, as I mentioned earlier, transitioned into the Natural Resource Director position. We just recently filled the ONC Partners Biologist position with Danielle Lowrey from Bethel, which we're really excited about. We also have a new position within our department, the Jesuit Volunteer Americorp Caroline Black, she's been wonderful. She's serving the role of the natural resources technician. And a lot of her work focuses on building capacity within our department, more specifically related to food sovereignty, helping to expand our subsistence food distribution programs and thus far she's really worked hard on the moose distribution program and helped us to coordinate more proxy hunts in Bethel. And then we also have Janelle Carle, who transitioned into the environmental coordinator position and she hired Cynthia Allen to fill the technician role and we're currently recruiting for a Native American lands environmental mitigation program coordinator.

Moving on to Slide 11. These are just some photos to highlight some of the moose distribution this year. We've been really grateful for all of the donations and the proxy hunters for their time spent and serving the elders in the community.

And with that I just want to say Quyana to everybody for listening and for having Avery and I present to you today and to the community and all of our project partners and we'll be here to take any questions if there's time or if you have any.

MR. HOFFMAN: Thank you everybody.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Janessa. Thank you, Avery. That was amazing. So good to hear great updates coming from tribes. Really great to hear your expansion and filling in your positions, and congratulations to all of you, I'm so proud of you.

All right, do we have any comments, questions from the Council for ONC.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing none. Thank you, Janessa. Thank you, Avery. Congratulations again to your whole entire team.

We'll hear from the Native Village of Napaimute, do we have Mr. Gillikin on line.

MR. GILLIKIN: Yep, Madame Chair, I'm here.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, go ahead, take the floor.

MR. GILLIKIN: Great. Well, good afternoon Council members, Madame Chair. My name is Dan Gillikin and I'm the Environmental Director and the Partners biologist for the Native Village of Napaimute. My presentation this year is going to be a little bit different than in the past. I'm going to show a lot less data and a lot more pictures so I hope everybody got a copy of the presentation and if you would just follow along with me.

So if you'd go to the second page,

please.

MS. PATTON: Dan, this is Eva. Just a quick update for the Council. So we just got that from Dan and were able to email it to folks Monday night so unfortunately there's a couple Council members that don't have access to email. But that should be in your email from me for the NVN report. And then I'll give you guys update, too, most of them we got in advance and we were able to mail to you but if you're able to look in your email that's where Dan's nice full color pictures are located.

Thanks, Dan.

MR. GILLIKIN: Okay, thank you, Eva. Yes, I'm guilty as charged, I got it in late. So well hopefully folks are looking at it and I'm on a Slide 2 or Page 2.

So like for many this year 2020 was a special challenge. Along with the Covid19 causing everybody to have to do business in very different ways at Napaimute, as most folks probably are aware, we had some pretty severe flooding as a result of ice dams in the river. It damaged probably two-thirds of our homes up there, destroyed or severely damaged two-thirds of the homes up there. And we lost a lot of our equipment that we use for our project work. But luckily enough I had a stellar crew this year. I had a really outstanding crew and we were able to get in there and get things repaired, pull things out of the woods, get roads fixed and do it all very safely following all the social distancing and Covid guidelines.

And you can see on the top pictures there how severe the flooding was. That's our airplane hanger at the airport up there, and it was almost all the way up to the very roof as far as the flooding goes. And boats inside there got damaged pretty severely.

So Slide 3 please.

So the crew was so outstanding I wanted to take a moment to recognize them.

Our coordinator this last year was Amanda Hoeldt, she's from Aniak and she's a recent

graduate with a fisheries degree from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. Cameron Lingnau was our Aniak test fish crew leader. He's a former ADF&G employee. Kattie Hoeldt was our crew leader for the Salmon River weir and this is the third year, actually, that she had worked at the Salmon River weir. During the off season she's an Excel Alaska employee. I had some really great interns and technicians. Kayla Morgan from Aniak here. She was a Salmon River weir technician. She's currently going to school to study environmental sciences. Jena Boelens was also a Salmon River weir technician, and she's a high school student here in Aniak. She was a youth hire. She's very interested in the sciences. We had a Napaimute this year, Brianna Sherer and she's attending college down stateside as well, studying environmental sciences. And we had Mackenzie Smith as an ANSEP intern and she's also interested in natural sciences and attending school.

So I wanted to just take a moment to quickly recognize them.

So Slide 4 please.

So, you know, we have a Partners Program here at Napaimute and I've talked about this many times before but our four main partners program areas of focus are, you know, partnering with agencies on monitoring projects. Advising our council on fisheries related concerns and representing their interests at these meetings. Youth outreach, in particular our George River internship and our Math Science Expedition work. And then to hire and build a local professional work force. And so everything we do in the Partners Program is aimed at building capacity in each of these areas.

So Slide 5 please.

So one of the monitoring projects that we had last year that was funded through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program was the Salmon River weir. It operated from July 1 to August 20th. And it focus is to count just chum and chinook salmon. And this year we actually operated it a little bit longer, a week longer because the chum run was so late. The number of chum and chinook that they counted should provide a really good estimate for expanding to the total escapement. And the crew experienced the normal

challenges that you have at any weir. You know they had to battle high water, bears, bugs, you name it, but also because we didn't operate the weir last year and we had been operating it with year to year funding, not consistently the site had kind of gotten out of hand a little bit and overgrown and we had to make some significant repairs to the infrastructure up there and cleaning up of things.

You can see in the graph above the gold line in the graph, for chinook escapement we were in the mid-range of what we've seen in previous years so the numbers were not stellar, not great, but they weren't the worst that we've seen, for sure.

Slide 6 please.

So the other monitoring project that's funded through the FRMP Program is the Aniak test fishery. The Aniak test fishery indexes abundance by collecting catch per unit effort information and relative species ratios. It's conducted right out here in front of Aniak twice a day and the data that's collected is transmitted to the managers on a daily basis. It operated from June 1 until July 15th. And the water this year was about average to a little bit high and cooler than in the last two previous years. Again, the chinook CPUE that you can see on the graph on the left, it was in the mid-range of what we've seen in the past previous years. And just so folks know that most of the fish that we capture in that test fishery are released unharmed. About 95 or better percent. So there's actually very few mortalities associated with the fishery and the ones that do die we distribute to the community.

So Slide 7 please.

Another area that we work a lot in is the water monitoring projects. We do this through the Indian General Assistance Program funded by the EPA. One of the areas of focus that we've been working on in the IGAP, we call it, Program, is to standardize the way we collect data up and down the Kuskokwim here. Many of the tribes up and down the Kuskokwim have this same program and they all have these water quality monitoring aspects to their programs. And what we're trying to do is standardize that so that we can each contribute our data to a larger data set that we can

then analyze long-term. We're currently working with EPA to develop a standardized protocol and methodology and then we'd like to get as many tribes as possible involved in the entire Basin on the Kuskokwim in following this protocol so we can find out more information about water temperatures here on the Kuskokwim.

An additional project that I've been working on with the University of Montana and funded through the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund is to model satellite imagery and correlating that to stream temperature data. We deployed 30 data loggers, these are continuous data loggers out in different habitats on the Aniak River and then all the way from the Swift River all the way down to the mouth of the Kuskokwim. Hopefully by marrying those two data sets and analyzing those two data sets, we can then model stream temperatures up and down the entire Kuskokwim in an affordable way.

So if we go on to Slide 9.

So our -- I'm sorry, Slide 8.

So despite all the Covid challenges, we were able to hold the George River internship safely this year. We did have to reduce the number of interns that were involved. We had 11 interns and that kept us within CDC guidelines. And, again, it was a great experience for the students, the George River internship, the students go out and they learn different stream survey techniques for -- we spend about 10 days in the field. They learn about stream ecology, all those sorts of things, and it was a great success this year, even with all the challenges that we had. And I highly recommend that if people want to see a great video and interviews with the interns this is that website that I have shown on the slide there.

So like Janessa said, we weren't able to do the MSC this year. There was just too many kids from different areas in order to fall within the CDC guidelines and make that work, so hopefully next year we can make that happen.

So the last slide, please, Slide 9.

Again, I just want to thank my crew,

great job they did this year with all the challenges that they had.

With that, if you got any questions I'd be happy to answer them.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Dan. Any comments of questions from the Council.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Dan, so much for the great presentation. I really wish we could see all these in person. It's one of the highlights of our meetings is getting to see everything that you guys are doing.

I want to tell you you've shown you have a really great crew and I'd really like to see those interviews. Would you be willing to give that address to the website just in case folks who want to see that website that don't have access to the PowerPoint.

MR. GILLIKIN: Sure, I'd be happy to do that. I'll send you a link to the GIR video and then also a link a to the Salmon River weir FaceBook page that shows a lot of really great pictures and things posted on that this year.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: That would be amazing, thank you so much.

MR. GILLIKIN: You're welcome.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Maybe you could send it to Eva and then Eva can distribute it for us.

MR. GILLIKIN: Will do.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. That's awesome.

Well, I did want to say that I'm sorry to hear about your guys' home damage from the break up. Let us know if there's anything we can do to help with you guys up there, if you guys need any support or any

letters of recommendation for helping you guys get back on your feet.

MR. GILLIKIN: Thank you, we appreciate that.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any other comments or questions for Mr. Gillikin.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Alrighty, we'll go ahead and move on to the Native organizations, AVCP with Ms. Jennifer Hooper, are you with us today.

MS. JONES: Jennifer Hooper is actually in a Director's meeting with our directors over here at AVCP. My name is Paige Jones, I'll be presenting for her this afternoon.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Thank you, Page, you have the floor.

MS. JONES: Yeah, hi, my name is Paige Jones. I am the resource coordinator here at AVCP. I actually focus on forestry. I work under Jennifer Hooper who is the Program Director for all of natural resources.

Since last spring the Regional Waterfowl Conservation Committee met in early February and then had to cancel our August meeting due to Covid. We've participated in conservation efforts for emperor geese and will continue to work with the Fish and Wildlife Service on efforts throughout the winter.

A detailed survey was developed and shared with the tribes and the public with the idea being that responses received would help provide some focus and priorities for the natural resources Staff to work on in the coming years.

A new division structure has been implemented here at AVCP. Natural resources has joined the Realty and the Cultural and Environmental Sciences Department to create the Lands and Cultural Resources Division. John McIntyre was hired as the director for oversee the division. There may be some changes to the structure and services provided by each program.

We have continued our involvement in the YK CEDS process and 2020 updates and will be working with various regional entities to address specific action items developed at a work session that was held in August.

We continue to provide financial support for the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission.

We again provided a fisheries technician to the Pilot Station sonar project this year. Donald Kelly came back for his 22nd year with the project and with AVCP, so, yea Donald.

John Orr left his position at AVCP in March and his position is currently being advertised. That position will continue to focus on Bering Sea issues, like shipping fisheries, response, but that person will also assist with other issues and needs of the department.

We engaged with the KRSMWG meetings and the YRDFA teleconference schedule to stay informed on the salmon fisheries this past summer.

For the next several months we will probably continue to work from home and work remotely and probably have limited to no travel due to Covid.

The AVCP Annual Convention was held on September 23 on line.

We will continue to participate in the NPFMC process.

We will continue to work with the regional compacted tribes on determining locations for forestry and HFR projects.

And we also will work with other regional entities on how to respond to the disastrous Yukon salmon fisheries.

Since we submitted our presentation we also have a couple updates as well.

We have support, year two of a temperature sensor project in the Kuskokwim Bay in

partnership with the CQN working group and the Alaska Seafood Cooperative.

We have a fisheries disaster update. We are actively engaged in working with several Yukon partner organizations on submitting a fisheries disaster request to the Governor for commercial fisheries. We are also working on a process to request subsistence fisheries disaster assistance as there's no current mechanism in place.

We started discussions with the KRITFC on what a Kuskokwim disaster request might look like.

AVCP will be supporting all of these efforts whether we are directly involved with the request or providing regional support.

Forestry and hazardous fuel reduction projects are currently being designed to hopefully start back up in the region in 2021. Our goal is to revive an active forestry program in the region and to provide fire safety information and opportunities to communities within the region.

That's all I have so thank you and if you have any questions, please, I will do my best to answer.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Paige.

MS. JONES: I know that was a lot.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: You did a wonderful job, though. Do we have any comments, questions for Paige from the Council.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi, Paige, it's Alissa. I had a question in regards to the emperor geese, I know we've been discussing it in the past couple meetings, but do you have an update for us on what the current data is right now or what you've collected and what, in detail, survey are you guys discussing about the emperor geese?

MS. JONES: I do not -- that is more of what Jennifer has been working on so I currently do not

have that data. I can see if Jennifer does and I can pass that question along to her. And you said this is Alissa?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, you can send it to Eva and Eva can make the distribution to the Council and have updated information on the emperor geese.

MS. JONES: Okay. I can do that. I can pass that along. I'm sorry I don't have a better answer.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, no, that's okay. It's just been one of those on the shelf topics that we have interest in since it is a part of our subsistence.

MS. JONES: Absolutely.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further questions for AVCP.

GABRIEL: I got a question.

MS. JONES: Uh-huh.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead.

GABRIEL: Gabriel from Alakanuk tribe.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Could you.....

GABRIEL: Could you email the fishing disaster and how you fill them out and then Alissa you can email all the information to the Alakanuk tribe.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Did you say Gabriel -- Gabriel you said you wanted a fisheries disaster packet?

GABRIEL: Yeah, to the Alakanuk tribe and also the other tribes so, you know, they'll know what to do.

MS. JONES: Uh-huh. Absolutely. We are currently developing it especially for subsistence. Like I said there's not a mechanism in place to ask for subsistence relief but we are working on finding a way

to request that. And as soon as we get a packet together for tribes we will absolutely be sending that out.

GABRIEL: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Would it be at all possible to have that packet put on the AVCP website so that people can submit their packets on line.

MS. JONES: Yes. I will see if we can do that. I will look into that.

MS. FITKA: Hi, good afternoon, this is Serena, Madame Chair. With YRDFA.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, and say your first and last name and your affiliation.

MS. FITKA: This is Serena Fitka, the Executive Director with YRDFA. I'll be covering the fishing disaster in my report.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Thank you.

MS. FITKA: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: We'll be standing by. Any further comments or questions for AVCP at this time.

MR. MAXIE: Madame Chair. Carl, Napaskiak.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Maxie.

MR. MAXIE: Yeah, my question is, does this disaster fishery have a timeline for filling out the application?

MS. JONES: I'm actually going to probably ask Serena to cover that when she goes into her report as well. Just because ours is -- we're still in such an early early part of it. I am -- I don't think there's really a timeline as of right now because it's still so early in the process.

MR. MAXIE: Yeah, thank you for that information, especially with this Covid19, we definitely need the public out there, the fish, some people couldn't get fish so that would be nice.

Thank you.

MS. JONES: Uh-huh. Yep.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Any further comments or questions.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing none, thank you so much, Serena [sic], you did a good job.

MS. JONES: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Look forward to hearing you in other meetings.

All right, we'll move on to the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission with Mary Peltola.

MS. PELTOLA: Good afternoon, thank you, Madame Chair. My name is Mary Peltola and I work as the Executive Director for the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission. I know many of you know a bit about our organization. We really appreciated the help that this RAC Provided to the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission back on March 16th and 17th as we prepared our -- prepared tribes and ourselves to go before the Federal Subsistence Board.

So -- but let me just do a little bit of an overview.

We have 33 tribes along our river. The Fish Commission envisions a bountiful Kuskokwim watershed which provides for present and future customary and traditional subsistence harvest and uses. We are guided by Yup'ik and Athabascan values. Our mission and vision center on unity, sharing and abundance and scarcity and remembering our purpose as people of the Kuskokwim.

Our Executive Council has seven members. They each represent a different unit along the river.

Our Chair is Charlene Eric, she's from Chefornak, or Unit 7. Our vice Chair is Mike Williams, Sr., you all know he's from Akiak, and he represents Unit 4. Our Secretary/Treasurer is Jonathan Samuelson, he's the Commissioner for Georgetown representing Unit 2. Joe Petruska from Nicolai represents the headwaters Unit 1. Unit 3 Gerald Kameroff from upper Kalskag. Unit 5 is the only unit that we have that's comprised of one community and that is Bethel, and Avery Hoffman is the Commissioner for Bethel. Unit 6 is represented by Golga Frederick and he is from Nunapitchuk. And our elder advisor is James Charles from Tuntutuliak. And James attends all of the meetings, all of our Executive Council meetings as well as the in-season manager's meetings.

Our in-season managers are elected by all of the Commissioners from the whole water shed and they are represented from different portions of the river. The upper most.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Mary.

MS. PELTOLA: Yeah, go ahead.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Sorry to interrupt Mary. I'm sorry to interrupt you but you're -- let me have people silence their phones really quick.

For those of you on teleconference we're getting some background noise and it's obstructing what Mary is saying, we can't make out some of the things that she's saying on there. If you could please remember to star six to mute your phones or look at your cell phones or your touchtone phone and push star six to mute your phones that will reduce the background noise. We want to be respectful to the people who are speaking or presenting and also for those who are trying to listen in to the conservation and pay attention into our teleconference meeting today.

Thank you.

And I apologize for the inconvenience and sorry about that, Mary, for the interruption. Go ahead.

MS. PELTOLA: No, I appreciate it, thank you.

So the upper most portion of the river is represented by Megan Leary, she is the Napaimute Commissioner and she also brings data that she personally collects asking, you know, fisher people up in the middle section of the river, she's been really great the last two years. James Nicori from Kwethluk and he represents the middle portion of the river. And he's been an in-season manager now 2017, '18, '19 and '20. Jackie Cleveland from Quinhagak represents the lowest portion of our footprint. And she and Megan are both in their second year as in-season managers.

This year we had three in-season managers and an elder advisor because late in the year our fourth in-season manager who was Robert Lekander resigned as a Commissioner to spend more time fishing and being at his fish camp.

Because of the abbreviated nature of this summary I'm going to focus on some highlights.

I can't thank you enough for this RAC Council's support to the Federal Subsistence Board for having Federal management of the chinook season. The pre-season forecast was very optimistic. The pre-season forecast was based on the 2019 run, and it was 220,000. The preliminary estimate of the run at this point is 106 -- no 116,196, that's the run reconstruction model announced on September 21st by Fish and Game. About 50 percent fewer than had been predicted by Fish and Game forecast. They -- the Fish and Game estimated an escapement of about 88,000 chinook and that left about 28,000 for harvest. And most of you know that the average subsistence harvest on the Kuskokwim has -- is about 88,500 but it's been as high as 110,000. So clearly getting less than 30,000 did not come anywhere close to meeting people's needs.

Another complication was that the chum

run was very poor.

The estimates now of passage past the Bethel sonar, the number of chums that Fish and Game estimated passed Bethel sonar was actually fewer chums than kings -- or chinooks that they counted. So that's very alarming. Most people recognize that there is a -- you know a lot of people meet their food security needs by supplementing their harvest with sockeye and chums so when the chum run was very low it does cause a lot of reason for concern.

Some of the 2020 outcomes and lessons learned.

The 20 -- well, one thing was, you know, this realization that the Department forecast is very uncertain and the in-season managers and the commissioners really took that into consideration and early in the year, in April and May, the commissioners, Executive Council and the in-season managers, they set out a strategy for this year recognizing that the forecast is so uncertain and so -- like -- like one of the bullet points in our summary is the 2020 salmon run was a reminder that subsistence harvesters and our in-season managers can identify a poor run based on their own observations combined with in-season information. It is critical to continue bringing the best available salmon science and traditional knowledge forward to inform management decisions. Without the precautionary approach taken by the commissioners, the fish commissioners in 2020, with harvesters sacrificing subsistence harvest for conservation the chinook salmon spawner escapement goal of -- or, you know, what the escapement actually was 88,000, that would not have been achieved. Both of the agencies had advocated for fishing every other day for 24 hours a day and the commissioners are always pushing for as much subsistence fishing as they believe the run can sustain. And I know that it's a very stressful job for the in-season managers and for the commissioners but I -- I'm just blown away by how well they balance those two critical needs.

The chinook and chum salmon runs were very poor. If the trends of both low chinook and chum salmon runs continue, subsistence harvesters will not be able to meet minimum food security needs. And although a healthy sockeye run was observed in 2020, it

is difficult to harvest them without negatively impacting the chinook and chum salmon run.

The other thing I want to just quickly mention because it was mentioned earlier today is the importance of those community-based harvest monitoring surveys. That's really one of the only in-season tools that the in-season managers have to assess the run in real-time. There is a lot of confidence in looking at the numbers of subsistence fishermen because we feel that they really know how to fish and they know where the fish are. And if our subsistence fishermen are not catching that is a clear indication that the run is not doing well.

Another concern that we learned this year was the concern about kind of hanging on to that optimistic forecast and continuing to say even until July that the king run is just late and it will materialize. It actually did not materialize unfortunately. And I think that all of us, you know, collectively managing together, the tribes, as well as Fish and Game and Fish and Wildlife Service, I think we need to do a better job managing expectations and taking honest assessments of the run in-season.

With that, I'd like to open it up to any questions if anybody has any.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mary. Do we have any comments of questions for Mary, Council.

MR. PETER: Hello. My name is Phillip from Akiachak.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Phillip.

MR. PETER: Thank you for your report, Mary. It's really hard to control especially in the area of Kuskokwim River. When there's a first opening from the mouth all the way up to the boundary below Aniak I know it's really hard to control the people because first opening in the morning there are a lot of fisher -- fishing, worst than the commercial fishing for subsistence fishing. And there are no control -- control in the river. We need to fix that. We need to fix it real quick because if we're going to conserve on those -- conservation on those chinook we need to start

talking how to control the subsistence fishing. Because we have more -- more population, we're increasing more -- increasing more population in the communities.

For example, I'm not going to blame no one, I'm not going to, you know, in my own opinion, I'm going to talk -- I'm going to talk in my own opinion and the fact -- fact -- because if we control it, subsistence fishing, we need -- we need to do it by either household or by group family. Like in the past, we used to fish when our mom ask us to fish. This is not like this no more. We get permission from our own mother who's the head of the household who cut fish. It's not like this no more. We need to do something and talk with those younger and married couples. So we need to fix it now for next year instead of combat fishing, some good spot, hot spot fishing area there are more people fishing in there, we had to wait for our turn to drift. We're not controlling it. We're not controlling it.

So -- and those chums were low again. I want to know why those chums are decreasing. What happened to them. They are dying off or are they starving in the ocean or the -- I don't know, the -- or by bycatch in the ocean. So we need to do something about it.

Thank you, Madame Chair for letting me speak.

MS. PELTOLA: Madame Chair, do you want me to respond?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, please, thank you, Mary.

MS. PELTOLA: Okay. Yeah, Quyana, Phillip. I completely agree with everything you're saying and our commissioners say the same thing. And Akiak has wanted and has brought to the Federal Subsistence Board year after year to do something like what was done in 2015, where every village has a certain amount that they can harvest and that's something that the Fish Commission will definitely want to ask the new Refuge Manager about. We have a new Refuge Manager, we're very excited about him and his family moving here and coming up with solutions.

I know that -- I mean I feel like it's amazing what has been accomplished by tribes, you know, the last five, six years, but I know that we can always do better. And this issue of everybody fishing during the same 12 hours bothers everyone. And, you know, the people who were commercial fishermen know that there's more people out there during the subsistence times to fish than there were during commercial times. And, you know, that designated fishermen thing didn't work for many communities but I think we're still looking for solutions that would work for each community to be able to harvest a certain amount but not during those short 12 hour windows.

So we're still trying to think of ways to do that, Phillip.

Quyana.

MR. PETER: Okay, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mary. Do we have any more comments or questions for Mary.

GABRIEL: I have a question, Gabriel from Alakanuk tribe.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Gabe.

GABRIEL: Were you the one that can email the subsistence and the commercial fishing disaster relief stuff?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: No, that's someone else. She's talking for the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission.

GABRIEL: Okay.

MS. PELTOLA: Madame Chair, could I respond briefly to that.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Sure, go ahead.

MS. PELTOLA: We are going -- we are sending a letter to the Governor asking the Governor to ask the Department of Commerce at the Federal level for a Federal fisheries disaster. Right now there really isn't a way to do it for subsistence fishermen but

we're also, you know, thinking about and ways to address subsistence needs.

Under the CARES Act, the State of Alaska for fisheries got $50 million. But with all the different stakeholders, commercial and personal use and subsistence, there probably won't be much money leftover per fishermen for that. So we're still working on it Gabriel. And ours -- you know, I think you would have a better chance in Alakanuk working on the commercial fisheries disaster part of it because there is a -- you know there's a long history of being able to address commercial disasters.

GABRIEL: Okay, thank you. I got another question too. I'm thinking like way ahead of time, like next year, you know, if they have to cut off commercial fishing or subsistence, you know, I would have to pick like subsistence or the commercial, which one would have to go first. That was the question.

MS. PELTOLA: Madame Chair. It seems like you should be able to do both because both of those have such a big impact in Alakanuk.

GABRIEL: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Do we have any more comments or questions for Mary.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Madame Chairperson.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, first last name and affiliation.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Hi, this is Boyd Blihovde with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Yukon Delta. Is it okay for anybody to give comment or just Council members?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, go ahead. No, you're fine, go ahead.

MR. BLIHOVDE: I just wanted to say thanks to Mary for the report and thanks for the InterTribal Fish Commission for being a strong partner and helping manage the fish resources here at Yukon Delta and it's challenging and often times a

controversial topic, so thanks for the report and the info. And looking forward to working with you in the future.

MR. WILLIAMS: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you very much, Mary, for that good report. And to the new Refuge Manager, welcome to our lands and to the Refuge. And I think the last five years that we've been helping manage the chinook fishery and it was in trouble, yeah, we worked hard to rebuild that and we continue to try to rebuild that and to respect the way of life and our approach, since 2015 has been just that, and I think that 2015 was one of the best co-management programs that we have seen with the lack of time of planning. And we were very successful in meeting escapement goals ever since and we'll continue to work hard with 33 tribes, the Refuge and Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

You know I think we're all in it together and, again, I'd like to thank our Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission Staff and for working hard and it's been wonderful to see a partnership growing instead of not working together, we are working together, and so that is the ultimate goal.

And, again, thank you very much for the good report, Mary. And, welcome, again, Boyd.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Quyana.

MS. PELTOLA: Quyana, Madame Chair. Quyana everybody.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Did we have any further comments or questions for Mary.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you, Mary, for your update and all the great and wonderful information and stuff that you guys are doing. It's really good to hear that your program's expanding to all these different types of projects and

programs to ensure that management has everything that they need to make decisions for the best of the subsistence and conservation.

All right, we're going to move on to Kuskokwim fisheries community-based monitoring program by Mr. Lamont Albertson.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Let's just give him a minute here to get off mute if he's on line.

(Pause)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Lamont Albertson, are you with us?

MS. PELTOLA: Kevin Whitworth is also on the line.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Let me make a quick reminder here. For those of you on teleconference land please star six to mute your phone or press mute on your button. We're getting some background noise and we want to make sure we're being respectful to those who are trying to listen and those that are speaking or presenting during this meeting. I'd appreciate it.

Kevin, did you want to step in for Mr. Lamont Albertson.

MS. PELTOLA: I also have something written if Kevin isn't available or can't do it.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: We could just wait for Mr. Lamont Albertson when he gets on line, we'll come back to his.

Moving on to Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. Serena Fitka.

MS. FITKA: Hi, good afternoon. I also have Catherine Moncrieff with me to give the report.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you. Can you spell her last name.

MS. FITKA: M-O-N-C-R-I-E-F-F.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

MS. FITKA: Good afternoon, Madame Chair and Council members.

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council. I am pleased to represent the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. My name is Serena Fitka and I am the YRDFA Executive Director. I'd like to bring your attention to our report in the booklet on Page 214 and the supplemental updates from YRDFA where we highlight our accomplishments and update the RACs on our fisheries research management program projects and other activities.

I'd like to start with our Yukon River salmon pre-season management meeting which was held on May 12th, 2020 via teleconference. Due to Covid19 we were unable to host a face to fact meeting this year. We had 116 participants join the call and it lasted for 150 minutes. The main concerns from the river were the 2019 die-off of chum salmon, which no one had any answers to besides stress and the ability to harvest fish in light of the pandemic. Since we are not able to meet face to face we will be hosting a post-season meeting on December 17th, 2020 by teleconference.

Moving on to the Yukon River in-season salmon management teleconferences. This year we were able to extend our teleconferences by having two extra calls in May, and two extended calls in September. This year has brought higher than average participation along with the length of the calls. For the 2020 teleconference season we averaged about 120 minutes with 80 participants per call. If you look at the report in the booklet we indicate a breakdown of each call with the number of participants, length of the meeting, and highlights. You can also access the teleconference summaries on our website at yukonsalmon.org.

The communities reported high water throughout the summer season with little to no

subsistence harvest for chinook and chum salmon. Ichthyophonus was reported early on in the season by fishers and remained prevalent in the salmon throughout the fishing season. We'll have an article by Stan Zuray, on of our board members from Tanana about the disease. If you do not receive the newsletter we encourage you to become a member by going to our website at yukonsalmon.org.

We were awarded additional funds to host monthly off-season teleconferences in October, November, January and February. Our first teleconference will be held on October 20th at 1:00 p.m., and we will be discussing the fishery disaster declaration process. Other monthly topics include a bycatch update and research presentations that are pertaining to the Yukon River. We will be utilizing the State in-season teleconference number and pin.

A group of organizations which include Jennifer Hooper with AVCP, Stephanie Quinn-Davidson with the Yukon InterTribal Fish Commission and TCC, Jennifer Williams and Ragnor Alstrom with Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association along with Catherine Moncrieff and myself of YRDFA have been meeting since August to discuss how we will approach the fisheries disaster requests. It was determined that YRDFA would take the lead since our organization represents all of the Alaska communities along the Yukon River. YRDFA will be partnering with the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association urging the Governor of Alaska to declare a fisheries disaster for the Yukon River, not only for commercial, but a subsistence disaster as well. We will be emailing the tribes and city offices with a sample resolution and support letter by the end of this week. If your tribe or city has already passed a resolution those can be emailed to Serena@yukonsalmon.org, which will be used as support in our request to the Governor.

To give a brief overview of how the fishing disaster declaration request works, it is designated -- I'm sorry.

To give a brief overview of how the fisheries disaster declaration request works we will write a letter to the Governor to request he declares a fisheries disaster for the Yukon. With that letter we will provide him with the support letters and

resolutions from the tribes and municipalities and Native corporations and other entities, agencies and organizations that are affiliated or work on the Yukon River. If he does declare a disaster, the Governor will reach out to the Department of Commerce to request that the Yukon River regional disaster and then from there we will come back and meet and that's when the lobbying process will begin.

Moving on to our next project. YRDFA is being contracted by ADF&G to help assist with the post-season subsistence salmon harvest surveys. We have our intern (indiscernible) coordinating the local hires in the communities. Due to Covid19 all surveys are being conducted over the phone and on line. The project started in the lower Yukon River in the community of Kotlik on September 6th and have been working their way up the river. Currently they are getting surveys in Galena. We would like to encourage all the communities to participate during this historical low salmon run. ADF&Gs goal is to survey 80 percent of each community.

Moving on to the Bering Sea and Interior Tribal Commission. They just celebrated their one year anniversary. They had their strategic planning session last week to create a long-term plan for the Commission. The Bering Sea and Interior Tribal Commission is posed to protest BLM's final resource management plan, if it mirrors BLM's draft plan. BLM's draft plan opens 99 percent of the 13.5 million acre planning area to mineral development, rejecting 4 million acres of tribal nominations for watershed protections and removing almost two million acres of existing protections. The Tribal Commission is focused on concerns about irretrievable damage to watersheds and impacts to food security. BLM will report the final plan is expected this year.

Next I'd like to turn it over to Catherine.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. MONCRIEFF: Hi, can you hear me?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, standby just a minute. For those of you on teleconference land please star six to mute your phone or push mute on your

telephone or touchtone dial, we want to be respectful to those that are presenting and try to keep as much background noise to a minimum and side conversations to a minimum so that we can hear clearly of the agencies that are reporting today. We want to be respectful to those that are listening to the conversation as well as the presenters who are presenting.

Thank you, I greatly appreciate for your participation. I apologize for the interruption, go ahead.

MS. MONCRIEFF: Thank you. Can you hear me?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, Ma'am, we can hear you now.

MS. MONCRIEFF: Okay, hi, great. Hi, thank you for the opportunity to report to the Yukon Kuskokwim Regional Advisory Council. My name is Catherine Moncrieff and I'm the YRDFA Staff anthropologist.

I'd like to start by giving you some highlights of the in-season subsistence salmon survey program, which is a Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program funded project. This year our surveyors were able to conduct 384 interviews with 146 households in 10 Yukon River communities stretching from Alakanuk to Eagle during the chinook salmon season in their communities. This year we encouraged the surveyors to call into the teleconferences after their contract ended to gain more participation and information from their communities. And, finally, as you can see from the table in our supplemental report, many of the participating fishing families did not meet their needs this year. On the handout in our report you can find additional details about this program's results from the summer.

Next, I'd like to update you on another Fisheries Resource Monitoring Project program.

Due to the Covid19 pandemic, we have requested and received an extension on our partnership project with the Tanana Chiefs Conference: Local and Traditional Knowledge of Anadromous Fish in the Yukon Flats with a focus on the Draanjik Basin. The new end

date will now be March of 2022. Both the community meetings and the biological field work were affected by the pandemic travel restrictions. After restrictions over the spring and summer, the biological field work is starting up again and our TCC partners will be conducting an aerial survey in the Kevinjik Creek in the Teedraanjik Drainage to identify and locate a coho spawning area that has not yet been added to the anadromous waters catalog. They also take age, sex and length samples and tissue samples for genetic analysis. Additional biological field work is planned for spring and summer of 2021 to document rearing juveniles, spawning adult chinook and chum salmon. Finally, community meetings to present proposed results will take place as soon as travel is safe or we will redesign this portion of the project.

YRDFA has an exciting new project starting in December.

This new project funded by the North Pacific Research Board: They Told Us There'd Come a Time, A Catalog of Elders Warnings. This project is a partnership between YRDFA and the Tanana Chiefs Conference Young Adult Emerging Leaders. Our research team will be trained to do archival research and ethnographic interviews. Our goal is to seek traditional ecological knowledge of conservation practices and warnings of potential declines in salmon. In the first year we will focus on archival research, ethnographic interviews in the second year, and in the final year we will produce outreach products that share our results.

Now, I'd like to turn it back to Serena and we can take questions at the end if you have any, if there's time.

Thank you for your time.

MS. FITKA: Thank you, Catherine, for providing your updates on your projects.

YRDFA would like to let you know of upcoming meetings. Our annual board meeting will be held on December 15th and 16th through teleconference. We are requesting nominations for one alternate in the Coastal communities, representing Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay and Chevak, also alternates for Districts Y1, Y2,

and Y5. We are also looking for two young fisher seats, one to represent the lower Yukon River and one for the upper Yukon River. And you can please contact me if you would like additional information regarding the open seats on the board.

The post-season meeting will be held on December 17th and will be utilizing the in-season teleconference number and code, which is 1-800-315-6338, the code is 98566#.

Like I said we got awarded for off-season teleconferences and they'll be held the third Tuesday of October and November, January and February at 1:00 p.m., our first teleconference will be on October 20th and we will be talking fishing disaster declaration process.

Quyana to everyone for listening and we welcome any questions at this time.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Really quick, what was that 1-800 number again.

MS. FITKA: It is 1-800-315-6338, and the pin number is 98566#. It is the same as our in-season teleconference number.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Quyana. Thank you guys for your great and wonderful presentation. Council members, do we have any Council comments or questions for Serena and Cathy [sic].

MR. SLATS: Can you tell me the name for that lady other than Serena?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Catherine Moncrieff.

MR. SLATS: Catherine Moncrieff?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes.

MS. MONCRIEFF: Yes.

MR. SLATS: Okay, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi, Cathy, would you be able to spell your last name for Mr. Slats.

MS. MONCRIEFF: Yes, I can. It is spelled M-O-N-C-R-I-E-F-F, like Friday.

MR. SLATS: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further comments of questions for Serena or Cathy.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Serena, one real quick question, when do you need your applications for your seats due, when are they due?

MS. FITKA: We will take them up until November 15th.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: And are these applications on your website?

MS. FITKA: We currently do not have applications, we just recommend that people that are interested in serving on the board submit a letter of interest.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MR. LANDLORD: Madame Chair, James Landlord.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, James.

MR. LANDLORD: I just wanted to welcome Serena to her position for the Yukon Drainage Association.

MS. FITKA: Thank you, James.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, go ahead, Ray. It sounds like you're breaking up out there.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you. I'm having trouble with my mute button here. Yeah, first of all I want to thank Serena Fitka for being the Director for the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission. I know Serena is originally from Mountain Village and she is the daughter of William Alstrom and (Indiscernible)

Alstrom from Mountain Village.

Thank you, Serena.

I have a question going to, Catherine Moncrieff mentioned addressed drainages that are not documented that are spawning areas, is this on the Yukon side and if that's the case, how many of those are going to be looked at as far as trying to document some areas that are spawners on the Yukon drainage, Alaska side.

Thank you.

MS. MONCRIEFF: This is Catherine. I'm trying to -- I'm sorry, I'm not sure I caught exactly what you were asking Mr. Oney.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, Catherine you mentioned that you were going to address drainages that were spawner areas that you were going to start documenting them; if I understood right?

MS. MONCRIEFF: Are you asking about the project we have up in the Draanjik drainage near Chalkyitsik, the FRMP project?

MR. ONEY: Maybe. I know you mentioned earlier that you were going to start documenting.

MS. MONCRIEFF: Oh, yes, okay.

MR. ONEY: I don't know which area you were talking about and I was just wondering if that was on the Alaska side, and if that's the case then how many of these areas that you mentioned that may be, you know, spawning areas that need to be looked at as far as documentation.

MS. MONCRIEFF: Thank you for that question. This is Catherine. I think that you're asking about the project I reported on that's taking place up in the Draanjik drainage near Chalkyitsik where we're working with the Tanana Chiefs Conference Partners biologist Brian McKenna, and he's going to be investigating or his Staff is going to be investigating a coho spawning area in the Teedraanjik drainage which is also sometimes called the SalmonFork of the -- or actually it's the Teedraanjik Creek and that's one we

know of for sure or that we've heard quite a bit about and it's been mentioned through traditional ecological knowledge and even place name and we are talking to people about other areas they may have seen and the biological field team will be going out to take samples and look for evidence so that we can -- if we can find anything else up there.

So that's the only one that I can speak to at this point. I hope that answered your question.

MR. ONEY: Yes, I think it does. Thank you, Catherine.

MS. MONCRIEFF: Thank you.

MS. FITKA: Madame Chair, this is Serena.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Serena.

MS. FITKA: I'd just like to make a correction for the record, Mr. Oney, I am the Executive Director of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association and I am originally from St. Marys.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Well, I welcome to you and thank you for being here. Congratulations on your position. It's good to hear that our own are running these organizations. I think that's one of the first as far as our whole entire meeting so far.

Great, wonderful, thank you guys. If there's no more further questions or comments we'll go ahead and move on to Yukon River post-season.

But first I want to check in to see if Mr. Lamont Albertson is on line.

MR. ALBERTSON: Yes, Ma'am, I am, Alissa, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Yeah, you're very welcome. Go ahead with the Kuskokwim fisheries community-based monitoring program. Sorry about that Lamont, go ahead.

MR. ALBERTSON: That's all right. Thanks for calling me and letting me know there, I

thought -- I couldn't figure out what was going on this morning, I just got a little confused.

But the community-based monitoring program is a program that has been going on for several years in other circumpolar areas on Earth. And we started thinking hard about it just about four, five or six years ago. And what we've been going through with our salmon on the Kuskokwim River a community monitoring program just seemed like it would work very well for us, in that, we could provide that real-time catch numbers for the two governance organizations out there, well, three now, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission. And by providing that real-time catch information, harvest information in our communities, that allows the decisionmakers to kind of put all that information in front of themselves and decide when we might be able to have another opening or if we should have an opening if the numbers are down, and that there were some other considerations, or reasons why we wanted to have a program like that. And that is the educational value for our professional biologists out there, in that, they could learn traditional knowledge from our elders and from the young people who would be gathering this information in the communities. And then of course also our young folks who -- they actually receive training, understand more about Western science also so that we might bring those two areas of expertise -- we consider our traditional knowledge, the people in the villages collecting that information, we think those are scientists just as sure as we think the Western trained folks are scientists too. So with the information from both those groups of scientists, then we're able to come up with some numbers which allow for recommendations regarding openings.

So we work with the ANSEP program in trying to line monitors up to work with us. We work with the elders and the tribal members in their communities in selecting someone. Also with our schools, we check with the science teachers and also try to get recommendations on those young people who might be very interested in the sciences to try to give them some employment during the summer months also.

But the whole idea is -- I really appreciated what Ray Oney had to say earlier today

about global warming or climate change, because everything that he was saying is right on target and I think some of the people who are going to experience the worst effects the soonest are in our polar areas and a lot of scientists think that right now. And so that's one of the reasons we really are pleased that we're able to start this program because we realize that our subsistence resources are finite, they're just not going to last us forever. And while we're focusing on salmon right now, we hope in all of our communities that our village monitoring program will extend to all of our other subsistence resources also.

So we feel like this is really a worthwhile program. We think it provides great biological information for people who need that information to make good decisions. We think it provides great community information. The State right now does not allow their biologists to attend our Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission management meetings but they do use the information that our tribal members and the young folks we hire to help us operate our program, they do accept that information so they are, in fact, using tribal information to make decisions that they have to make. But it's -- we're hoping to expand into other communities and we're hoping to start covering other resources and so it's just kind of in the very beginning stages of what the program can be. The main thing we need is funding and we need people working at the Refuge there in Bethel, because I'm talking specifically about the Kuskokwim, I'm not familiar with the Yukon River's program yet, but we need their support very much, and we do have their support, but we need is funding support also. The Federal government derives about 80 percent of all the funding for research on the Kuskokwim River and the State administers those funds for them. And so we're thinking that the Federal government will kind of look kindly on the efforts that we're making because we make every effort that we can to cooperate with both government agencies who make those decisions along with our contribution.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. ALBERTSON: That, in a nutshell, is kind of what we're hoping to accomplish out there and we hope that we'll be able to carry that program on

this summer and even expand it to other communities.

I'd be glad to answer questions.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Albertson. Thank you for being able to participate with us. For those of you on teleconference land hit star six to mute your phones, doublecheck and see if you're on mute or not on mute on your cell phones, we're getting some background noise and some wind it sounds like.

Is there any Council members who have comments or questions for Mr. Albertson.

MS. PELTOLA: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mary.

MS. PELTOLA: Thank you. I just wanted to share, with Lamont's permission, that the number of interviews that the monitors did this summer in four communities was a total of 443 surveys.

MR. ALBERTSON: Yeah, thank you, Mary.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Congratulations, Lamont, that's a really good number.

MR. ALBERTSON: Well, we got some hardworking Yup'ik kids out there and they're the ones who ought to be congratulated.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Duly noted. Hopefully we'll be able to get it out there and let them know how proud of them we are.

MR. ALBERTSON: Yes.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hopefully they'll become scientists, young scientists and fisheries biologists and just like our monitoring students and interns have -- became our now biologists for our tribes.

MR. ALBERTSON: Absolutely.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: So pretty excited that you guys have this opportunity out there for our communities. Congratulations.

MR. ALBERTSON: Yep, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further comments or questions for Mr. Albertson.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Madame Chairperson. This is Boyd at Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Boyd.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Yeah, I just wanted to comment that -- to Mr. Albertson and to Mary, and the whole InterTribal Fish Commission, and I guess ONC as well who does a similar program that since I've been here, new, I'm only here two months or so in the Delta, I've been very impressed with the community based monitoring approach and I certainly hope we can work together from Fish and Wildlife Service to help get funding and expand that program. Good funding to you and hopefully we'll be able to work together to expand it like you expressed.

Yeah, congratulations, I think it's a great program and it really helps us understand the fishery from a subsistence standpoint, so thanks for sharing.

MR. ALBERTSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Boyd.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further comments or questions.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Albertson, I greatly appreciate you being here with us today.

MR. ALBERTSON: Thank you, Madame Chairperson.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. I just want to make a really quick note here. It kind of just dawned me as I was talking just a minute ago, I've

been following these meetings since I was nine years old with the YK RAC and over the years I continue to hear our elders talk about we needed more Native youth involved and being biologists and scientists and being on these boards and being a part of these scientific based data collections. And I truly believe we are really making them proud hearing all of these young youth and interns that are in this science and fisheries and data collecting fields, I truly believe we're really making them happy and proud and fulfilling their dreams. We are our elders dreams.

Thank you.

We're going to be headed on to Yukon River post-season salmon report with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I'll let you guys decide who's going to take the lead on that one.

MR. MASCHMANN: Madame Chair, this is Gerald Maschmann with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I'll be taking the lead. Let me know if I'm not coming in clear.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. We can hear you loud and clear, thank you, Gerald.

MR. MASCHMANN: My name's Gerald Maschmann and I am the acting Yukon River Federal in-season manager. I'm going to give you a summary of the Yukon River salmon season. Eva should have sent you a document, I think, Monday. The first 16 pages is ADF&Gs 2020 preliminary Yukon River season summary, that's for the summer season summary. I won't read this document but I'll give you a few highlights. It's a pretty thorough document and it gives a pretty detailed outline of what happened this season for the summer season. The last two pages of that document is the fall season summary, which I put together and I'll get to that here after the summer season.

We entered the 2020 chinook season -- summer season with a chinook outlook for a run size of 144,000 to 220,000 chinook salmon which would be slightly smaller than 2019 run size. And the summer chum outlook for an average run of about 1.9 million summer chum. You know, management strategies were formulated based on this pre-season projection.

Fishermen were consulted during the YRDFA's pre-season fishermen's meeting and the strategies that were put together were similar to the strategies we've used in previous years with kind of the main strategy is starting out the season on six inch or smaller mesh gillnet at the beginning of the season and then fishing restrictions or relaxations would be based on the in-season assessment.

Some of the early thoughts are that commercial fishing for summer chum would most likely begin with selective gear such as dipnets and beach seines with the live release of chinook salmon, depending on the processors ability to operate due to the Covid19 problem.

As we entered the season the lower Yukon was restricted to six inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a half window schedule. The southern Coastal district was also restricted to six inch or smaller mesh gillnets. Page 5, Table 2 of that document summarizes the subsistence salmon fishing restrictions for the summer season. As the season progressed it appeared that both the chinook run and summer chum runs were coming in weak and late with the chinook salmon run coming in below the low end of that pre-season projection. So with this information a subsistence salmon fishing period was cancelled in Districts 1, 2 and 3, and then it was returned to a half windowed schedule using selective gear only. About this time we also offered a couple of short selective gear commercial fishing opportunities for summer chum but harvests were really small. By early July chinook salmon projections were improving and indicating a run above the low end of the projection, subsistence salmon fishing in the lower river was relaxed back to six inch or smaller mesh gillnets on a half windowed schedule and, then relaxed further to 7.5 or smaller mesh gillnet to the full regulatory window schedule for the rest of the season. And it was really about this time when we realized that, you know, summer chum were coming in really late. We had that really late entry of summer chum in 2019 so we were still thinking, you know, maybe that they were going to come in but we were also noticing like other drainages that the four year old component seemed to be really low and so really the summer chum didn't come in like we thought.

Upper districts, Districts 4, 5 and 6, you know, they saw similar restrictions as the lower river, restrictions to six inch, you know, some pulled periods, some half windowed schedule, it was really similar to the lower Yukon. You know due to Covid19 concerns the lower Yukon test fishery was operated with kind of reduced operations and it was run by local fishermen and to minimize the potential spread of Covid19 the Middle Mouth portion of the test fishery was not operated this year.

Page 9, Tables 3 and 4 list various project escapement information.

Overall both summer chum and chinook salmon runs entered the river late and with many days of low abundance before the first pulses showed up. This long slow trickle trickling entry really affected our management decisions this year.

The Pilot Station sonar was fully operational this year. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the village of Pilot Station really worked hard together to formulate a sonar operations plan that would allow for the safe operation of the sonar while protecting the village, so we need to give a lot of kudos to the village of Pilot Station for that. The Pilot Station chinook salmon estimated passage pass was 162,000 fish. Again, this was above the low end of our outlook of 144,000 fish. Unfortunately the estimated passage of summer chum salmon was only 691,000 fish, and this was well below the average and the third lowest passage on record. But it was still above the lower end of the drainage-wide escapement goal of 500,000.

The Andreafsky River weir, the Gisasa River weir and the Henshaw Creek weirs did not operate this year due to Covid19 concerns.

The Anvik River sonar was not operated this year due to Covid19 concerns.

The Salcha River counting tower was not operated this year. And I think that was primarily due to funding issues.

The Chena River counting tower/sonar project did operate with -- they had a lot of

operational difficulties this year due to high water. So we might be getting some post-season numbers from that later.

The Eagle Sonar was fully operational this year. Again, the village of Eagle and the city of Eagle and Fish and Game worked really hard to make sure everyone stayed safe to get that project in. Unfortunately our expectations of what we thought would be going to Eagle were not met, only 31,200 chinook salmon passed the sonar this season, you know, this number is well below our Canadian obligations and below what managers expected based on the Pilot Station sonar, and our genetic assessment project.

There were reports of ichthyophonus infection in subdistricts 5A, B and C this year, as well as -- the drainage had high water like all summer and so this may have contributed to increased mortality of Canadian-bound chinook salmon. Again, we'll be thinking about that this winter.

And as you've heard, of particular note, the proportion of age four summer chum salmon at the lower Yukon test fishery was the lowest since sampling began in 1964.

The last two pages of that document is a summary of the fall season.

Fall chum and coho salmon are still migrating through the Yukon and the ADF&G preliminary fall season summary won't be available until this winter or early this spring.

We entered the 2020 pre-season fall chum salmon run projection was for a run size of between 800,000 to a million fish, strong relationship between the fall chum and the summer chum run. Well, after the poor performance of the summer chum, the fall chum salmon projection was revised to less than 450,000 fish and the coho salmon run was projected to be near average size for the 2020 season. Pre-season projection of less than 450,000 fall chum necessitated starting the season on the regulatory windows schedule with 7.5 inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. A run of this size also precluded any potential commercial fishing openings.

As the fall chum run reached its typical midpoint in the lower Yukon it became clear based on assessment information that this year's fall chum salmon run was coming in below the threshold to allow any salmon fishing, including subsistence salmon fishing. Subsistence salmon fishing for fall chum salmon was essentially closed throughout most of the drainage for the rest of the season and depending on their area subsistence fishermen had various options to fish for other species using selective gear and four inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear.

So the final passage estimate of fall season chum salmon past the Pilot Station sonar was 262,000 fish. Based on genetic analysis only 189,000 were fall chum salmon, and that was due to a late pulse of summer chum salmon entering right at the beginning of the fall season. And this number is well under the 300,000 to 600,000 fall chum necessary to meet the drainage-wide escapement goal. This is the lowest fall chum salmon passage on record.

Coho salmon ended with a below average passage past the sonar of 108,000 fish.

Assessment at the Eagle sonar actually ended today -- or actually ended through October 6th, and there were approximately 21,000 fall chum salmon have passed the sonar through October 6th. It's unlikely the interim management escapement goal for Canadian origin fall chum salmon of 70 to 104,000 fish will be met.

The Teedriinjik River, which is formerly the Chandalar River sonar and the upper Porcupine River sonar out of Old Crow were not operated this season due to Covid19 concerns.

Fall season assessment will continue through October and into November with the Fishing Branch weir in Canada as well as aerial and foot and boat surveys for fall chum and coho salmon on the spawning grounds.

Similar to the summer chum salmon run, age four fall chum run were well below average. The chum runs were down across the state in the Kuskokwim and Norton Sound, chum stocks also saw lower than expected age four chum, and I expect there'll be

further discussion this winter concerning the possible causes of the lower than expected age four class and its impact on the 20/21 salmon runs.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Staff want to extend our best wishes and hopes that folks along the Yukon have a safe winter. We also want to thank them for their participation in the pre-season and in-season teleconferences. I think YRDFA had one of the highest turnout years for the teleconferences and the input and information managers get during this teleconferences is invaluable.

So if you have any questions for me I'll take them now and you can also give me a call at the office or you can call the State managers, they're open to calls too.

Madame Chair, back to you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Do we have any comments, questions for Gerald from the Council.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. Thank you, Gerald for your report for the Yukon.

You mentioned that the test fish on the lower Yukon was done locally by local fishermen, you know, how late that test fishery has been -- is going on or is still going on, because I know people are still catching cohos and fall chums as we speak. If I could get -- if the test fishery is still going on on the lower Yukon?

MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair. Councilman Oney. Thank you. The lower Yukon River test fishery out of Emmonak and normally out of the Middle Mouth, if it was running, they typically end the end of August. For the fall season we do have the Mountain Village test fishery that runs a little bit further into September to try and kind of get that more of the coho season and late fall chum but for

management, you know, purposes, most of the fish have gone through the lower Yukon by the end of August. We know there's still fish coming in and particularly coho that come in late in the season but for the most part it -- for management purposes we're not going to find out anything more going much beyond the end of August. So the answer to the question is, no, it's -- the test fishery is done, but we definitely want to hear your test fishes so if subsistence fishermen are still catching fish we'd love to hear that information.

MR. ESTENSEN: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, who is this?

MR. ESTENSEN: Madame Chair, for the record this is Jeff Estensen with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game fall season manager. And I just want to expand a little bit on what Gerald said.

The lower Yukon test fishery for the fall season, that operates in Emmonak and at Middle Mouth operated until the 10th of September this year. And we've been -- the Department operates it until about the 28th or so and then YRDFA has been very kind over the last, maybe five, six years to extend the operations of that and greatly appreciated. And then the Middle Mouth -- or excuse me, the Mountain Village test fishery in the community of Mountain Village operated until the, I want to say the 15th and I'm doublechecking that right now, and that is correct, it did operate -- actually the 12th of September is what it operated this year and both of that is to try to, you know, not to see if we hit these later pulses of fall chum but also try to estimate from the number of cohos that come in after the sonar at Pilot Station is done operating.

So thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

MR. ONEY: Thank you. Madame Chair, if I may followup.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair.

For the record, Ray Oney. Gerald you mentioned about the genetic testing of fish that were caught on the Yukon River, do you guys compare these test results with other areas, maybe to the south of us or even to the north of us because, you know, with the fish on the lower Yukon were absent this summer, if there is this type of genetic testing that may be going on probably, I don't know, Bethel, maybe Bristol Bay area, Area M area, Nome area, I know those areas been fishing steadily all summer while the Yukon River was shut down. And also we seen a lot of north winds, as one of our Council members mentioned over the summer, very few fish comes in when there's north wind, northeast wind, and the only fish -- only time that fish usually come in is when we get a good south wind and that was absent pretty much all through the summer. And, you know, it was cool, cool dry summer, because I usually get a pond in front of my yard here, you know, and it stays -- it's a puddle pretty much throughout the summer but it was dry this, probably middle of August, it was dry, there was no water because of no rain and the weather was cool, cool enough to fool the berries in blooming and ripening, and you heard already some people saying that there was abundance of berries and they were huge because of the cool weather that we had this past summer, kind of a dry cooler weather that fooled the berries and fruit to bloom area.

So I just wanted to mention that, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Ray.

MR. MASCHMANN: Madame Chair. Mr. Councilman Oney, this is Gerald Maschmann, Fish and Wildlife. Yeah, thanks for those observations.

The genetic sampling, you know, we sampled the chinook salmon and we're primarily focused on U.S./Yukon stocks Yukon/Canadian stocks, we're not comparing those fish to, you know, Norton Sound fish or Kuskokwim fish. Chum salmon we also do genetic sampling and, again, it's mostly an in-river in the Yukon so we're looking at various Yukon stocks. And, you know, during a normal year when we have better escapement monitoring and assessment going on up river we can kind of look at the Pilot Station sonar and the genetics and look at that information and then compare it to the escapement that we see elsewhere and, you know,

sometimes we can get an idea of how well our assessment at Pilot was doing based on that so it's useful but, yeah, we're not comparing it to other regions. But that's kind of an interesting thought, you know, wondering if Yukon fish are moving further north or moving further south or something like that.

And as far as the weather observations, yeah, that's what we heard, there was just -- it didn't seem like there were any fish went down in the lower Yukon like there normally are. In the upper Yukon we got a lot of rain so it was off and on high water up in Canada and high water in the middle Yukon. So it's interesting that you were cool and dry down there and we were wet up here.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Do we have any more Council members who have comments or questions for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and ADF&G.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Gerald, this is Alissa. I have a couple questions.

What is your strategy right now with the given data information that we have at this point in time, what are we looking forward to in regards to what are we going to do about it now?

MR. MASCHMANN: Well, I think, Madame Chair, that's a good question and I think we're going to be talking about it this fall with, you know, YRDFA's having some extra teleconferences and I think we're going to be discussing it as managers and then this spring, coming winter and spring with the public, probably at your next RAC meeting, you know, with the age four chum lower than average that means we might be looking at an age five chum also lower than average. One thing we noticed that the chum that did come back, they were bigger than normal, or at least bigger than what we've been seeing in recent years. So some thoughts are, well, maybe there were fewer chum and the ones that were out there had more food and were able to grow better. You'll probably hear from -- in the NOAA presentation that Jim Murphy or Sabrina Garcia is going to be giving later this afternoon, that what's going to

be coming back age four chum next year looks pretty good from the Bering Sea standpoint. So I think we might be seeing some coming back, but, you know, again, we're going to talk about that information. I think Jim Murphy or Sabrina, whoever's giving that presentation will be able to elaborate more on that.

But we definitely like to hear what the RAC members think. I mean do you think, do we need to be conservative, more conservative next year, do we think we just need to make our assessment and follow the assessment, or, you know, what do you guys think we should do manager-wise, is what I'd like to ask.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: So, Gerald, we're getting some background white noise. For those of you on teleconference please star six to mute your phones or doublecheck your cell phones to see if you're on mute. We're getting wind or someone breathing. Again, that's star six to mute your phone or look down at your phone and press the mute button, if not press star six on your dial tone touchtone phone.

Sorry about that, Gerald, I didn't the last part of what you were saying.

MR. MASCHMANN: Yeah, so, you know, this is where as a RAC you guys can have input on the management, the management strategies and we are definitely open to hearing, you know, how you think we should manage on the Yukon next year. Should we be even more conservative than we were this year, should we just go with our assessment and the assessment's the assessment and we're going to manage based on the assessment. And if it comes in worse then we do restrictions, if it comes in better we do relaxations. You know, how would you guys like us to approach management next year?

(Pause)

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Madame Chair. Gerald, for the record, Ray Oney.

Yes, we've been addressing this chinook

salmon I think since we started noticing the decline probably in the late '70s to early '80s, you know, we've been tackling this year after year and we're seeing declines, you know, year after year, and probably this is the hardest hit that we're facing as far as relying on salmon for subsistence use.

You know the lower Yukon has made a lot of sacrifices over time, like reducing the mesh size, reducing fishing times, things like that and trying to rebuild the stocks, the chinook and chum stocks. It seems like every time we take two steps forward it seems like we always, after we hear everything, we're falling back one step.

You know we're just users on the river, we need to know the conditions of the river, you know, what state it is in, we need to know the people that are mining up in the Canada area, if that's contributing to the declines, and also the High Seas fisheries that are contributing to the declines. We don't know the health of the Yukon River. You know as we heard last year there was fish dying off, you know, right in front of our eyes due to the warming waters. And I don't know what it's going to take to try and rebuild the chinook and chum stocks for the Yukon. I know we've been communicating, we've been collaborating all these years and like I said this was the worst year I've seen as far as relying on salmon for subsistence.

Growing up as a young boy, I lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle. In the summer season time was the time that we relied on to sustain our winter living. I remember the times when we had enough, we'd sell a few bundles of fish to the store just so we could buy flour, sugar and all the basic things that we need. And I don't know how long the trawl fishery has been going on in the Bering Sea, it seems like after we find out that the trawl fisheries has been contributing to the declines, what more do we need to do, if we're seeing less and less fish coming into the Yukon. We need to make it known to those people out there, you know, if we request a moratorium just so we could have fish back, would that be the route that we need to take. We can't do it alone on the river, we need people to see us and see who's contributing to the declines and those people need to -- organizations need to, even if we consider a moratorium on them, that's one thing that I could consider.

Thank you.

MR. MASCHMANN: Madame Chair. Gerald Maschmann. Yeah, thanks, Councilman Oney. As managers we always want more information, we just never seem to have enough and we don't really know what happens to these fish once they get out to the Bering Sea. But it seems like, you know, the basis,or what was previously called the Basis Study, the juvenile sampling out in the Bering Sea is starting to give us some information on what's going on and what happens to fish when they get out other.

So, yeah, thank you.

It's probably the worst -- you know, I'd probably agree, it could be argued, but it's probably the worst year on record or at least recent record.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Gerald. Any further comments of questions.

MS. ALSTROM: Madame Chair, this is Thomas Alstrom, Alakanuk.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Alstrom.

MR. ALSTROM: I have just a comment, and thanks. Gerald did ask about how they did with the restrictions here on the Yukon. With the low number returns they did a good job on being more restrictive this year because of the low number returns of salmon so when there's low number returns we leave the -- the fishermen here in the villages understand the low number return and why the Fish and Game were more restrictive this year than the previous year so I'd just like to thank Fish and Game and Gerald with the restrictions and hopefully in the future we'll have more openers with more fish.

Thanks, Gerald.

MS. JALLEN: Through the Chair, this is Deena Jallen with Alaska Department of Fish and Game, if I might just add a couple things.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Deena.

MS. JALLEN: Thanks. I want to thank Gerald for giving that excellent summary of the summer, you know, we co-manage throughout the season so we work together on all of our management decisions and analysis and announcements, and the post-season summary, we review each -- we review the work and go back and forth and so we have a really good cooperative team and also I really want to thank the fishermen. We completely rely on cooperation and the information that we get from fishermen in-season and post-season. So that's the other really big piece of the puzzle is looking at the harvest and that's what we're doing right now, post-season. Of course, we're not traveling community to community like we would normally do, the survey is being conducted by phone and on line and by mail and so we definitely appreciate information that people provide in the post-season to help us look at the harvest that we did do and then, you know, we really look at the management actions that we took and the fish that were there and the harvest that we ended up with and each year we just try to, you know, do a little bit better and look at the information that we have every year and the last couple of years we've had to adapt to really interesting, different circumstances. We had really hot weather and hot water temperatures last year and then this year we had colder water but really high levels of discharge and drift and we know that fishing conditions were really challenging for people in addition to having low runs and poor fishing.

So, yeah, I just wanted to thank you, Gerald, for that summary and thank you for giving me an opportunity to chime in on your meeting.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Do we have any more further comments, questions for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and ADF&G for the Yukon River.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair, this is Eva.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi Eva.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair

and Council. If there were no more questions for the Yukon River post-season salmon report we do have up next on the agenda the Kuskokwim River post-season salmon report. And I'd like to just touch base with our agency presenters after that. Maybe for flow of discussion since there's a lot of questions that keep coming back to the juvenile salmon out-migration and some of the Bering Sea and climate change issues, if, after the Kuskokwim River post-season salmon report, we could switch the agenda around and take up the NOAA reports after that. That might answer a lot of the questions that Council members have regarding both the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Bering Sea salmon conditions. But want to touch base, so if our other presenters, we have Fish and Wildlife Service for Togiak and Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, BLM and then our ADF&G Subsistence Division and fisheries, so we did just get confirmation, who's going to present on the sonar program for Kuskokwim is going to have to take off for his class and he can present after his class after 5:00 o'clock.

So just wanted to touch base, we have a couple other folks that were on the agenda prior to the NOAA agency reports, if folks would be okay if we move up those NOAA reports after the Kuskokwim River post-season salmon report, and then continue on with the others on the agenda.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Eva. All right, could I get a motion on the floor to amend the agenda to move NOAA after the Kuskokwim River post-season report.

MR. LANDLORD: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes.

MR. LANDLORD: James Landlord. I move.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Landlord. Can I get a second.

MR. ONEY: Second, Ray Oney.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Oney. All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All those opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Alrighty, we'll go ahead and move that up in the agenda.

We're going to go ahead and move on to the Kuskokwim River post-season salmon report for 2020.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Hi, Madame Chairperson, this is Boyd with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Boyd.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Hi, I just wanted to introduce the folks that are going to be presenting. And I do believe that Alaska Fish and Game has agreed to let us give this presentation but I'm sure they may jump in with more details.

I wanted to introduce Gary DeCossas, who most of you know, and have heard from already today and yesterday's discussions. He's our fisheries biologist for the Refuge. He and Ray Born, who's the Deputy Refuge Manager here at Yukon Delta and who was in-season manager last year are going to give the presentation and that's because they have all the information and I do not.

So I'm going to pass it on to Gary if he's up and on.

MR. DECOSSAS: Yeah, sure, this is Gary DeCossas, like Boyd said, fisheries biologist at Yukon Delta. The way this presentation is going to work is I'm just going to give a brief talk about the pre-season forecast and then I'll switch it over to Ray, Ray will talk about the in-season management actions and kind of give the Council a timeline and then it'll jump back to me to talk about the post-season, what we know now. So just to give the Council and the folks over the phone a head's up.

As Mary kind of mentioned earlier, the

pre-season forecast, while promising or optimistic after the larger than expected return that we had in 2019, however what we found out at the end of the season was that all of the forecasts were not accurate for the 2020 season. The midpoints of all the forecasts, there were three forecasts, there was the ADF&G produced forecast, which had a mid-point of 227,000; there was the Baze-tool (ph) forecast, which is what Ray used as the Federal in-season manager, that had a mid-point forecast of 218,000 chinook salmon, and then there was another forecast produced by a consultant with the InterTribal Fish Commission, Craig Cunningham, his mid-point -- the mid-point of his forecast was 213,000 chinook salmon. And like I said they weren't accurate, all of the mid-points of those forecasts were all approximately 50 percent lower than expected for the 2020 run.

So with that being said I will hand it over to Ray to talk about the actions that happened during the season.

Thank you.

MR. BORN: Thanks, Gary. Yeah, this is Ray Born, I'm the Deputy Refuge Manager at Yukon Delta and the Federal in-season manager this year for the Kuskokwim chinook salmon management. Due to time I'll probably summarize, there's -- we sent you about nine slides that you can look at, that have all the details.

But basically we had 12 meetings overall with the InterTribal Fish Commission throughout the year to kind of help refine and do a better job with management. We also attended eight meetings of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group to get feedback from all of the users as we're mandated to do, to get rural resident input from everybody.

So a couple of key things that happened.

Of course our first meeting was January 2020 and we talked about chinook salmon science and kind of went through a lot of that, my discussions with that, and there was some meetings pre-season and then we had the technical advisory body meeting, which is actually the science piece of how we're doing the management with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

InterTribal Fish Commission and State of Alaska. Probably the first key event was the Federal Subsistence Board on May 1st, where they made the decision that there'd be Federal management June 1 to July 1, so that kind of helped us frame where we're going to go forward with that.

And then we had a pre-season meeting on May 12th with the InterTribal Fish Commission and taking a look at it and based upon these pre-season forecasts, the best information we had at the time, we went ahead and decided to move forward with three setnet opportunities between June 1 and June 11th to give people an opportunity to have a taste of fish, as AFN requested, and Alaska Fish and Game agreed with that, they went ahead and worked with us together to get that all set up. So that worked out really well. And then kind of as we discussed, we started to see indications that it was not coming in as we thought it would, so we had another meeting with the InterTribal Fish Commission on about June 2nd and at about that point time we're saying, you know, this is not looking as good as we thought but we still need to provide some opportunity, and as Mary alluded to, we originally, pre-season thought we could have 24 hour openers every other day, but looking at the information we got from the setnet opportunity we went we're going to have to reduce that. So we agreed to three 12 hour openings for driftnets on the 12th, 15th and 18th spreading them out over a couple of days to give the salmon a chance to make it past Bethel and get to get up river further. And anyways we looked it again -- we looked at -- we're looking at the -- the fish coming in we're looking at, what the catch was like and then we said, okay, this is still concerning so we had the additional meeting and then the third meeting in June 16th we looked at all of those numbers with the InterTribal Fish Commission and kind of came to the agreement we want just one more opening this year. Pretty restrictive this year but based upon the numbers we saw we adapted as we kind of looked at that, we said, okay, this is kind of the way things are wrapping up this year, pretty concerning with that.

In the middle of all of that, you know, Lamont Albertson, proposed, to the Federal Subsistence Board that we continue the management with the chum and sockeye concerns to do that. That was presented to the Federal Subsistence Board and as required -- and the

Federal Subsistence Board did not support that extended closure for chum and sockeye, so we continued on with the season and then as the Federal Subsistence Board directed, Federal management ended on July 1st. We're still concerned, we're watching the numbers, paying attention, it was still pretty restrictive.

We went to a Salmon Management Working Group meeting on July 6th and after lots and lots of testimony and the interest to get fishing and the chinook were pretty much done from the best of our knowledge, we had -- they -- the working group went ahead and so did the State and opened it up on July 6th to provide opportunity for people to catch more fish.

So that's kind of a quick summary of kind of what all happened in the year. It's a short version of that. The details are in the slides that we sent out to everybody, you can look through that.

One additional note, we'll have a post-season meeting tomorrow with the InterTribal Fish Commission to take a look at this year and how it went and maybe some lessons learned from that.

So that's kind of a quick summary of how the events went and the closures and those things, and those decisions we made, and I think that the best thing we did is we made our decisions early in the season as to what we thought it would look like, but then, you know, as we got into that first couple of weeks we took a look and we adapted. You know working with the InterTribal Fish Commission, we agreed with their 12 hour opening opportunities that they recommended and they -- we looked at that and said that's a good way to go forward and that's where we moved forward for basically the rest of the season.

And that's all of that.

I'm going to turn it back to Gary to talk about what we know now. What we've seen in the harvest assessment and what we've seen kind of post-season.

Gary.

Thanks.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you, Ray. Madame Chairperson, this is Boyd. Gary got disconnected, and he just chatted with me, and that might be him coming back on now.

MR. DECOSSAS: Hey, Boyd, I'm here, I just got back on.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Okay. Okay.

MR. DECOSSAS: All right. So Gary DeCossas back again. So I'm just going to go over some post-season updates that we have and this includes the in-season harvest estimates that we had as a part of our in-season monitoring program that goes on, and that's a collaborative partnership between ONC and the Bering Sea Fishermens Association.

So for in-season harvest estimates we had seven opportunities for a total of 120 hours that were provided in 2020. Just as a comparison in 2019 there was six opportunities for a total of 72 hours. The main difference in the number of hours that happened this year as opposed to last year was because of the three 24 hour setnet gillnet opportunities that were done during the front end closure period between June 1 and June 11th. That's just an FYI to the Council.

So the one thing I want to preface before stating any kind of numbers is that these estimates are only -- these harvest estimates that I'm about to provide are only between the villages of Tuntutuliak and Akiak, and so these aren't drainage-wide harvest estimates. Those won't be known until some time in the early springtime.

So far in-season harvest estimates we estimated a total of about -- oh, go ahead.

(No comments)

MR. DECOSSAS: Alissa.

(No comments)

MR. DECOSSAS: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, no that

wasn't me.

MR. DECOSSAS: Okay.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Did someone have a question or a comment at this time.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hearing none, go ahead, Gary.

MR. DECOSSAS: Okay. So we estimated a harvest of about 36,000 salmon between the communities of Tunt and Akiak during the 2020 season. About 65 percent of that was chinook salmon, that's about 23,000 harvest. Sockeye salmon was about 19 percent, and chum salmon about 16 percent of harvest. The sockeye salmon, the harvest was about 7,000 and for chum salmon the harvest was about 5,600.

Just to put these numbers into perspective, the total salmon harvest so that 36,000 number was the smallest since the in-season harvest monitoring program began in 2016. It was about a 50 percent reduction in chinook salmon harvest compared to 2019 and about a 40 percent reduction in chum and sockeye salmon compared to 2019.

Kind of mentioned by the Fish Commission in their presentation as well as Gerald in his presentation on the Yukon, the reduction in harvest is likely due to the weak and late salmon runs that were observed in 2020.

Another thing to note is that one of the opportunities with drift gillnet that occurred later in the year on June 24th, folks from the region may remember that it was incredibly rainy and stormy, I think that was the first fall storm of the season that we go, it was really early, but we don't really have a good handle on how much harvest happened during that opportunity of June 24th. We weren't able to fly airplanes because of the bad weather. But from what we do know, you know, we think there was not a lot of salmon harvested. The waves were really high.

So with that being said I'll move on to the post-season updates as they relate to the different

salmon stocks -- salmon species, I mean.

So for chinook salmon in the Kuskokwim River the run was about four days later than average, the estimated run timing date in which 50 percent of the run passed the Bethel area was June 26th. Based on ADF&G's letter sent to the North Pacific Marine Fisheries Management Council for the three river index, the preliminary total run size for 2019 [sic] is 116,000 chinook salmon. The preliminary total escapement was about 88,000. So, you know, just 4,000 chinook salmon shy of the mid-point of ADF&G's sustainable escapement goal range of 65,000 to 120,000 chinook salmon. And kind of like Mary alluded to earlier, the preliminary harvest was about 28,000.

The Bethel area sonar operated and there was about 106,000 chinook salmon that we estimated had passed the Bethel area sonar during the season. As far as escapement goals go, specifically in the tributaries, the Kogrukluk and the George River both met their tributary escapement goals however these were below average, both the five and 10 year average, I believe.

The other weir, we had the Kwethluk weir, that did not operate this year due to Covid concerns but there was an aerial survey done that counted about 721 salmon up the Kwethluk and that's just a snapshot when they flew the flight, that's not the exact number of fish that went up the Kwethluk. The Takotna weir also had operational issues due to high water but from what they counted it appeared to be a below average escapement.

The Salmon Pitkafork up there above McGrath they were in operation this year and their escapement numbers were very similar to 2019.

The salmon of the Aniak River weir was operated this year. That was a good project to have, Native Village of Napaimute helps run that project. Their chinook salmon escapement was below average as well.

There were aerial surveys flown by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the tributaries and the tributary goals for those aerial surveys were met in the Aniak River, the Chenetnuk River, and the

Salmon PitkaFork as well. However there were two aerial tributary goals that weren't met in the Kuskokwim River for chinook salmon and those were the Kisaralik and the Salmon River, Aniak. The one thing to note about these two systems and them not meeting their goals is that, you know, the lower bound of the Kisaralik River escapement goal was missed by 50 fish and Salmon and the Aniak River goal was missed by about 61 fish. But still below average for those.

I'll move on now to chum salmon.

So as far as run timing goes about, 50 percent of the run, the chum salmon run passed Bethel on July 9th, and that's about five days later than average. There's no run reconstruction available for chum salmon but the in-season data and weir data did indicate a weak run, similar to what Gerald had said, the chum salmon stocks across Western Alaska just did not do very well this year.

And like Gerald mentioned, there was a possible cohort collapse, the age four fish that spawned in 2016 did not do very well and that's, of course just based on the Yukon data that Gerald talked about.

The Bethel area sonar did operate and enumerate chum salmon and like Mary had said earlier, they estimated about 76,000 chum salmon passed the Bethel area sonar.

The only tributary goal for chum salmon is the escapement goal at the Kogrukluk River. And that goal was achieved on August 7th so we did meet the chum salmon escapement goal for that system.

A word of caution about the chum salmon assessment for 2020 in the Kuskokwim, the max catches in the sonar portion part of the sonar, the Bethel area sonar, so that test fish that they run behind the sonar, the max number of chum salmon they caught in 2020 was five. And that only occurred once. A majority of the apportionment catches were below four for the entire season.

Meanwhile the Bethel test fish catches for chum were much higher than the sonar apportionment fishery, much higher.

Another thing, and this is kind of just an FYI, if the sonar number is to be believed for chum salmon, that would suggest about 30 percent of the -- 36 percent of the chum salmon run that entered the river went to the Kogrukluk and George River systems. There was about 27,000 escapement between those two systems alone.

With that being said I'll move on to sockeye salmon.

So for sockeye salmon, 50 percent of the run passed Bethel on July 5th. That's about seven days later than average and typical to sockeye, especially over the last couple of years, they've come in late, like similar to chum salmon there is no run reconstruction available for sockeye salmon. But the in-season and weir data did indicate a below average river type sockeye salmon run, so the sockeye salmon that migrate into the rivers maybe didn't do so well as the lake type sockeye salmon, which are primarily the sockeye salmon that run up to the Telaquana (ph) Lake area. The Bethel area sonar estimated about 575,000 sockeye salmon passed the Bethel area. The only tributary with sockeye salmon escapement goals is the Kogrukluk, similar to chum. That goal for sockeye salmon on the Kogrukluk was achieved on July 28th, and that was below the five year and overall averages.

So that's kind of what I was getting back to earlier saying that the river type sockeye salmon maybe didn't do as well as the lake type run. The Telaquana Lake weir passed a similar amount of sockeye salmon as they did in 2019 and it indicated a very strong run. I believe there were almost -- they were pushing close to 200,000 sockeye salmon past that weir.

And then there was a comment mentioned earlier by a Council person about the -- how they had noticed that there was a lot of smaller sockeye salmon and those sockeye salmon that folks are catching out here that are smaller, in general, and they kind of all look the same, those are more than likely the chinook -- the sockeye salmon that are going up the Telaquana up to the Telaquana Lake area. They're all pretty tiny and they all look exactly the same, they're almost like clones of one another, while the river type sockeye salmon, like the ones that go up the Kogrukluk,

Kwethluk, what not those are typically a little bit more chunkier in size.

With that being said my presentation's over with.

Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Gary. Do we have any comments for Gary.

MR. BORN: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead.

MR. BORN: Yeah, Madame Chair, Ray Born. I was just going to say if there are any comments or questions now, this would be the time to bring those forward.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Council members, do we have any comments or questions for Ray or Gary at this time.

(Pause)

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - typing)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: This is Alissa Rogers, I have a question.

With all of the operational sites that we had were they put in on time, were we running late on those and does that have any effect to do with our estimate and how much fish we missed or how are we calculating all that information with when Covid hit and we had to not -- we weren't running on time as we usually do in putting up stuff, project sites, how much of an effect or what percentage of an effect do we have on our estimates.

MR. DECOSSAS: Sure thing. So Gary DeCossas here with Yukon Delta. I would -- since the Alaska Department of Fish and Game operated many of the assessment projects this year, I would default to the area manager, Nick Smith, for that information, if

Nick's on.

MR. SMITH: Madame Chair, this is Nick.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hey, good morning, Nick.

MR. SMITH: Hey. So, yeah, I can answer that question. So for the assessment projects the ones that were all ran by Fish and Game, so Bethel test fishery, sonar and the weirs, the Kogrukluk, and George River weirs, they were all operational when they were supposed to be, I guess. So the only one that was a little delayed was the sonar project in early June by a couple days due to the high water, trying to get that camp in and all the Covid restrictions. But for weirs, I think what you're specifically speaking to, we got all our weirs in when they were supposed to be operational.

As you know throughout the season, you know, you eventually get high water events that could wash out a weir or make it unable to count for safety reasons, so that did occur at some of the projects. One to point out would be the Kogrukluk River weir. I know that the presentation here did not have anything about coho because we just pulled the weirs out here a couple weeks ago, but the Kogrukluk weir had operational issues starting at the beginning of September. They were having high water events that were making it so they couldn't count and then around September 11th they had a really big high water event that actually pushed the weir out so it was completely inoperable and they weren't able to get that weir back in so for this year we're not going to be able to make estimates for coho because we missed too much of the passage, whereas if you go to another project site like the George River weir, that one operated well throughout the season, only had a couple instances where they had temporary issues of, you know, a hole in the weir, or a little bit of high water obscuring view, so on those instances we can make estimates.

So that's what we're in the process of doing right now is reviewing all the data, getting our preliminary estimates done for what weirs we can do estimates in and what weirs we can't do estimates in.

I think the other weir, the Takotna,

was put in a little bit late due to Covid and maybe high water, maybe Kevin can chime in on that one.

But hopefully that answers your question that we do make estimates for missed passage or if a weir was put in later or taken out earlier than we'd want it to, and sometimes we miss too much passage to make a reliable estimate and that's currently what we're working on right now.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you.

MR. WHITWORTH: Madame Chair, this is Kevin Whitworth.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi, Kevin, go ahead.

MR. WHITWORTH: Hey, Alissa, thanks, Madame Chair and Council members.

So just a little bit of information on the Takotna River weir, Nick touched on it a little bit. So usually we operate from July 1st through August 10. We had an issue this summer because of high water so we weren't able to install until July 12th. We operated through the 10th. We did come up with an estimate for chinook salmon, 347 which is about average for that weir. Working with Fish and Game, they helped us with coming up with that estimate, even after we missed about 10 days in the front end we still got an estimate. That estimate was used in the run reconstruction model so that's very good.

Even after the tough season of Covid and just crew things happening we still got through the summer.

Chum numbers were very low in that Takotna River weir. We didn't come up with a very good estimate for the summer, but from what we did see while we did run the weir from the 12th through the 10th, chum numbers were very low, extremely low. Even if we did run it for that extra 12 days in the front end it wouldn't have made up what we didn't see. So chum numbers were very low.

That's all, thanks.

And one other thing is I helped with the Kwethluk River weir and I didn't hear if Gary had touched on this at all. But the Kwethluk River weir did not operate this summer so that is a big question mark. I guess it's a big tributary contributor of chinook and chum, not operating is a big hit for us looking at data.

But that's it, thanks.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Kevin. Yeah, that's one of the things that I was trying to hit on is, about how much of our estimate are we estimating on best case scenario and averaging and trying to do our best calculations to get those numbers.

Gary, would you be able to elaborate a little bit more on the Kwethluk and how is that impacting our numbers, our total numbers for the Kuskokwim River.

MR. DECOSSAS: So like Kevin had mentioned and I had mentioned previously, yeah, the Kwethluk River did not operate this year due to extenuating circumstances related to the Covid pandemic.

I will defer to Nick about how the Kwethluk River weir not being operational this year affects the run reconstruction estimate. They're still pretty early in their, you know, like he had mentioned earlier about trying to estimate missed passage and what not, so they did produce a preliminary run reconstruction estimate, but like I had mentioned in my presentation there was an aerial survey flown on the Kwethluk River. That survey actually hasn't been flown in quite some time because the weir has been operational so there are some data out there where you could try to make a relationship between what the weir data shows and what the aerial survey data shows to kind of get an idea, but I haven't looked into that yet. So I'd default to Nick if ADF&G's into that yet this year in the process.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Yeah, Nick, you guys ran an aerial survey, did we meet our goals up there or -- just by an aerial survey?

MR. SMITH: Madame Chair, this is Nick

with Fish and Game. So the tricky thing here is that not running the -- the goal for the Kwethluk, for chinook and also they have -- there's a goal for coho also, the goal -- you can't just, you know, fly an aerial survey and ask the question, you know, did you meet the weir based goal because they're two different assessment projects. Like Gary alluded to, there is a relationship between the aerial surveys and the weir, that's what you'd hope you would see, is that one assessment project would compliment the other assessment project. I have not, this year, ran those numbers just to see exactly what, I guess, we would estimate would be weir passage, because that would be all -- you know, you're just what you're going to compare that too down the road. With respect to the run reconstruction, you know, the run reconstruction uses all of our aerial survey data, weirs, harvest information and on any given year we don't have all the projects in that model for reasons that, you know, like this year, for instance, the weir didn't operate, well there's also other years where, you know, Kogrukluk weir was washed out so we didn't' get chinook estimate from that, so that's kind of what this model is for, is that we take all of our available data from that year plus all our historical data and it gives us our best estimate of total run.

So while I would have liked to see the Kwethluk operate this year to get all species, from an assessment perspective it's one piece of the greater wheel for the Kuskokwim River assessment program.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you, Nick. All right, does anybody else on the Council have any comments or questions for ADF&G or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: For the last few years we've been saying late run, smaller chinook, smaller reds, the same with chums but this year was probably the worst summer I've seen for chums compared to other species. And silvers were late. And some days they would be in good and other days they were not in the river. But come September when moose season opened,

there were lots of silvers on the river for almost two weeks. And we -- I tried setnetting for whitefish up the river on (Indiscernible - muffled) for whitefish, using a small whitefish net, overnight I had 41 or 42 silvers and one chinook and only three whitefish, two humpbacks and one broadfish. I had to pull it out the next day pretty quick, you don't want to catch too many silvers. Because all summer when we had open seasons I gave away most of my fish to my neighbors and the people in the village that need them because some folks did not meet their subsistence needs during the salmon season like they had no way of going out, no boat, no motor. People that do go out try to share with their relatives out here.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Andrew. Any further comments or questions from the Council.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair and Council, this is Eva.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Eva.

MS. PATTON: Hi. If there's no further questions from the Council on Kuskokwim post-season salmon report, we do have Jim Simon [sic] from NOAA and Sabrina Garcia, ADF&G ready up next when the Council's ready to present a joint presentation, kind of back to back for both of them. And then we do have Ellen Yasumiishi on line ready to present, also from NOAA Bering Sea ecosystem. So whenever the Council's ready they're ready up next, and then we'll get back to the rest of our folks on the agenda.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Eva. Quick, really correction, it's Jim Murphy, not Jim Simon.

MS. PATTON: My apologies, I keep making that mistake. We work with many good Jims.

(Laughter)

MS. PATTON: Jim Murphy of NOAA, not Jim Simon.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Eva.

MS. PATTON: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Well, I want to thank all of the ADF&G, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service both on Kuskokwim and Yukon, for everything that you do to get as much knowledge and information for us in regards to all the decisions of management that needs to be made, all the information we can at the tips of our fingers to pulling our hair out and trying to figure out management decisions and trying to do our best to provide for subsistence and conservation measures for the next generations to come. It's a lot of brain wracking work. And I want to thank all of you so much for everything that you do and helping us understand what you're teaching us at the same time.

I, myself, just want to say that I had my hopes up this year and it's been a pretty tough summer this year trying to figure out how everything's working, and with how our environment is changing, our fisheries are changing, and what our next best steps are. And I honestly got to say at this point I'm kind of brain shocked on what to do next and how to -- what next steps are we going to take from here in learning lessons and trying to figure out what we should be prepared for and understanding it and what we could do better in the future as time progresses.

So I thank you all for all of your hard work and I hope you continue to be with us throughout the whole entire year so that way we can continue building this relationship and continue working together.

So thank all of you for all of your hard work, we greatly appreciate it, I greatly appreciate it.

And with that we'll go ahead and move on to NOAA, Jim Murphy and Sabrina Garcia, thank you for being patient with us. I know we're taking a lot of our time today, greatly apologize for the delay in our meeting. You have the floor, thank you.

MS. PATTON: And, Madame Chair and Council, just a quick reminder. Council members you have the full PowerPoint presentation in your print supplemental materials that came in the mail. So you'll be able to find those in your packet for both these next upcoming presentations.

Thanks so much.

And if anyone on line didn't get them, you can email them and I can forward them to you, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: You have the floor.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Madame Chair and Council members. This is Jim Murphy, hopeful you can hear me. And this presentation, as Eva mentioned, is going to be a tag-team here between Sabrina Garcia and myself. And we're going to try to cover some of the research that has been conducted in the eastern Bering Sea on juvenile salmon.

I work for the Alaska Fisheries Science Center here in Juneau, it's also NOAA Fisheries. And I've been involved with salmon research here in the Eastern Bering Sea for a few years now. A lot of my focus has been in the North Bering Sea and on Yukon River chinook salmon. And Sabrina works for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game out of Anchorage, and she also leads marine research for the Department in both the Northern Bering and Southern Bering Sea.

I'm going to try to let folks know as I move between pages in this presentation, hopefully you'll be able to follow me. And so I'm going to go to the next page, this would be Page 2. We'll cover some background on marine surveys in both the Northern Bering Sea and Southern Bering Sea. But I'll start with the Northern Bering Sea. The Northern Bering Sea we have a little longer history there so I'll kind of cover those topics.

And we'll go on to Page 3.

And the research that we conduct in the Northern Bering Sea kind of falls along two different related categories, different related categories. And

one is the juvenile assessment so it's just estimating what the abundance of the juveniles are, but we also do research on juvenile ecology. We use surafave trawls, the catch and effort data from surface trawls to describe the distribution and abundance of salmon. And we use (indiscernible - muffled) to the water columns, habitats such as the mixed layer depth in Eastern Bering Sea cold pool to help describe the juvenile habitat, that goes into the assessment model as well. And perhaps quite importantly is that we use genetic stock information to estimate stock specific abundance and that's a really important link to the adult population. The research that we conduct on juvenile ecology is primary focused on connecting information on juvenile size, age, growth and diet and nutrition to their survival as well as connecting that information to the warming climate conditions that we're seeing in the North Bering Sea.

We'll go on to the next page, this would be Page 4.

The charter commercial fishing vessels, these are fairly large vessels, over 120 feet, to conduct our surveys in the North Bering Sea. And these vessels have the capability and expertise to work with the large trawls that we use for our surface trawl surveys. These trawl sample, water depths from the surface to about approximately 20 meters and that actually ends up being like the water column itself in the North Bering Sea because of the shallow water depth in the region. And these surveys are primarily conducted during the month of September.

So we'll go on to the next page, that would be Page 5.

There's a figure on the left shows the distribution of juvenile chinook in the North Bering Sea. And here you can see that juveniles are largely distributed within these shallow habitats. It's actually a fairly large area but it's less than 50 meters. And this is by September. So they still are fairly close to these -- they haven't dispersed quite as far from the natal rivers like the Yukon. And chinook in the North Bering Sea are distributed from Nunivak Island up to the Bering Strait. And the distribution of chinook has been a really important part shaping the timing and the spacial extent of these

surveys.

I'll go on to the next slide, this would be Slide 6.

This slide shows the.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. MURPHY: They show the stock composition of chinook over time and the only thing that's important to note here is that the upper Yukon chinook, which is the figure on your lower right, upper Yukon chinook is accounted for approximately half of the juveniles in the North Bering Sea and that's been pretty stable over time. However, what we've seen in the last couple of years is those -- the proportion of the Canadian origin stock group has dropped significantly. The other thing that's important to note in these data is that we're seeing an increase in non-Yukon stocks, and that would be the figure on the lower left, if you're following along.

Now, of course, Norton Sound, chinook salmon are an important part of that non-Yukon group, but I think what we're seeing is the increased movement of chinook salmon from the Southern Bering Sea, so this would be stocks from the Kuskokwim, they're starting to move into the Northern Bering Sea, and actually we're seeing -- actually non-Yukon stocks make up a higher proportion than the Canadian origin or the upper Yukon chinook stocks. So that's a fairly big departure from what we've seen historically.

We'll go on to Slide 7, so this is the next slide.

This slide shows the abundance of juveniles for Yukon River chinook salmon. And here you can see it's that declined proportion of Canadian origin stocks that has an important part in this overall decline that we're seeing of chinook salmon in the North Bering Sea. And the abundance of -- juvenile abundance in 2019 is one of the lowest on record.

We'll go on to Page 8, Slide 8.

We use a fairly simple linear model

just relating juvenile abundance, juvenile to (ph) adult abundance. It provides a reasonably good indicator of what to expect for the next three or four years. And it indicates that a lot of that variation that we see from year to year is happening during the early life history stages of chinook salmon. And the variance or the air around this model is what gives us the range in our outlook.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - dog barking)

MR. MURPHY: So we'll go on to the next slide, which is Slide 9.

And this shows the outlook for Yukon River chinook salmon, these are the run outlooks from 2020 to 2022. And so here you can see that the expected run sizes for Yukon River chinook salmon are expected to decline just based on juvenile abundance alone. And this decline is all the way through at least 2020 and we -- it's possible we could see some record low runs of Yukon chinook salmon by 2020.

Now, the outlook for the Canadian origin stock group is very similar and it's concerning because we are seeing the largest decline in the proportion of any stock group, is the Canadian origin stock group, so there's concern for Yukon River chinook salmon, both for the Canadian origin and for the total run for the Yukon.

So we'll go on to the next slide, should be Slide 10.

And in this we see a very different story for pink salmon. Actually we're seeing abundance of pink salmon with these warming climate conditions in the North Bering Sea and the abundance index for juvenile in 2019 was about the second highest we've ever seen since we started the surveys in 2003.

So we'll go on to the next slide, which would be Slide 7, or excuse me Slide 11.

And this slide just shows that there's a very similar conceptual relationship with pink salmon. We see juvenile abundance provide a reasonably good indicator of future adult returns. And this

points to the fact that it's fresh water and initial marine mortality and survival that's causing change in their abundance in the North Bering Sea. And this is ultimately tied to some of the losses of the ice and the warming that we're seeing, and we're expecting pink salmon numbers to continue to increase warming of the North Bering Sea.

So with that I'm going to pass it over to Sabrina and let her go over some of the other aspects of the North Bering Sea as well as the Southern Bering Sea surveys.

MS. GARCIA: Thanks, Jim. Hopefully everybody can hear me. So at this point we should be on the Slide 12 titled juvenile chum salmon abundance.

So what you're seeing on this slide is very similar to what Jim just presented for chinook and pink salmon, so that figure on the right shows the juvenile chum salmon abundance that we've estimated for the Northern Bering Sea from these surveys. And I just want to point out that these are very preliminary so we just started working on these models so this is hot off the press. And what you can see from this figure -- so we have the survey year on the bottom and then the juvenile abundance on the left axis there is that the 2017 juvenile chum salmon abundance was the second lowest abundance since 2003. Now, the juvenile chum that we're catching on the surveys are all age one, which means that the juvenile chum that we caught as one year olds in 2017 would have returned to their spawning rivers as age four in 2020. Now, from the reports that we've heard from managers and fishers around the AYK region it appears that the age four returns in 2020 were lower than expected. In start contrast to what we saw in 2017, the juvenile chum salmon abundance in 2018 and 2019 were two of the largest since the survey began. So we're hoping that these high abundances contribute to improve chum salmon run sizes over the next few years.

Next slide.

So like I said this model is in development and we have more work to do. So one of the next things that we're working on is completing the genetic stock identification analysis to determine what stock groups and in what proportions we're encountering

during the survey. So the figure that I just showed, that showed the juvenile chum abundance for the entire Northern Bering Sea so that includes stocks from Kotzebue, Norton Sound, the Yukon and so what we -- we need this genetic information to be able to tell us which stocks we're encountering and that will allow us to calculate a stock specific juvenile abundance. So that would mean juvenile abundance for say Yukon River fall chum. So the genetic analysis is almost complete and we're hoping to get results in the next few weeks.

Now, once we have these stock specific juvenile abundance estimates we can begin to link the stock specific juvenile abundances with the adult returns and that would be similar to what Jim presented for chinook on Slide 8 and for pink salmon on Slide 11. So if we have a relationship between the juveniles that we encounter in the ocean and the adults that return to the river, we can begin to look into forecasting chum salmon returns to the AYK region.

Now, in addition to forecasting future run sizes, we also want to understand aspects of the early marine ecology of juvenile chum salmon such as their diet and their energetic density. More specifically, we want to know how to ocean temperatures affect juvenile chum salmon during this important life stage. So we have data on diet and energy density for juvenile chums since the survey began in 2003 and we're going to work on putting all that information together in the upcoming months.

Next slide.

So I just mentioned looking at the diet and energetic density of chum salmon and I wanted to show you what that data looks like so I'm going to be presenting the juvenile chinook salmon diet and energetic data from 2003 to 2017.

So in the figure on the page you can see the proportion of each prey item by weight that we identified for each year of the survey.

On the left axis is the proportion of the prey of -- of that specific prey item. And here we're looking at six different groups.

So we're looking at sand lance, and you

can see these six groups in the legend on the right of the figure. So we're looking specifically at sand lance, walleye pollock, capelin, a general other fish category that includes flatfish, and poachers and any unidentified fish, decapods which includes crabs and shrimp and other invertebrates, which includes things like squid and insects. And from the stomachs that we collected we found that, not surprisingly, that juvenile chinook salmon mostly eat fish but they also eat crab and other small invertebrates. Now, if we look at the diet data by warm and cold years we can see some general trends. So for this analysis we considered the years 2004 to 2005 and 2014 to 2017 as warm years, and the years 2006 to 2013 as cold years. And if your packets are printed in color I've put red boxes around the warm years and a blue box around the cold years. And what we see is that in warm years juvenile chinook are typically eating higher proportions of sand lance and crab. And in the figure the sand lance are shown in the top of the bars with those grey boxes, and the crabs are shown in those diagonal striped boxes towards the bottom of the bars. And what we see in cold years and, that's, again, 2006 to 2013 is that juvenile chinook salmon are eating higher proportions of capelin, and those are shown in the black boxes in the figure. Based on what we're seeing we believe that chinook salmon switch to whatever prey is readily available instead of relying on a specific prey species.

Next slide.

We also found that juvenile chinook salmon had less food in their stomachs during warmer sea surface temperatures. So the figure on this page shows the average sea surface temperature in celsius on the bottom and a measure of stomach fullness or how much food was in their stomach on the left. And now you can see that stomachs have higher food so higher on that left axis as colder temperatures around 7.5 degrees compared to temperatures around 10.5 degrees.

Next slide.

And while lower stomach fullness in warmer years might be concerning we found that energetic density which tells us how much energy the fish has stored within its tissues was higher in warmer years compared to colder years. So on the right,

again, we have average sea surface temperature on the bottom and a measure of energy density on the left axis. And that dashed line is showing the linear relationship between sea surface temperature and energetic density. So you can see that as the water gets warmer the energy density typically increases. And each of the years is shown next to its specific point so you can see some of our warmer years, like 2014 and 2016, towards the top of the linear regression and some of the colder years like 2011 and 2012 towards the bottom. And this relationship shows us that even with the emptier stomach that I just showed in the previous slide, juvenile chinook salmon were able to maintain higher energy. And this tells us that the prey available to juvenile chinook in warm years must be of good enough quality to support both marine growth and also build their energy reserves which they're going to need for their first winter in the ocean.

And while this is encouraging, we don't know what will happen to juvenile chinook salmon energy density in temperatures outside of the range of temperatures that we've seen in the Bering Sea so far. But this is something that we're going to continue to monitor as part of the Northern Bering Sea survey over the next few years.

Next slide.

So right now you should be on the slide that says Northern Bering Sea summary at the top. So Jim and I presented a lot of information and we wanted to capture the main takeaway messages here.

So we've seen juvenile chinook salmon abundance decline in the Northern Bering Sea since 2017 and we've also seen a decreasing proportion of Yukon River stocks in our juvenile surveys.

Both the declining juvenile abundance and the genetic proportions are contributing to a declining adult outlook for Yukon River chinook salmon through at least 2022.

And while the 2017 juvenile chum salmon abundance was one of the lowest on record, the 2018 and 2019 chum salmon abundance were two of the highest. And so we expect to see improved run sizes from these juveniles in the next few years. However, I just want

to remind everyone that these juvenile models are still in progress and the relationship between juveniles and adults needs to be established before we can look into forecasting adult runs.

For pink salmon we've seen that both juvenile and adult pink salmon abundance has increased with warming climate conditions in the Northern Bering Sea and we expect to see their abundance continue to increase.

In addition to estimating juvenile abundance and forecasting runs, the data collected from these surveys is vital to understanding how warming climate affect the early ecology of juvenile salmon.

From the genetic data we've seen that juvenile salmon from the Southern Bering Sea are being encountered more frequently in the Northern Bering Sea survey with 2019 having the highest proportion since the survey began in 2003. And like Jim mentioned we believe this increase is caused by juvenile chinook salmon from Southern Bering Sea systems moving north in search of cooler waters.

And the diet information that we've analyzed shows that juvenile chinook salmon eat less fish in warmer years. Since juvenile chinook generally eat what's available we believe that the lower amount of fish in their stomachs in warm years is due to the lower abundance of fish prey available to them. But although they're eating less fish, juvenile chinook are still able to maintain high energy density during warm years which indicates that the prey available are of good quality to foster both growth and energy storage.

And I do want to end the section on the Northern Bering Sea by letting people know that the Northern Bering Sea is funded for 2021, so, hopefully, Covid dependent, we'll be out there next summer. And we also have a proposal that's awaiting a decision for the 2022 survey.

So next slide.

Now, we're going to be switching gears and talking about similar surveys in the Southern Bering Sea. The objectives and survey designs are very similar to those of the Northern Bering Sea survey we

just talked about but on a smaller scale.

Next slide.

So we should be starting the Southern Bering Sea survey. That should be the title of your slide.

So this survey was funded for two years under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant and it's a collaboration with Fish and Game, NOAA, and the Alaska Pacific University. And although NOAA has been conducting surveys in the Southern Bering Sea for many years, this is the first survey that focuses on near shore salmon habitat. And on the figure to the left you can see the area that's sampled by the Northern Bering Sea survey and then the area that's sampled by the Southern Bering Sea survey.

The Fish and Game vessel Pandalus is used to conduct the surface trawl surveys in the Southern Bering Sea. So I mentioned that this was a smaller scale version of the Northern Bering Sea and that's because we're using a smaller boat. The Pandalus is 65 feet compared to the 120 to 160 foot boats that we use for the Northern Bering Sea survey and we also use a smaller trawl net. The smaller boat allows us to access shallow near shore habitat that the larger boats can't access. And then also on the left I just wanted to point out that there is 56 stations within that survey area that we aim to sample in each of the survey years.

Next slide.

So some of these objectives will probably look familiar.

The first was to estimate the abundance of Southern Bering Sea stocks of juvenile chinook salmon in both 2018 and 2019. The second was to evaluate the life history and health characteristics of juvenile chinook salmon such as the diet, energetic density and size at marine entry. And finally we wanted to know if the small vessel could successfully complete these surveys. Because while the small vessel allows us to sample closer to shore and is much more cost effective than a larger vessel, it also has trouble dealing with the weather that's typical of the

Southern Bering Sea in the fall.

Next slide.

So we completed two years of surface trawling in 2018 and 2019 and what did we learn.

So first of all we learned that it's really hard to trawl in the Southern Bering Sea with a 65 foot vessel. The vessel cannot trawl in seas greater than five feet and winds greater than 20 knots. And unfortunately we had many of those days in 2018 and we were only able to trawl 39 stations, so 39 of the 56. We had a bit better luck with the weather in 2019 and we completed 50 stations. We also didn't catch as many juvenile chinook salmon as we expected in either survey year. Because the same vessel and smaller trawl had completed surveys in the Northern Bering Sea from 2014 to 206 we went into the Southern Bering Sea survey with a rough idea of how many juvenile chinook salmon we should catch. However, we only caught 47 juvenile chinook in 2018. And at the time we thought that our low catch was because we missed quite a few stations, however, we caught less juveniles in 2019 even though we sampled more stations.

The juvenile chinook salmon we did catch were from stations closest to shore, as you can see from the purple stars on the figure on the right. So while we did catch a few juvenile chinook salmon in off shore stations those catches occurred later in the survey around the third to fourth week of August. Based on our catches we suspect that juvenile chinook salmon had just started to enter the near shore marine environment and we conducted the survey too early. One reason for this maybe that Kuskokwim and Bristol Bay chinook salmon have large bays where they may be residing before tranisitioning to the marine environment, or it may be that it just takes these juvenile chinook longer time to swim through these large bays before fully entering the marine environment.

Next slide.

Thankfully we have enough money left in the grant to fund the third survey year in 2021. Unlike the prior surveys we're going to use this third year to try and figure out when juvenile chinook salmon

are tranisitioning into the marine environment.

So the map on the right is showing our proposed survey grid for the 2021 survey. So we're planning to sample the core stations which are shown by the black triangles and those core stations correspond to the stations closest to shore from our 2018 and 2019 surveys. And once we catch juvenile chinook salmon at our core stations we'll travel to the adaptive stations that are shown as the open circles and sampling those adaptive stations will let us know how far those juvenile chinook salmon have started to move off shore. Once we know the migration timing of juvenile chinook salmon into the near shore marine environment we can hopefully use that information to inform future surveys that are aimed at estimating juvenile abundance.

Next slide.

So here are the few takeaway points for the Southern Bering Sea survey.

Unfortunately because of our low catches of juvenile chinook salmon we were not able to estimate an abundance -- a juvenile abundance in either 2018 or 2019.

And while we expected juvenile chinook salmon from Southern Bering Sea systems to leave their rivers earlier than juvenile chinook salmon in the north, it appears that juvenile chinook salmon from the south may have different marine entry dynamics than we expected. Specifically, they might be hanging out in their bays before fully moving into the near shore marine environment or they may be taking longer to swim through those bays to get to the ocean.

We're going to use extra funds from the project to fund the third year of survey operations in 2021 and the objective of that survey will be to identify the marine entry timing of juvenile chinook salmon from the rivers to the ocean.

And based on the outcomes of that 2021 survey there's probably two options for continuing our research. Assuming we're able to figure out the marine entry timing we can use that information to inform future surveys that will focus on estimating a juvenile abundance. However, if we're unable to identify the

out-migration timing we may need to consider a combination of smolt and juvenile surveys in Kuskokwim and Nushagak Bays.

Next slide.

So that wraps up all the material that Jim and I wanted to present to you today.

Thank you so much for inviting us and letting us speak about this important research. Our email contacts are on the page and if we're unable to get to all your questions today please feel free to email us.

I also wanted to point out before I open it up for questions, is a FaceBook link that's on the page. That FaceBook page regularly posts updates about the marine research that you heard about today as well as some other projects that we're working on like a salmon shark tagging project in the Bering Sea so please follow us so that you can stay up to date with what we're working on.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you Jim and thank you Sabrina. I really enjoy seeing and hearing what's going on in the marine environment with our juvenile salmon. So I really appreciate you guys being able to be here with us today and it answers a lot of different questions that we had earlier in these past couple days about juvenile salmon especially because they're such an important resource to us.

I'm going to go ahead and open the floor to the Council. Does anyone on the Council have comments, questions that they have Jim and Susan [sic] at this time -- sorry, Sabrina.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. Thank you, Jim and Thank you Sabrina for that presentation. It's very interesting. Very interesting to learn about the marine ecology of juvenile salmon in the Bering Sea.

I know -- what year was that year that we didn't have ice out in the Bering Sea, I think it was in 2017 I believe or '18, when there was no ice out in the Bering Sea and as a result of that there was a lot of marine mammals and birds and what not that were washing up on shore after break-up. I'm wondering if this is the only time that we've seen this no ice in the Bering Sea, it's the first time there's been no ice in the Bering Sea that year -- when there was no ice there?

MR. MURPHY: Well, I could probably say something. It's not an area that I'm much of an expert in. We've seen warmer periods, or not warmer periods, we've seen warm periods in the Bering Sea. I think it was particularly unusual in 2018, it was the winter of 2018. There was a combination of warm temperatures but also the direction of the wind. And I think that was -- it was kind of the combination of all this southerly wind and warm temperatures that made the North Bering Sea largely -- I don't think it was completely ice free but there was very, very little ice over the winter and I think that, of course, did cause quite a number of problems for the ice seals and just kind of the North Bering Sea ecosystem as a whole.

Does that answer your question?

MR. ONEY: Yes, it did. And also we've heard about the movement patterns of salmon moving further north and you've confirmed that, the increase of movement further north. Is there other species that you know of that are moving north, maybe the -- like the cod and the pollock and what not that are out there?

MR. MURPHY: Yeah, we're seeing kind of widespread northward movement of a lot of different species. Cod are definitely moving north and that's not just the juveniles but the adults are moving north. And so we're seeing that, as a pretty universal pattern.

I think the other thing that was quite different in 2019, this is following that really warm winter, was we saw a large movement of sockeye, Bristol Bay sockeye, which tend not to move too far into the North Bering Sea, but there were large numbers of sockeye that moved up into the North Bering Sea. So

it's -- and we see it across where we see like even zooplankton, the base of the food chain or species that are moving north as well.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Another one that I have is the pink salmon, the abundance of pink salmon. We've seen that on the Yukon, too, where pink salmon are spawning everywhere it seems like as we heard earlier from our coordinator, but spawning here at the mouth of Alakanuk so everywhere I go on the lower Yukon, Black River, Aklurek, there's a lot of spawning that are going on in places where I usually don't see them. So there's a big abundance of pink salmon. I think it's been running here on the Yukon for over a month. But definitely, yes, it makes me wonder about the health of the Yukon, you know, that's something that we need to maybe look into, you know, because of the warming trend that we're seeing and hearing from elders about the changing weather patterns.

And it's going to continue.

And as you mentioned, you know, we'll be expecting to see more declines in the salmon for the Yukon and that's the reason why, you know, we need to, as in-river users make this available to, you know, those people that are trawl fishing out there, to let them know what we are going through in trying to rebuild our salmon stocks, both on the Kuskokwim and the Yukon.

Thank you for that presentation.

MR. MURPHY: Yes, you're welcome.

MR. ONEY: Yeah,if I may followup.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. Ray Oney for the record. We mentioned -- or Thomas mentioned earlier to try and get a study or an assessment for juvenile salmon migrating down from the spawning grounds. Do you know if that study has been made or anything like that's been done for the Yukon River?

MS. GARCIA: Hi, Ray, this is Sabrina. There has been some Yukon smolt studies that have been based out of Emmonak, and I believe those -- that project is being run by Catherine Miller, who also works in Jim in Juneau with NOAA, and that project started, I believe in either 2013 or 2014, and they actually were able to sample this year in 2020. So they do very small scale trawling in the river and they look at catch rates of out-migrating smolts and they also look at taking stomachs to look at what they're eating. I'm not too familiar with the results of that work but it is happening. And Catherine Miller at NOAA would be the person to talk to. And I don't know, if, Jim, do you have any other information about that Delta smolt study?

MR. MURPHY: Yeah, I think that's about all that I know. I think some of that work is continuing to be funded through the R&E fund so there's support there to continue that work. And a lot of it is based off of the communities, are actually the ones that are actually running those programs, or actually doing the sampling, so it's a community-based project.

MR. ONEY: Maybe one more, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: For the record, Ray Oney. I know AVCP and Bering Sea Elders Council were concerned about the marine highway that the shipping lanes are going to be happening to go further up north because of the ice melt that's going on in the most northern areas. I'm kind of wondering, you know, what more -- what further impacts we may have as a result of, you know, that marine highway that's going to be happening or may be happening already if that might contribute to some contribution to the declines of the salmon on both the Yukon and Kuskokwim, or even Bristol Bay, the western side of Alaska.

Thank you, that's all I have.

MS. GARCIA: Hi, Ray, this is Sabrina. Unfortunately I don't really know too much about the expansion of shipping lanes. I don't know if Jim has anything to add about that. If I had to guess I don't

know that that would be the -- one of the things that we'd be looking at as to what's causing declining salmon runs but, again, I'm not an expert on shipping. But, you know, you're definitely going to be expecting some more ship noise in your area.

MR. MURPHY: Well, maybe I'll say something. I think some of the concerns about the increase in vessel traffic that will perhaps eventually become part of the future of the Arctic is just that potential for, I guess, oil spills or just bringing that many vessels into that area, is has potential for -- you know, it's going to potentially change the dynamics of that area. I know the Coast Guard is really trying to actively make sure that there is proper oil spill response, capacity up in that area and I think that's the -- to me that's part of the risk of that increased traffic.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, I have one more. You know as a result of the earthquake that happened in Japan, I don't know how many years ago, are you witnessing anything out there that might contribute to some declines? Maybe even water samples, or even testing the animal that may have died out there, or, you know, that Fukushima disaster is still ongoing and, you know, over the years we've seen deformed fish like presented to the Council, I think, last winter, or a year ago, you know, the chinook salmon -- I mean not the chinook, but the chum salmon, you know, were deformed, some were, you know, had two heads and things like that. So I'm wondering, are we going to see more of that, because of that warming trend and, you know, the contributions to, you know, the disaster in the Bering Sea as a result of that Fukushima disaster.

Thank you.

MR. MURPHY: Well, I don't know, Sabrina, if you maybe can chime in on this too. I think -- I haven't really been too much up to speed on the work. I know, I think the Canadians, in particular, and the State might have done some work trying to see if they could detect any sort of contaminants in the water that would be related to the Fukushima disaster. I think my recollection is is that they really didn't see any real evidence of something that would be alarming or concerning in terms of the radioactive material. I think one of the areas that

wasn't necessarily -- or, I guess folks that know this better than us fish biologists would probably expect it, but I was kind of surprised by that really it was some of the high altitude lakes that showed perhaps some very limited evidence of the contamination from that disaster and that's because that was from the contaminants that were dispersed through the atmosphere rather than across on the ocean. I think areas like the Pacific Northwest where some of the debris from the Fukushima disaster landed on their beaches was of concern because of now the invasion of these Asian species, and I think that that would -- that's been part of the concerns there.

So it's not that there's no concern at all it's just not perhaps as we would think, like the water would become contaminated and I think that they're not really -- we're seeing that kind of contamination through transport in the ocean and not to extend necessarily all the way here to the Gulf of Alaska.

I guess maybe that's enough then.

Sabrina do you have anything you want to add.

MS. GARCIA: Sure. I just wanted to let Mr. Oney know that the Alaska Department of Environment of Conservation, so the DEC, they do test fish including salmon, halibut, pollock for any of the, you know, radioactive material from the Fukushima disaster. So I just did a quick search on their page and they actually have -- they've continued to test yearly so I can see on their page that they have results from 2014 up to September 19th, 2019. So I think if you're interested in looking at those files, if you just Google Department of Environmental Conservation Fukushima, it was the first page that popped up and you can see their test results there.

MR. MURPHY: So that's very interesting. Do you have the summary of that result, can you share that?

MS. GARCIA: Sure. So I can -- I just pulled up the September 19 file and it has a column for region so they tested in the Aleutian Island/Bering Sea region, they tested pollock and halibut. They don't

actually give you levels of what is considered safe. Let me look at some footnotes here. But two of the four that they tested were not detected so that was for Aleutian and Bering Sea pollock and halibut. Same thing for Bristol Bay sockeye. And then in Southeast Alaska they also tested halibut, herring, coho and pink salmon and, yeah, I can't really tell -- it seems like the other two that do have numbers, they are below the level where it presents a safety concern, so that's good news.

But, yeah, I would continue to check back on this page because it seems like hey are continuing to test fish, you know, at least once a year and in some years they do testing almost monthly.

So, yeah, I would check out the Department of Environmental Conservation page.

MR. ONEY: Okay, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further questions or comments for NOAA, for Jim and Sabrina.

MR. SLATS: I apologize, this is Richard, I have to run.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MR. SLATS: Good luck to all of you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Richard, for being with us.

We do have -- I do have a couple more questions. With the depletion of salmon that we saw this year -- or last year with the dead salmon floating out, the effects of the warm water, would it affect the juvenile death rate as well as they're going out river in what you guys seen this past year. According to about how much fish actually were headed out. If there were adult dead salmon in the river at that time, it makes me wonder about the dead salmon headed out -- or sorry, the juvenile salmon that were headed out during that time. Did you guys see a decrease in the 2009 [sic] study that could possibly be connected to that?

MR. MURPHY: Yeah, that's a really good question. I think not only the -- we can't really

pinpoint, I mean one important point to make here is that we can't really pinpoint exactly when or where the poor survival is occurring. It's possible it could be happening in the river. So for a species like chinook, the issues could have happened the year before, during the fry stage. So any time, you know, in that time period, you know, there could be issues. I think it's a good question to ask whether or not some of the fish that are dying in the river could be causing problems with salmon, the juvenile salmon survival. I also think that, you know, we are seeing the warm temperatures have a big effect on the adult salmon and the question there is like, you know, it's also possible these warm temperatures could be impacting the survival of the juveniles. So it can't be -- it's not going to be universal, necessarily I don't think, because, you know, we don't see the same kind of pattern in the abundance of salmon across species. So whatever might be affecting the poor survival of chum could be different than what's causing the poor survival of chinook. If that makes sense.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MR. MURPHY: Sabrina, did you want to add anything.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: And another.....

MR. MURPHY: Okay, go ahead, I'm sorry.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: No, it's fine. Sabrina, did you want to add anything to that.

MS. GARCIA: The only other thing I would add is Bonnie Borba from the Yukon River fall Staff had -- once we started talking about juvenile chums specifically she had mentioned that in 2016 there was a flooding event up on the Tanana and she was just, you know, letting us know that that could be something that could affect juveniles moving down stream. I don't know if she's on the line and could speak to that, but that's just another thing that came to mind when you had mentioned smolts particularly moving down stream.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Another question. For pink salmon, at the rate of the pink salmon -- abundance rate out there, are we over

abundancing in pink salmon and is it affecting other salmon in the ocean?

MR. MURPHY: Well, that's another good question. I'll take another stab at this.

One thing that is important to kind of observe is that even when we're seeing these large numbers of pink salmon -- juvenile pink salmon, we're not really seeing, you know, poor growth. So they -- they seem to be doing okay, they're not exceeding the capacity necessarily of that early marine period, so they're -- even though there's a lot of them they are still growing fairly well. You know some people are concerned, you know, once they leave and are out in the open ocean that they could potentially be competing with other species of salmon or -- and that's kind of a difficult question, we can't really address that in the work that we're doing. I know that there's concern. I also know that the High Seas ecosystems are vast and there are species that most people don't even know, so there's a lot that we don't know about the High Sea's ecosystem. But it is an important question, we just don't have the answers for that clearly in the work that we do in the North Bering.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. And for my final question, you were talking about invasion of species. Are we seeing a lot more Asian species on this side competing for food with our species of juvenile salmon?

MR. MURPHY: Well, the species are more like invertebrates that occupy intertidal areas. So it's not really going to be invasion of salmon or fish, it's going to be in the -- I think it's more of the assortment of the benthic infawna or miofawna that -- it's just species that would hitch a ride on the dock, and once they hit the beach then they become part of our ecosystems.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

MR. MURPHY: Uh-huh.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Is there any other questions or comments from the Council.

MR. LANDLORD: Madame Chair, James

Landlord.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, James.

MR. LANDLORD: Yes. In your presentation, chinook, pink salmon -- the -- in climate change -- climate change, are you assessing the (indiscernible - muffled) the mouth all the way up to Eagle, is the permafrost melting away, would that change of the Yukon River, for the chinook salmon, not to recognize the scent of the mouth or -- I think that's how they come back, they recognize the Yukon River and the scent of -- like the composition of the scent because of the climate change, changing the water in the Yukon River. Do you think so? A lot of lakes and ponds are being emptied also out of the Yukon River. At one time I went to another conference with the Yukon River InterTribal Watershed Council and there was a guest from USGS, they do studies -- they take samples of the river, they do their own study in that part of the river, I think they were funded for maybe two or three years to do the studies. And that presentation was very, very interesting because the estimate for the Yukon -- the composition at the mouth and up the Yukon, all those are decreasing except for your other Western Alaska, those are increasing where they're not the non-Yukon group. And on Page 7, 9, I think the Drainage Association moratorium ever since the chinook have failed to come back in abundance and no matter what moratorium we try -- they try, the indications for -- even for 2020, 2021, 2022, you know, the return of the chinook even now those fish are still decreasing.

But the chinooks are increasing -- the pink salmon are increasing, the chinook salmon are very sensitive to the composition of the Yukon River. Maybe they don't recognize the scent, that's why they're going up north and they become non-Yukon group, like in Nome area, Kotzebue area, those are where the chinooks are returning, those have increased, but on the Yukon it's decreasing.

Maybe Madame Chair we could invite the Fish and Wildlife and Alaska Department of Fish and Game, they have listened to USGS' assessment of Yukon River and the melting of the permafrost maybe, would it change the scent on the Yukon River and maybe invite them to a -- maybe a presentation if it affects any of

the fish.

Thank you.

Madame Chair, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, James. Was there a question -- I was trying to write what you were saying, but was your question has there been a change in the water quality of the Yukon River that is deferring salmon from returning, is that your question?

MR. LANDLORD: Yes, that's part of that, yeah.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Jim and Sabrina, do you have an answer for him?

MR. MURPHY: Well, I'll take a stab at it. Sabrina you can also add in too. I think it's a good question. I think there clearly -- you know the changes in climate are not just affecting the ocean, they are having, you know, big effects in these fresh water systems. And I think that what -- you know, kind of related, I don't know if it's directly related to how much salmon stray but that's kind of what the point is, is that is this changing climate causing salmon to stray more at a higher rate. I think definitely what we're seeing is this warming climate conditions in the Arctic are resulting in more fish moving up north and pink salmon are an example. They're -- you know, they're finding pink salmon in Quebec. They are definitely moving at a higher rate into the Arctic. I think it could be tied to, just because they're becoming so much more abundant now, that that might be causing them to stray more frequently than -- so it's kind of tough to say whether it's abundance or whether it's their ability to home.

But, yeah, those are good questions, I don't think that we really have the answers to that specifically.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. All right, thank you so much I greatly appreciate your presentation. It looks like we have Ellen Yasumiishi from NOAA up next.

MS. PATTON: Hi, Madame Chair, this is

Eva.

MS. YASUMIISHI: Madame Chair.

MS. PATTON: Can I share a quick update.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Let's finish up with NOAA and then we'll go with your update, thank you.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair and Council. We just had some email correspondence. We've got a handful of folks that are needing to sign off soon and I did correspond with Ellen that she might be able to allow ADF&G Subsistence Division for a quick update before she starts, if that's possible, if Ellen's amenable to that.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. Did she say it was okay?

MS. PATTON: Hi, Madame Chair, that was the email I got but we'll check in with Ellen again here. If there is an opportunity, Ellen, if it's okay with you for a real quick update from ADF&G Subsistence Division.

MS. YASUMIISHI: Yes, Madame Chair, this is Ellen Yasumiishi. I'm totally fine with that.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you. I greatly appreciate your patience.

Could we have a motion on the floor to move ADF&G Subsistence Division up next.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, for the record, Ray Oney. Before we end this portion, I'd like to invite them back, I don't know, maybe after they are done with their study, just to follow up on maybe some of the questions that we have for them or if they could get back to us once their project is complete just to

provide more information relating to the ecology of Western Alaska juvenile salmon.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Oney. I am totally on board with that. We'll go ahead and invite you guys back to our meeting and if you guys have followup answers to the questions we had it'd be greatly appreciated. You can coordinate with Eva to have distribution made out and I guess we'll standby and just wait to hear from you guys whenever it's possible, if that's okay with you.

MS. GARCIA: Yes, Madame Chair. I believe that Jim and I would be happy to come back and speak to you all about our research as it continues. Just to remind everyone that our emails are also on that last page of the packet and if there were some questions that you weren't able to ask us, please, please feel free to email us and we'll try our best to answer your questions.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you. Could we get a motion on the floor to have Subsistence Division next.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair, I so move.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Oney. Can I get a second.

MR. ALSTROM: I second, this is Thomas.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Alstrom. All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair and Council. I think we have Dave Runfola on line who was going to provide a quick update for ADF&G Subsistence Division.

MR. RUNFOLA: Hello, Madame Chair.

MS. PATTON: Thank you all for your patience and all your input.

Thank you.

MR. RUNFOLA: Hello, Madame Chair. Council members. Dave Runfola.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Welcome Dave, sorry.

MR. RUNFOLA: That's okay. Thank you for hearing me today and sticking around so late to listen and thank you too, anyone on the agenda, who is waiting to -- or has changed their position to present after me.

This should be fairly quick, I'm just going to present a brief update on current research within the YK-Delta RAC region that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Subsistence Division is conducting.

Right now the big project that's happening in the Kuskokwim River is the Kuskokwim area salmon post-season subsistence harvest surveys. That has been taking place for decades now and the Division of Subsistence, three years ago took that -- inherited that project from the Division of Commercial Fishery and we've continued to survey with the same methods that they had employed for years and we work with local tribes as much as we can with their support throughout the Kuskokwim area, including ONC. That's an important partner for us, essential to get our work done in Bethel, the largest community. The purpose of that is to estimate that total salmon harvest each year and utilize -- and provide that to other agencies and the Division of Commercial Fisheries to understand more about the annual run sizes and to be able to determine whether or not people are harvesting the salmon that they would need each year and whether they would meet the ANS for harvest, the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence.

Right now the 2020 surveys are in progress in communities outside of Bethel. So far we've been working in nine villages in the lower river. None of them are completed yet and we've done 500 surveys. And the Bethel surveys start next week. Janessa

Esquible from ONC talked about her involvement and her team who will be working with us, they're going to start training this weekend and surveying in Bethel probably on Sunday.

The way we're doing surveys now is different than usual. In the past we would go to every community and our technicians and local assistants would go to each household and ask questions about their salmon fishing. Because of Covid19 we've changed our method. Instead of doing the face to face surveys, we're calling people in every village, with the help of the tribes and some information that we've collected over the years, we have many contact numbers for residents. And we are attempting to contact as many households as possible by phone. We're also talking to other people who are assisting us to get in touch with folks who we would like to call if we don't have their phone numbers. So we may get in contact with a family member or a community organization in each village to get in touch with people we can't -- number we don't have.

Those are going fairly well. And this way we're preventing any face to face contact. In Bethel, the ONC technicians will contact households wearing PPE and they'll be at a safe distance. They intend to attempt to do surveys outside at six feet or greater, and they also will avoid any households that have the YKHC hanger on the door that says, you know, that there's a person of high risk in the house, there are hangers on people's door in Bethel right now, we'll avoid those houses. We will also leave information for people so they can call us or do the survey on line.

And that's the summary of what's happening right now in that post-season survey project.

Quickly, some other projects.

All of these projects are currently on hold, the field work is on hold because -- to avoid contact, person to person contact in villages where we need to go to do surveys or other research and we're working with tribes and other community members to develop research methods that ensure safety of all participants in communities. We will not go into communities for any of these projects without absolute 100 percent support from tribal organizations, cities

and other individuals who need to be sure that they're going to be safe.

We have a Kuskokwim big game survey planned with enthnography, or interviews, to learn more about customary and traditional use of big game in GMU 18. We're planning to go to Kwethluk and Akiachak. Hopefully this winter, spring, but we're not really sure what's going to happen with our Covid delays so we're developing methods, instead of going in person to try and contact people over the phone or give them options to do a survey on line. The purpose of this project is to get more information about big game harvest in GMU 18 from these communities so that we can support management of the declining Mulchatna Caribou Herd, as well as management of changing GMU moose population and changes in the use of moose by local hunters.

We also have a project that we were going to start this summer. We were going to -- we were planning to go to the mouths of tributaries in the lower Kuskokwim River where salmon do not spawn, so like the Johnson River or rivers around Tuntutuliak and to talk to fishermen while they were fishing and ask them questions about their salmon harvest. We were hoping to get information during the fishing season that would help with management decisions, give information to Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Fish Commission and the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group. Again, we had to postpone that due to Covid. And we are working with communities to ensure that when we go out this summer, that we will keep fishermen safe by staying away from them and, yet, being able to talk to them. We don't actually have to go to people's houses for this project. We can be in our boat while the fishermen are in their boat and we can be at a safe distance while we ask them a few questions for about five minutes and then we're done. So we think that we can be safe, we just want to get the support of the tribal councils before we start.

We also have received funding from NOAA for a subsistence halibut harvest survey that we do every two years. We attempt to do these surveys in Tununak and Toksook Bay, sometimes that doesn't work out and we'll go to a different village. This information is very important to support management of

the National Marine Fishery Service Bering Sea Pacific Halibut Program, especially to understand more about subsistence uses of halibut, which is very important to several villages in the Coastal areas of the YK-Delta. Again, we're working with communities to develop research plans that keep everyone safe in villages where we would like to do the research and we will give the option of doing these surveys over the phone, by mail and possibly on line if we're able to develop that.

We also have a couple of projects. We have a couple of projects that are happening in the Yukon River. One that has been postponed -- or will likely be postponed, or we think that may be postponed, we're not really sure, we're still trying to make the decision, due to Covid, it's the customary trade of salmon in the lower and middle Yukon River regions. And that -- within the YK-Delta RAC area, villages that would be included in that are Nunam'Iqua and Mountain Village. The purpose of that project is to describe how customary trade practices fit within the overall subsistence use of salmon in the lower and middle Yukon area, both in the past and presently when salmon are declining. We would like to do a household survey to document how people trade or sell salmon within the community and outside of the community. We will also do some ethnographic interviews or some interviews about local and traditional knowledge or historical information about customary trade with residents who participate in that who do sell or buy fish or trade fish for something else.

The final project is something that is the -- another Yukon project with salmon. It's called Yukon Salmon Networks and it researches the.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Sorry about that Mr. Runfola.

MR. RUNFOLA: That's okay.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Let me check in with him really quick. Peter, Phillip, did you have a question or comment that you wanted to make for Mr Runfola?

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, you can continue on Mr. Runfola, sorry about that.

MR. RUNFOLA: Thank you. That's okay, thank you. Thank you, Madame Chair. Yukon Salmon Networks is a project that is completed, has completed field work. We went to Pilot Station, Nulato, and Beaver to document how subsistence salmon harvests are shared in Yukon River communities and understand the customary practice of sharing. We also inquired about how declining salmon runs and increased restrictions affect households ability to get what they need through those exchange networks, or those sharing networks.

We conducted surveys to understand how salmon was distributed. We also interviewed people to get more information that we can't get from simple surveys and we did this with a research partner at Oregon State University. And, there, the research partner is helping us analyze the data that will show how these networks -- how these networks demonstrate these patterns of sharing. The field work was completed and we are currently analyzing data and are preparing for the report writing.

That's all I have for our research update for the Council.

My contact information is available through Eva Patton, and there is also contact information for -- specifically if you have questions about Yukon River research from the Subsistence Division, our researcher here in Fairbanks on those projects is Alida Trainor and Eva will also have her contact information if you have questions.

Thank you, very much, Madame Chair and Council members and I'd be happy to take any questions at this time.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Dave. Do we have any comments or questions for Dave at this time from the Council.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right,

hearing none, thank you so much, Dave, and I really appreciate you being here with us and we apologize for the delays in our time with this really busy schedule we have.

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair.

MR. RUNFOLA: Yes, Madame Chair, no apologies necessary.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, hold on. It sounds like we have John Andrew on the line. Go ahead, John.

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair, this is John Andrew at Kwethluk. Sometimes I will find these people when they come around and try to do their surveys, like Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife, ONC, they always ask the same questions and they're very demanding. I find them very intrusive, especially after you spend the whole day at camp and then come back and you're dirty, you want to take a shower or to clean up. I don't like to ever have to three different agencies or people from three different outfits come over and ask the same questions.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Did you copy that Dave.

MR. RUNFOLA: Yes, thank you, Madame Chair. Through the Chair. Council member Andrew. I really do appreciate and understand your concern and it's very hard to compensate or share our gratitude with the people who help us do this research. But we recognize that what we do requires people, many people, from many villages to talk to us about their food, about their personal habits when they get food, and what their family is doing and that a lot of times those things happen when it's inconvenient for people. And we are truly grateful for that important information that you share and we assure you that the reason why we do it is to help understand how people catch and use and what they need among all of the resources that they're getting, the food that they're getting from the land and the water because other agencies who manage the resources, and I know that -- I believe that Council member Andrew understands this

because he's involved in so much of this management and regulation, the other agencies must hear information directly from subsistence fishing and hunting families or they cannot understand the importance of the resources to people and how it goes beyond just getting a meal.

So the other thing I can tell you is everyone -- we don't -- you know, we -- I don't encourage people to decline to do a survey but these are always voluntary and I know people want to be polite but I would never want to intrude on someone if they felt like I shouldn't be bothering them so I would also encourage people to feel free to tell us that they cannot do a survey if they just don't wish to talk to us in a situation like that.

Thank you for your comment, Mr. Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further comments or questions for Mr. Runfola.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you, Mr. Runfola, we really appreciate you being here with us today.

MR. RUNFOLA: Thank you very much.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Up next we have NOAA Fisheries. Thank you, Ms. Ellen for being so accommodating, Item No. B, Bering Sea Ecosystem Environmental Changes. You have the floor Ellen.

MS. YASUMIISHI: Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the Council. I appreciate the opportunity to present an overview of our Bering Sea -- some of our work that we're doing as well as some of our stock assessment survey information. And also to start off, an overview on sea temperatures and this information is from Rick Thoman and he is a climatologist at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, the Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy, so he's very generous in providing this information to us.

One thing I did want to add to the

lively discussion on ship traffic and one of the concerns that we have in the back of our minds, in particular, with future warming, are the increasing CO2 in the atmosphere that is absorbed by the ocean and this attaches to water molecules that are ingested by species that create shells and it makes them -- it more difficult for them to create shells, and for example a lot of noplankton crab, et cetera, so this is called ocean acidification and that's one thing that we have in the back of our minds way down the road we might be seeing in terms of an increase of fossil fuels in the atmosphere, in the ocean.

So I'll start off saying that this year was a little cooler than last year which is good news. For the Eastern Bering Sea, East of 180 off the Shelf we see that this is the third warmest year on Slide 1 relative to 2019 and 2016, and the last 10 years we've had seven of the warmest years on record since 1900. And so we're seeing an increase in these temperatures.

On Slide 2, these are daily temperatures that start in December through November since 1985 and the blue line is from 2019 and the orange line is from 2020 this year and it shows that in the Northern Bering Sea we started off with a pretty average spring in temperatures and that by July we were seeing warmer than -- or June and July we were seeing warming above the 30 year average.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. YASUMIISHI: .....from '85 to.....

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Ellen, I apologize. Ellen, hold on, standby.

For those of you on teleconference land we're hearing some background conversation about salmon, can you please star six to mute your phone or mute your phone on your cell phone. Again, we're hearing some background conversation. Please star six to mute your phone, it's very distracting that we cannot hear the presenter. For those of you on teleconference land please star six to mute your phone.

Tina, would we be able to get that line muted, it doesn't sound like they can hear us.

REPORTER: Okay, I will check in with the operator, yes.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. I greatly appreciate it. I apologize for that Ellen.

MS. YASUMIISHI: Oh, that's fine, it's the new normal in this time of teleworking and Covid.

(Pause)

REPORTER: So I'm on hold, Alissa, with an operator, and I'm sorry I don't know how long it will take for an operator.

(Pause)

REPORTER: Dave, I believe it's his line, he didn't mute after his presentation.

(Pause)

MS. PATTON: Staff that apparently have their phone lines open, if you could please mute your phone that would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Apologies Ellen and everyone. And I'll try to send an email or text here, thank you.

REPORTER: And I'm still on hold but I'm sure we'll know as soon as the operator comes on.

(Laughter)

MS. YASUMIISHI: I think I heard an expletive.

(Laughter)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, it sounds like he did. Thank you for everyone for all your help in trying to get this situated. Ellen, I apologize for the interruption and for the teleconference line, go ahead and resume where you left off.

Again, my apologies.

MS. YASUMIISHI: Not a problem. Not a problem at all.

I'm on the sea surface temperature departures from normal slide showing basically the warmer anomalies in early August were mostly near shore.

On the next slide the sea temperatures through the water column, and this is on the Slope of the Continental Shelf so farther off shore where a lot of the adult fish spawn. And this is a time period starting in 2006 through -- actually it's through 2020, it's updated. On the right hand side is the depth in the water column, so it's 10 meters down to 250 meters and we see it's definitely still warmer than average from this time series but we're seeing a cooling this year relative to last year.

Near the Kuskokwim Bay the average sea temperatures were also above average in June and August and a little bit similar this year to last year for August where June was a little cooler, so around let's see 15 degrees which is quite warm in June and then August was slightly above 11 degrees, and then in also western Norton Sound 30 miles off shore of Nome we saw it was much cooler in June of this year, more along the lines of average and dipping down into the average area for August as well.

The next slide is Western Norton Sound daily temperatures starting in mid-May through October and this is just a more detailed look at the conditions, how variable -- it's showing how variable they are throughout the season and they were, on average, below the 2020 -- or 2019 values in blue so we're not seeing as abnormal conditions up in the north than in the south later in the year.

NOAA did actually have some surveys conducted this year and I'll just go through one of our more traditional stock assessment surveys is a -- it's called a longline survey and they collect fish off the bottom including sable fish, Pacific cod, G turbot and a variety of rockfish and those are the main species and it covers almost the entire Coast of Alaska and the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea itself surrounds just off of Nunivak Island. But we do have results from that and they count the fish, they take information on

fecundity, how many eggs there are, they weigh the fish and get information on the age and sex that are used to estimate the relative population numbers and that's the next slide, it's the BSAI sablefish longline RPN, relative population numbers. And what we see in the Bering Sea is actually a large increase in the number of adult sablefish in the surveys and these are primarily due to two really strong year classes. So those juvenile sablefish that were born in 2014 and '16 are coming into the population and it's something that we see also in the Gulf of Alaska where warming actually improves the growth rate and production of sablefish or blackcod, and that was sort of a good sign in all of this warming, you know, a lot of species aren't doing that well and are conditions aren't that well either.

The next slide is the Bering Sea Pacific cod population numbers. It was up by 17 percent relative to last year, so -- but the numbers are still around the average of a time series that began in 1999, whereas the greenland turbot, flatfish population numbers are still declining.

So that was our main stock assessment survey this year. We did not have a bottom trawl survey that is used to estimate pollock populations and many other species and that was due to Covid.

Also some of our Bering Sea, our research surveys, also notably the one that Jim is a part of and then we also have two surveys in the Southern Bering Sea, one in the spring and one in late summer to collect some graphic information and fish along with the diet and condition information. And then we have a 70 meter line, that red line that goes up through the center of the Eastern Bering Sea Shelf as well as the distributed biological observation stations. We did send a vessel out, our scientists did not make it on due to the false/positive for Covid, but there was some information collected showing good numbers of zooplankton so that was a good sign for the Northern Bering Sea this year.

Next, I just wanted to show you some of the information that we collect as a whole. So this includes the survey that Jim is part of in the Northern Bering Sea and then the Southern Bering Sea survey that happened around the same time in late summer. These

are the surface trawl surveys. So this is the capelin, maps of distribution and abundance where it shows the -- the blue on the maps indicate that there are low catches and the red are the high catches. And so there is a little bit of a lag that we mostly see capelin in the north and more in cold years and then we're currently seeing a decline in capelin production in the north with zero catch in 2019. And this was interesting because some of the bird populations around St. Lawrence Island have been very poor and so they're -- and those birds prey upon capelin so we're making that linkage between forage fish and bird populations at this time. And it's also a prey item for chinook salmon.

Next so we also catch quite a few herring, also mostly in the north, in Norton Sound, and off of Nunivak Island, near shore, we actually catch more of those in warm years and we're seeing an increase in the abundance of herring in the south in 2018 and kind of a leveling, around normal for the five year average in the north. But again we do see more in warm years than in cold years.

In terms of juvenile sockeye salmon we're mostly catching the Bristol Bay sockeye that hang out in the middle of the Shelf there in the south, in the middle domain and we're seeing more of those fish in warm years as well. In terms of numbers, yes, 2018 was really a large catch.

One thing I didn't mention is that our surveys in the south in late summer occur every other year, so this was a survey year, the 2018, so our next survey will occur -- or sorry, 2020, this year, our next survey is scheduled to occur in 2020. In odd years we're sampling in the Gulf of Budget. And mostly due to budget constraints.

Juvenile pollock, a large fishery, commercial fishery, we do see the juveniles near shore in late summer but mostly in the south, and during -- in the middle domain where the juvenile sockeye hang out. And right now we're looking at -- we have a study looking at the interaction between those two species to see if they're competing for food and how their numbers are affecting each others distribution.

So in summary, in the north we're

seeing a decline in capelin and pollock as well as juvenile sockeye. We're seeing good numbers of juvenile chum and coho and herring. Those numbers have been stable over the last few years. And in the south, seeing low numbers of capelin, average numbers of pollock and an increase in herring and the other juvenile salmon, which are mostly the sockeye.

Finally, one of the really important links that we've made is the importance of sea ice on the production of large copepods and these are little crustaceans that are very lipid rich that the forage fish, these small fish rely on for food. Some of the other linkages to chinook were the capelin are feeding on these copepods. So what I'd like you to do is focus on the cartoon on the bottom, and this represents a cold year when the ice melts later in the year so it's farther south and the algae, there's algae trapped in the ice, and when it melts he algae is released into the water column and later in the year -- when this happens later in the year there's enough sunlight to create a spring bloom large enough and at a time when these copepods are reproducing and they're offspring are feeding on the algae. So that's increasing the number of large copepods available in the ecosystem.

And on Slide 20 it shows the proportion of these large copepods in the diets of age 0 pollock in the Southern Bering Sea and lipid analysis show that these are very high fat content critters and results in larger, more fat in the pollock as well. So that's the importance of these cooler periods and more nutritious prey.

We've also linked the abundance of large copepods that we estimated using our plankton nets that we sample the zooplankton with throughout the Southeast Bering Sea, we have a spatially integrated estimate of how many large copepods are out there and we have a time series now since 2002 and this is correlated with the number of pollock that survive to three year olds. So three years later in their lives and so now we can predict the number of age 3 pollock based on the abundance of large copepods in the water column. And we provide this to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council as well as the stock assessment scientists. And at the bottom of that slide there's a reference, if you'd like to read that paper that we wrote.

On the next slide this is a paper that I published last year in the Journal of Marine Science and it was based on the growth rates of -- on the scales of adult returning chinook salmon that return to Yukon River and also the Kuskokwim River, so the two columns of graphs on the left are the Yukon River chinook and on the right are the Kuskokwim River chinook. So -- and I estimated -- I looked at the growth rates on the scales of these fish and found that particularly for the fish in the south, the Kuskokwim River, they had more variable growth and it declined with temperature. In warm years they grew slower. And also when the ice retreated earlier they have slower growth. I also link that to our copepod index showing that when we have -- see more copepods in the water column they're growing faster and this might be just an indirect relationship through their prey, what they're eating on -- their prey are eating the large copepods. That's the hypothesis. So I think it's interesting that the chinook salmon that are in the Southern Bering Sea have more variable growth and they're more impacted by these fluctuations in sea ice, timing of ice retreats and extends in the south as well as copepod production.

So the next project that I'm working on I'm working with Professor Curry Cunningham at Alaska Fairbanks is to look at what is driving their changes in abundance, the abundance and distribution of juvenile salmon in the Southeast Bering Sea. So we're going to look at the impacts of -- throughout the -- in the marine environment that we collect during our surveys as well as zooplankton and competitors such as other pink salmon, or other salmon such as juvenile pink salmon, are they competing with, say, juvenile sockeye for food as well as pollock, because pollock are the most abundant small fish out there. So we want to look at the impact of those fish on juvenile salmon. So we do have a graduate student actually starting in January and I'd be happy to update you on that at a later time.

So in conclusion we see that 2020 was cooler than 2019 and we really didn't get to survey fish like we really wanted to this year due to Covid. We really made efforts to the very last minute to try to get out there and collect the data but there were high level decisions made not to.

And then my concluding remark, I'm just really happy to be here, but I want to know if there's any other information that you would like to see from us. I know there was a request for halibut information. I heard the survey was scaled back this year, quite a bit, so didn't have the time to followup with them on their catches.

And I'd be willing to take any questions and thank you for sticking around to listen and chat with me and feel free to email me at any time with any other questions that you might have.

All right, thank you, very much.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Ellen. I greatly appreciate it. Do we have any comments or questions for Ellen at this time from the Council.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. Thank you, Ellen for your presentation. I was just wondering about the Bering cisco, I don't know if it's included in your report. We were talking about Bering cisco to study abundance and migration patterns. I was wondering how come it's absent from your report.

Thank you.

MS. YASUMIISHI: Through the Chair. Ray, thank you. We -- I would have to talk to Jim Murphy but we do not catch cisco in our surveys in the south. The mesh size of our nets is such that we aren't able to sample the really small fish that well so we don't include them. I would say if Jim is still on the line we could ask him but I don't remember seeing them in the surveys.

Thank you for your question.

MR. ONEY: Thank you. Another one. Are you coordinating projects along with Jim and Sabrina?

MS. YASUMIISHI: Through the Chair.

Ray. Yes, we are -- what I presented today was information from Jim's survey also and Jim and I work together in the same program. I expanded on -- to show you other surveys that we conduct and other information. But, yeah, we do coordinate and we do publish -- Jim is very specialized in the Northern Bering Sea so he is definitely the expert in that region, particularly for juvenile chinook salmon.

MR. ONEY: Okay, thank you.

MS. YASUMIISHI: Thank you for your question.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi, Ellen. This is Alissa. I wanted to check in and I know Mr. Landlord had a really good question about the water quality discharge from both the Kuskokwim and the Yukon River, are you seeing any differences or do you do that type of study, to find out the different type of changes from year to year on the water quality discharge of both rivers?

MS. YASUMIISHI: Through the Chair. Alissa, thank you for that question. The extent of our water quality is temperature, salinity, oxygen. We have specialists in the phytoplankton, so I would have to defer that question. One of the things that we are doing now is collaborating with Cathy Lafey and collecting critters to see whether they have toxins so the -- like the PSP and the saxitoxins. There are a few other toxins that we're looking for that show us more frequently what it is in warming conditions and that might be interesting for other species that feed on those prey.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

MS. YASUMIISHI: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Do we have any further questions for Ellen.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Sorry about that, I put myself on mute. Thank you so much Ellen for being so accommodating for our late meeting this evening and for allowing us to change you around in the

agenda.

MS. YASUMIISHI: No problem, thank you for having me. It's a really wonderful opportunity. My favorite part of my job is to actually come out and talk to people about what we do, we don't do enough of that so appreciate the opportunity. And thanks for sticking around so late, I know it's after dinnertime now.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you. We're going to jump back to Avery Hoffman for the Kuskokwim sonar presentation. Avery, are you on line?

MS. PATTON: Thanks again Ellen. And, Madame Chair and Council, this is actually Van who's going to be presenting, our student Van presenting along with Keegan on the Kuskokwim sonar. Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, sorry about that. My apologies, Van, are you and Keegan available on line.

MR. VAN KAPSNER: Yeah, I'm here.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Great, wonderful. You have the floor.

MR. VAN KAPSNER: Okay, sweet, one second let me just get it. Here we are.

MS. PATTON: And, Council members you have a print copy of Van's sonar report that he's going to be providing. That's in the supplemental materials, his PowerPoint.

Thank you.

And thanks so much Van, extra credit for presenting late. Thank you so much.

MR. VAN KAPSNER: Yeah. Yeah, I don't mind. I don't mind. So this is the Kuskokwim River sonar presentation, I hope everyone's doing well today. For those of you who don't know me my name is Matthew Van Kapsner. I'm from and live in Bethel, Alaska and I've been with ONC for three summers now. And every year, honestly, is better than the last.

This year the highlights for me were the crew, because life was certainly better when you were able to call your co-workers friends and the sonar site, which was a blast because there's nothing like not taking a shower for 10 days, fishing every day and getting paid to do it. And then everybody at the camp brought their own set of skills and different personalities which meshed together like a net and they certainly worked that way to always help each other.

Now, we'll move on to the presentation, Slide 2.

How sonar works.

If everyone can look in the top right corner you'll see a black rectangle which is the transducer or sounder receiver. The transducer sends out soundwaves and picks up things with a different density which then sends a reflector wave right back at the transducer. Now, if you'll move to the figure in the bottom right hand corner, sound waves are sent by the transducer shown as dark lines then reflect off objects like the black circle. Reflected sound waves shown as dashed grey lines are then received by the transducer and that's what it does.

On to Slide 3.

Now, how do we count the fish.

We get the information from the transducer and then count the fish on the computer, which will look like something like the figure on the right which is called an echogram. Now, how do we read this. If the lines are dark to light we count it because that shows the fish is going up river like the one outlined in the black box. Now, look at the figure in the bottom lefthand corner. We know a fish is going up river because objects down river of the transducer are dark and objects up river of the transducer are light.

On to Slide 4.

Site selection methods are one. We look at Google Earth images to find single channels so we don't miss any fish who decide to take another route. Second we find a slot below the tributaries

because you don't want a handful of them going away and not being counted. Third, we make sure there's no sandbars in the river otherwise you'd have to put the sonar in the middle of the river which is costly and difficult to manage. Last, we check how consistent the area is.

Church Slough was a sonar site in the '90s and stayed relatively the same since then.

On to Slide 5.

Site selection methods, Part 2.

Once we have the potential sites we use a depth finder to see the river bed. After the bottom is mapped out, we make sure it has a shallow bank and a steep bank like the figure below. What we don't want is an even shape on both sides like the bowl figure above where fish can swim everywhere in the river with ease. Fish are more likely to hug the bank when the bank's are different shapes because it's easier for them to swim up river. This also makes it easier for us to count them when they are close to shore.

On to Slide 6.

Site surveys.

In 2014 and '15 they did 150 tracts all over the lower river to see what kind of options they had for the riverbed. The three best sites were the Gweek, Akiak and Church Slough. The reason they chose Church Slough is because it had a good river bed, there was one channel below the tributaries and so it had a history which was consistent. Every year the Church Slough site gets 50 new tracts to see how the river bed is doing and if it's keeping up with its consistency.

On to Slide 7.

Church Slough site and its challenges.

One of the most difficult things at the site is the tides. The left bank sonar is in very shallow water and has to be put far off shore to stay under water. Because of this the sonar might miss fish swimming behind it. To prevent fish sneaking by we put up a lead or a weir to push the fish in front of the

sonar shown in the figure above.

The second challenge is the river width. The sonar has limitations on how far it can go. So there is currently a 20 meter gap in our sonar coverage shown in the figure below.

Our third challenge is the speed of the Kuskokwim. If it was a fast flowing river it would drive the fish to the bottom but since it is not the fish really swim up and down.

On to Slide 8.

Church Slough site, Part 2.

Looking at the figure on the right, the reason we're not worried about the 20 meter gap is because the majority of fish tend to stay close to the bank. Now, on to the left figure, to deal with the fish swimming in the high water because of the slow flow of the river we use a wide spread to count as many fish as possible, kind of like a fish eye. We can't count all of them though, but we can count most which is important.

On to Slide 9.

Fish counting.

To count the fish we break the river up into five slices shown in the figure as lines and dots. Starting from left to right we have LS1, LS2, LS3, RS2 and RS1. Every slice gets counted 30 minutes every two hours. So we use quickmath to double the rate to get our hourly passage. Then we multiply our hourly passage by 24 to get the total passage -- to get the total daily passage in each slice. At this point we know how many fish have gone up river but not the specific species that have gone up river.

On to Slide 10.

Fishing zones.

So how do we tell what species they are.

We figure that out by the fishing zones

shown here. A fishing zone is a specific area we fish in the river. We fish these three areas because they overlap the five counting slices. Why is it important that they overlap. Because the fish we catch need to represent the fish we count. Remember we can't tell what the fish we count are. So we fish six different mesh sizes in each zone every day for a total of 18 drifts every 24 hours.

On to Slide 11.

Drift gillnets and fish delivery.

We use six different mesh sizes so we can catch every size of fish in the river. On the left bank it's much shallower so we use the shallow net, for the right bank in the middle of the river we want to fish as much depth as possible so we use a deeper net. Currently we are testing an extra net for the middle of the river to see if any species are swimming under our normal nets. We try to release all of our catches alive, but for the ones that die we put on ice and provide pick up at camp or delivery to Kwethluk.

On to Slide 12.

Applying fishing catch -- counts.

Our left jellybean jar is our raw counts of daily passage by slice. What do I mean by raw. We don't know what species they are. So that brings us to our catch, what do we catch. It looks like it was 335 percent grey, 50 percent white, and 15 percent black. Now,to combine the catches and counts together we multiply the total passage in each slice by the percentage of each species captured in that area. The result is species counts by slice in the jar on the right. At the end we include effort which is how long it takes to catch each fish and collectivity which is how likely each mesh size will catch each fish.

On to Slide 13.

Daily and cumulative estimates.

First to get our daily passage we are going to add all five slices together to get total daily passage by species. This is represented as a dot on the figure. Second to get the cumulative for the

whole season we just add every day together. And finally , to show variability or error in the estimate a grey bar is shown to display the range of possible passage.

And on to our final slide.

Are there any questions.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Van. I greatly appreciate with your patience in presenting your sonar. Do we have any questions or comments from the Council.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. Thank you, Avery [sic], for your presentation regarding the sonar. It sounds like this is a mobile sonar that you're using, is that right?

MR. VAN KAPSNER: Yeah, so it's mobile but like it stays still unless we move it. It's on these little -- it's kind of like these two upside down T's and it's just held by the metal bars and, yeah, you can just go up to it, you know, pick it up, move it forward.

If that makes sense.

MR. ONEY: Yes, it does. Yeah, I was just wondering about that when I was seeing on slide -- one, two, three, four, five, six, there was different site areas that you mentioned about doing the surveys, site surveys in 2014 and 2015. So I thought it might be a mobile sonar. Is that a fairly new sonar?

MR. VAN KAPSNER: If I could pass that question on to Keegan.

KEEGAN: Yeah, I can take that, Madame Chair, are you okay?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, Keegan, thank you.

KEEGAN: All right, thanks, Madame Chair. To answer your question those lines that we have on Slide 6 of the site surveys, those were actually conducted from a boat using a side scan sonar. We did those back in 2014, 2015 so it's actually a separate sonar unit, just a highly precise like depth finder, basically, that we use to map out the bottom of each of these locations.

As far as actual sonar operations for counting fish, we deployed sonar at a couple different sites, one of them was just below Akiak in 2015 and the other was up at Church Slough site that we use today.

MR. ONEY: Thank you.

MR. LANDLORD: Madame Chair, James Landlord.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I'm sorry, I could barely hear you.

MR. LANDLORD: James Landlord.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Oh, hi, James, go ahead. Sorry about that James, go ahead.

MR. LANDLORD: Are there different types of sonar or are they all the same?

MR. VAN KAPSNER: So there's just -- there's two sonars on each side of the bank and I believe they are the same -- did I get that right, Keegan.

MR. LANDLORD: Yes.

KEEGAN: Thanks for the question, James. And I appreciate you taking a shot at the answer, Van. He's right that we do essentially use two different -- one of them we call imaging sonar, which gets it's name because we can actually see a video image of the sonar -- of the fish as they pass through the sonar, and then the other one we use is called split beam sonar and the difference being that because of the limited number of beams we don't actually get an image of the fish as they go by, we see a trace of the path that the fish took through the sonar. So if you look at Slide No. 3, that image on the right hand

side,we call it an echogram, that's an image from a split beam sonar and basically that's the image we get from all the sonar types regardless of whether they're split beam or imaging. So the imaging sonar just adds a video image of the fish going by in addition to the picture you see here.

Hopefully in the future when we run these presentations we'll be able to have them in person in color and I'd love to have some video included of fish as they swim by.

MR. LANDLORD: At what time -- in Mountain, that maybe we should have a sonar here in Mountain and mentioned that why don't they use the Navy, like maybe submarine or sonar to count fish because I don't know what -- what -- maybe what they use to count fish.

MR. VAN KAPSNER: Yeah, so I -- like I would really like that it would be so cool to be in a submarine, you know, and just like counting fish and stuff looking out that little submarine window.

MR. LANDLORD: Uh-huh.

MR. VAN KAPSNER: I mean in our river I don't think you'd really see much. But the transducers kind of -- it does the same thing a submarine does with the radar and that sonar thing, you know how whales they go that (makes sound).....

MR. LANDLORD: Yeah.

MR. VAN KAPSNER: .....and then it catches all of those different densities in the water, like all the different things, like even sticks and stuff, but the sticks are a little bit thinner than the fish sometimes and sometimes they're bigger.

MR. LANDLORD: Yeah.

MR. VAN KAPSNER: So it really just -- yeah, so it's the same thing but just a lot smaller and a lot easier to carry around.

MR. LANDLORD: Yeah, okay.

KEEGAN: Thanks for that Van, and

thanks for that question, James. When you say Mountain, I assume you mean Mountain Village on the Yukon.

MR. LANDLORD: Pardon me.

KEEGAN: You were asking if they could operate a sonar at Mountain?

MR. LANDLORD: Yeah, somebody wanted -- maybe get another sonar besides Pilot Station. They wanted to know if one could do it here in Mountain and I said, gosh, I don't know, I don't know how it's done.

KEEGAN: No worries, James. I can't say for certain that one would be deployable there but as far as the benefit of another main stem sonar I assume that there -- it would depend on what tributaries were between the two rivers to see what kind of information you were looking to get. It might be possible and it'd be something that we could take a look at.

MR. LANDLORD: Uh-huh.

KEEGAN: But I'm guessing that the Pilot Station provides essentially the same information on the Yukon.

MR. LANDLORD: Yeah.

KEEGAN: But as far as your question about submarines and the Naval sonars that they use. It actually is very similar technology but they use a much lower frequency so basically they can see really large objects at great distances, whether it be canyon walls, other submarines, the sea floor, but they don't see as much detail as we do. We use a much higher frequency sonar. Another example, continuing in that trend, is ultrasound that we use to examine a baby in the womb, it's the same exact technology but at an even higher frequency so you can see more detail at a closer range. So, again, all of those things use the same technology, you're right submarines employ that.

MR. LANDLORD: Uh-huh.

KEEGAN: A little different mechanics that they use for theirs.

MR. LANDLORD: Oh, okay.

KEEGAN: And actually some of the sonars are Navy developed. The ARIS unit is a military contracted sonar unit.

MR. LANDLORD: Yeah, okay, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Do we have any further comments and questions from Council members.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you guys. We greatly appreciate your presentations and love all this new information that's coming through. Keep up the good work.

MR. VAN KAPSNER: Sweet, thank you. And I appreciate everybody else for talking and everything. A bunch of people brought up some really interesting points. Yeah, I feel like there's a lot to learn from this.

KEEGAN: Thanks for your time on that Van. Van and Avery and Janessa are all really great, it was a great team helping us start out our first year of August extension this year.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: That's wonderful. All right. We'll go ahead and move into U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We have Togiak National Wildlife Refuge on line.

MR. ADERMAN: Yes, Madame Chair. Andy Aderman with Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. Can you hear me?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, ma'am -- sorry, yes, I can hear you. Sorry my kids and dog.

MR. ADERMAN: Okay. Yeah, so.....

MS. PATTON: Thanks Andy. Bless your heart and thanks so much for staying on line.

MR. ADERMAN: Yep, no problem. What I was going to present on was included in the

supplemental materials, email No. 1. It's just a bunch of projects that the Refuge is involved with. But wanted to specifically call your attention to the third page, in the middle of the third page is a figure showing moose minimum counts in the Goodnews and Kanektok Arolik drainages, which is the southernmost part of Unit 18. And the counts are from 2001 up to the present year.

If you don't have that in front of you I'll just kind of explain it.

In the Goodnews drainage in 2002 we counted two moose. In the current year, 2020 that number is now 450. In the Kanektok and Arolik drainages in 2002 we saw three moose and then in 2020 that number has increased to 236. So moose are continuing to increase in the western part of the -- the Togiak Refuge, the southern part of your area.

And then the only other thing I wanted to mention was I was out flying a couple times in the last 4 days, probably about seven hours worth and I have seen more ptarmigan in this last week than I have in the last five years. So ptarmigan are increasing as well and that's here in 17 -- I was in part of eastern Unit 18 yesterday up by -- oh, I can't think of the name of it right now -- Kisaralik, in that area.

So that's all I had.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Do we have any comments or questions for Mr. Aderman.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. Thank you for that presentation. Yeah, I think the moose population will continue to grow. I think it's something that we wanted to see happen for those people in that area so I'm glad to see the moose population is beginning to, you know, to sprout in those areas. How about the predator -- do you see any increase in wolf or brown bear predation as a result of the growing population of moose in that area?

MR. ADERMAN: We don't have any hard numbers on wolves and bears but I think, you know, bears have always been present in the area even before the moose really started to grow. But I think the wolf population probably has grown more just because moose provide a stable source of, you know, big game or big meat for them, you know, moose will stay around all year unlike caribou, you know, they're there part of the year and then are not. So that's my thoughts on it anyway, Mr. Oney.

MR. ONEY: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Mr. Aderman, I know this might be out of your expertise, it says to contact Kara Hilwig, but I was going to see if you have any indication of your murres and seabirds. At our last meeting there was a huge discussion and concern for seabirds out in the area, have you noticed additional die-off this year or any increase in abundance?

MR. ADERMAN: Well, we didn't do the seabird monitoring this year because of Covid. And our monitoring largely has been at Cape Pearce, which is just a little south of Cape Newenham. But what they've been seeing the last -- the previous three or four years is almost total failure with murres and kittiwakes as far as reproduction. And I don't know about any large numbers of either species, you know, showing up on beaches. I'd have to get with Kara and see if she's noticed any of that.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, thank you. Any further comments from Council for Mr. Aderman from the Togiak Refuge.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing none thank you so much for being present with us and staying with us on line this long. I greatly appreciate your patience with our technical difficulties and delayed agenda.

MR. ADERMAN: No, problem, thanks.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Next on the agenda we have the Yukon Delta National Wildlife

Refuge.

MR. BLIHOVDE: Hi, Madame Chair and Council members, thank you. This is Boyd again. Boyd Blihovde, the Refuge Manager at Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. I'm sort of tag teaming with our Subsistence Coordinator, Aaron Moses, on this summary. And I just wanted to introduce myself formally and my family and my wife because, although Aaron Moses and other Staff that we're really proud to have on the team are from -- many of them from the area or from the Native community, I am not. I am new to Alaska. My wife and I are both new to Alaska. We moved here from South Texas. I have come up and worked in Alaska in the past but this is the first time I have had the joy of permanently residing in an area in Alaska and it's been a dream of mine so really proud to be here and hope to meet you all in person. This is certainly just the second best way to meet all of you. But my, wife, her name is Gisela Chapa and she's certainly the better half of the marriage. She also works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and she was a Refuge Manager as well in South Texas. We came from very close to the Mexican Border in South Texas. I was the Refuge Manager at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge and Gisela was the Refuge Manager at a place called Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. We have two kids that are a big reason why we wanted to come here to Alaska, we wanted to get them into a more rural way of life and a way of life that consisted of wildlife, and beautiful open spaces like you all have here in Bethel that I really respect and admire. So our kids are six years old and they're twins named Ava and Taylor, a boy and a girl, and we think it's just the perfect age for them to come in and learn about a community like Bethel and the greater Yukon Delta area. And I'm sure all of you are just as proud of it as we are becoming. But after two months my wife and I have become very proud to be here and very protective, too, of this resource that you all have managed so well for so many years.

So just a few seconds just to explain where I come from.

My father worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for over 34 years. It was his career, basically my whole life growing up so I knew what I wanted to get into when I got older and so this is a dream job, I think, for anybody that likes wildlife and

likes the outdoors. And so that's what I got into.

I've worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for about 20 years. My last Refuge, like I mentioned was a place called Laguna Atascosa in South Texas and it has several things in common with this area. Texas is the second biggest state, second to Alaska, and moving here made me realize just how small Texas may be compared to Alaska.

So I am trying to get into this community and get out and learn the Refuge as best I can but it's really difficult with Covid right now and I think that's going to be a big point that Aaron will bring up, is that there's many things we couldn't do because of Covid.

But I don't want to take too much time because I know it's getting late in the day, I just want to say Quyana, that's one Yup'ik word that I've learned and I hope to learn more, but Quyana, for taking such good care of this resource and I hope to just stand with you all to continue that trend. I really celebrate the good work that many have done here in this area to help protect this resource and manage it well. And one person I want to thank is Ray Born, who was acting as the Refuge Manager for several years and also in-season manager for several years, he did a great job, he's back to his regular role of assistant Refuge Manager here. And for those of you who don't know he was doing two jobs for a long time and so I really appreciate all the work that he did, it's kind of a thankless job so -- but I want to just appreciate him.

And, Aaron, I want to turn it over to you, and also describing some of the other folks that we've hired, there's been a lot of new folks that we've picked up here at the Refuge and I'll turn it over to Aaron to start talking about that.

Thanks, so much.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Boyd. For the record my name is Aaron Moses, I'm the subsistence specialist here at Yukon Delta. Like Boyd said we've had a number of people come in which has been nice because we've been severely under Staffed for the past few years. Like Boyd mentioned Ray has gone back to

his Deputy Refuge Manager role. We also have a new law enforcement officer, Matthew McDonald, he'll be here off and on throughout the year when we need him. We have a new big game biologist but he is a familiar name around here, Aaron Webber, comes to the Yukon Delta from the Kenai Field Office. Webber was the fish biologist that helped run the Kwethluk weir for a number of years. Our supervisory biologist, Lew Coggins has departed and has accepted a job as a remote coordinator. Lew came here in 2014 as a fish biologist and moved up to supervisory biologist in 2016. Also another thing, is we have a new Park Ranger, Leticia Leciera (ph) is currently working remotely from Utah. She is unfortunately not able to join us locally due to the pandemic and the restrictions that have caused us to close the visitor center.

Some highlights from the biology department for fisheries. Our fisheries biologist Gary DeCossas was able to run one project, or two projects this year. This summer he was trying to investigate the relationship between chinook salmon body size and their length in order to understand how smaller chinook salmon returning to the Kuskokwim River will have an impact on future productivity.

We also worked very closely with ONC and Bill Bechtel to operate the in-season harvest monitoring. I cannot say enough about ONC and how hard they helped and how much they mean to us working on in-season salmon work.

As for moose and caribou. The Kuskokwim moose are doing better and we plan to work with Fish and Game to count this winter on the moose population in Unit 18, Zone 1 and 2.

We issued Unit 19A permits to the four -- five member villages. The Yukon Delta will be working with Fish and Game in Togiak on compliance for caribou closures this winter.

As for the waterfowl department. A lot of the projects got cancelled due to Covid. We were able to complete four projects this summer but a lot of the -- all our interns and all the people we rely on in the summertime weren't able to come in and get work done.

Visitor services has been negatively impacted due to Covid19. In response to the threat of the pandemic the visitor center remains closed until further notice. The main line to the Refuge continues to be monitored for messages or any assistance requested by the public. We would like to hear from you, you could find us on FaceBook at Yukon Delta Refuge.

So for the Refuge Information Technicians, the RITs are the backbone of our Refuge efforts to talk with the tribes and villages. We currently have three RITs and we are in the process of recruiting an additional two more RITs. So please let the public know if you are interested in becoming an RIT for the Refuge.

And lastly for the BIA site, the formerly used defense site, commonly known as BIA cleanup project has started with abatement from hazardous material in the buildings and building demolition. The 27 acre portion of the site is intended to be transferred to YKHC for their use, with the remaining 18 acres to be devoted to an environmental and cultural education trail.

That's all I got for the Refuge.

If you guys have any questions I can answer.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. I greatly appreciate you guys waiting on line so long for us and apologize for the delay in our meeting as we've had a pretty tight schedule.

Thank you so much. It's really great to hear that we're filling up the Refuge and getting all these great people in there and things are going back to normal and that you guys are able to get all these projects -- different projects done even though you guys are working around Covid.

But I wanted to see if there were any comments or questions from the Council.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Ray.

MR. ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. First of all I want to welcome Mr. Boyd to our area, Yukon Delta -- Yukon Kuskokwim Delta area. I'm sure we'll get to meet you some day, hopefully. And thank you, Aaron, for your presentation. I don't remember if it was either Fish and Wildlife or ADF&G that were going to be doing a ptarmigan tagging study. I don't remember if it was your, the Fish and Wildlife group or ADF&G that were going to do that, if I can get an update, if that's been done.

Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Yes, through the Chair. We are working with Fish and Game on that. The project is currently ongoing. We were supposed to do it this spring but due to Covid a lot of things got cancelled. But we still have the transmitters and we are still looking to the future to see how that's going to be able to work out.

MR. ONEY: Okay, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further comments or questions for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing none, thank you guys so much for your time. Again, welcome all of your new Staff to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and thank you guys for being a part of our meeting today.

(Pause)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right.

MS. PATTON: Thanks Aaron.

(Pause)

MR. ONEY: Yes, can we move on.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, sorry about that my mute button was not cooperating.

Okay, so let's go ahead and move on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fisheries Division, if you're still on line.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair and Council. We had the update from Keegan and Van, that was part of the update and then we had folks, also Nick Smith providing information during the in-season salmon report. I don't believe we have anyone else from the ADF&G Fisheries Division to report at this time.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, great. If they do end up coming on line they're more than welcome to jump in or chime in whenever they're ready.

We'll go ahead and move.....

MS. PATTON: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: .....on to the Western Alaska Partnership, previously Landscape.....

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: .....Conservation Cooperative, Ms. Danielle Stickman, are you on line?

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair and Council, if I may. We actually just jumped over Bureau of Land Management so they were after Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. And we did have Bonnie Million who's the Director for the Anchorage Field Office who covers the YK-Delta region and also Bruce Sepi was on line as well. I know Bonnie had to leave, I don't know if Bruce is still on line with us at this time.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: And if Bruce isn't on line Bonnie did provide a bulleted update which I just forwarded to the Council. And maybe really briefly I'll just highlight those updates from BLM because I think there's some things coming up that are of interest to the Council, just so you're aware of it, and then that -- that information should be in your email and then we'll fax it to those Council members that don't have access to email as well.

If -- if it's at the wish of the

Council I can provide a very quick update of the information that Bonnie Million had provided for BLM for the YK-Delta region.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, Eva, go ahead, you have the floor.

MS. PATTON: So one new update is BLM has -- all of Alaska BLM has a new subsistence coordinator and that's Chris McKee, who, all of you may remember was OSM's supervisory wildlife biologist. So Chris has just gone to BLM and he will be their subsistence coordinator for all of Alaska. So he's definitely knowledgeable having been at OSM for many years. So that's one update.

A big point I'm sure the Council is interested in, the Red Devil Mine proposed plan, those public comment meetings are coming up in October so they've got a number of virtual meetings and Bonnie had provided a link to call in to those meetings. So those are starting October 20th, another on the 22nd, another on the 27th and another on the 29th of October. And I believe that's addressing the remediation for the Red Devil Mine on the Kuskokwim River. So those meetings are coming up, I think there was interest for that so the Council and public is aware.

They -- they actually just sent out a link recently, BLM has the Campbell Creek Science Center here in Anchorage but they've always been involved in a lot of on line learning, interpretative learning, and they've got some great resources for distance learning for schools that are -- that meet school curriculum so there's a link for that. So for your own kids or your local community schools, that was a resource that Bonnie had reached out recently to let folks know that that's available to everyone in Alaska. And that's for science learning, remote science learning that meets school curriculum.

Alaska Native Veterans Allotment Act update. So BLM is helping to transfer allotments to Native Veterans who did not receive allotments initially because they were out of the country serving in the military at the time, and so there's a link for that, to help provide to your community and Veterans. They're still working on transferring lands for allotments to those that did not receive them at the

time of the initial distribution for Native allotments.

And then the Bering Sea Western Interior Resource Management Plan, I'm just reading here, the next stage of the project is the eventual release of the final environmental impact statement and proposed management plan. So that looks like that hasn't been released yet but once it is then there will be a 30 day public comment period then. And so there's a link for that.

And then they've been involved with water quality monitoring at various areas. And they've provided some updates on that.

And then also BLM is part of the permitting process, it looks like there's some mining activities that they're still engaged with as permitting compliance including the Nyac Mine, they're looking at reclamation, and the Platinum Mine is looking at opening back up.

So those are all the bullets that Bonnie Million had provided for the Bureau of Land Management and I just received that from her since she had to get off line and forwarded that to the Council. And she was happy to answer any questions, so if the council has any followup questions we can contact Bonnie for that.

Thank you, Madame Chair. That was it from Bonnie Million and BLM.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you, Eva. Do we have Danielle Stickman on line?

MS. PATTON: And, Madame Chair and Council. Danielle also contacted me by email, she had an appointment at 6:00 so she had to leave as well. The Council also has a -- it looks like a two page color slide from what used to be the Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative. They have a new name now, which I forget, they're calling themselves the Western Alaska Partnership. But in you print meeting materials you should have a colored two page flyer.

And I guess one of the key things that was in that flyer was they were involved in the Adapt

YK Workshop, which is addressing climate change in the region. And for the future, good to keep communications with them, they are -- kind of their task is to work on integrated research in large part addressing climate change. We've got a flyer from Danielle as well.

(Coughing)

MS. PATTON: Sorry.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: You're okay, Eva, it's been a long night.

All right, if you guys look at your flyer and if you have any questions there's contact information for Danielle, you can call her with your questions and any information you want to acquire out of the Western Alaska Partnership.

We'll move on to Office of Subsistence Management.

MR. RISDAHL: Hi, Madame Chair and members of the Council. This is Greg Risdahl, OSM Fisheries Division leader. And it's been a long day and I have to say thank you all very much for sticking it out and for the hard work you've been doing. This has been really interesting. I found some of the agency reports to be more interesting than ever, especially about the marine waters, something that we've all been wondering about so I really appreciate that. Again, thank you all so much for sticking it out and hanging in there through the end of the day.

It's been pretty difficult for us here at OSM and everybody else as well dealing with the Covid19 environment but we've all done our best.

As you all know by now we have been holding all 10 of the 2020 Fall Regional Advisory Council meetings by teleconference.

The decision to do this, of course, was made with the utmost consideration and concern for the health and safety of everybody, including all the Council members, their families, rural communities, the agency Staff and folks at OSM as well. Health and safety of everyone is our highest priority.

The Regional Advisory Councils have always been and are remaining to be the foundation of Alaska's Federal Subsistence Management Program. And we recognize that holding face to face Council meetings in rural communities is far preferable for engaging the public most effectively. And I just know we all like to get together and it's just been a loss for everybody, but thank you all so much for going with the flow. We are fully committed to resuming in person meetings across Alaska as soon as possible, to do so safely.

We've also had quite a few Staff changes here recently. Fortunately a little bit of hiring is taking place but first some of the departures.

Sadly, Tom Doolittle, our Acting ARD for about three years has resumed his Deputy position for the last few months since Sue Detwiler, our new ARD was hired. Tom is retiring this fall although he's trying to get in as much hunting up here in Alaska before he hangs it up.

OSM's wildlife division lead you just heard, Chris McKee, took the ISC position with the Bureau of Land Management and we wish Chris well and it's really nice to have another OSM person in that position who's very knowledge about the Program so we expect great things from Chris.

Suzanne Worker, another of our wildlife biologists took a position recently with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services Program in Portland, Oregon.

Currently we are down to one wildlife biologist and that is Lisa Maas, and she is currently the acting OSM policy coordinator.

I have lost a couple of my best fisheries biologist, I guess they're all best at this point, but Frank Harris, he took a position with the Kenai Fisheries Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and he is still going to be working, you'll be happy to know, still on the Kuskokwim fisheries projects.

Scott Ayers, another OSM fishery

biologist took a promotion and has moved over to the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program here in Anchorage.

We have replaced to fisheries biologists position, have two more to go, but we did hire Jared Stone, who has worked for OSM for some time in a technician capacity, mostly working with youth hiring in the ANSEP Program and we're really happy to have Jared back. We also hired Cory Graham, who you heard from today and yesterday. Cory's a really excellent addition to OSM's fisheries Staff, we're so happy to have him.

We've also recently hired Sherri Gould-Fehrs as our third administrative assistant and I'm very happy to tell you that we have also finally hired a supervisory anthropologist, Dr. Brent Vickers will begin here at OSM some time in December, in the next couple of months.

A couple of policy changes that I just wanted to bring up, and remind people about.

The Federal Subsistence Board approved changes to the closure policy and the non-rural determination policy. Councils have been previously briefed on these two items. The Board also approved revisions to the special action section of the tribal consultation implementation guidelines. These documents are available upon request as well as on the OSM website.

Another item that we wanted to remind everybody about is the RealID. If we ever get to travel again we will have to have those. Fortunately the deadline that was originally established for October 1, 2020 was postponed until October 1, 2021. So if you haven't already gotten your RealID, Council members please try to do that for when we can travel again because we will be needing those.

There's been a lot of interest about the lawsuit that was recently filed from the State of Alaska and this is just a brief paragraph or two about that.

On August 10th the State of Alaska filed a lawsuit against the Federal Subsistence Board

after it adopted Wildlife Emergency Special Action, WSA19-14, this special action allowed the village of Kake in the Southeast to engage in a community harvest of two antlered bull moose and five blacktailed deer. Also included in the lawsuit was a Temporary Special Action WSA20-03, which closed Federal public lands in Units 13A and B to non-Federally-qualified moose and caribou hunters. As part of the lawsuit the State asked the court to issue two preliminary injunctions. One, was to prevent the Unit 13 closure from taking effect, and another vacating the Kake hunt and prohibiting the Board from allowing any additional emergency hunts related to the impacts of Covid19. On September 18th, the U.S. District Court denied the State's request for a preliminary injunction on the Unit 13 closure. Essentially the Court found, and I quote: "Because the State has not demonstrated either a likelihood of success or serious questions on the merits of its claims, the Court need not consider the remaining elements of the preliminary injunction analysis."

As of this writing, early October, the Court has not yet ruled on the request to enjoin the Kake hunt or the adoption of other Covid19-related emergency actions.

A ruling on the preliminary injunction does not resolve the litigation. Barring a settlement with the State, the questions raised by the State concerning the Board's authority to take these actions will probably be argued over the coming months. The Solicitor's Office estimates that the briefings should be complete in late winter or spring of 2021 and a Court will issue its decision in early summer.

Based on legal guidance, we've been asked to not get involved in any conversation about it because there's just a lot going on and we are not that closely involved in the details of the litigation.

Anyways, last but not least, we just received a notice today that the Wildlife rules were just approved and they will be published next week.

So, again, thank you all so much for hanging in there through this long day and all the excellent work that's been done and that you are continuing to do for subsistence users, rural folks

throughout Alaska.

And with that I'm happy to take any questions.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Greg, and for sticking around with us. Is there any Council members who have questions or comments for Greg.

MR. SLATS: Madame Chair.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I believe -- did we have someone before you, Ray, or was that you?

MR. ONEY: It sounded like somebody was before me.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: They're breaking up so I can't understand what they're saying.

MR. SLATS: Madame Chair, this is Richard.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead.

MR. SLATS: I've been back for a half hour.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you, Richard.

MR. SLATS: I'm just letting you know, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you for coming back on line.

Okay, Ray, go ahead.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. I just want to thank you for updating us on the actions that are going on in the Office of Subsistence Management. Thank you for updating us relating to things that are happening there, filling out seats, and also updating us on the

lawsuit.

So appreciate that, thank you.

MR. RISDAHL: You're very welcome, Ray.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further comments or questions for Greg.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, Greg, it's Alissa. I had a quick question in regards to the three policies that were passed. One was the closure review, you said the second one was a non-rural determination, could you please elaborate a little bit more of exactly what was changed in the non-rural determination?

MR. RISDAHL: Yes. The non-rural determination policy, they've been kind of gradually tweaking that policy over the last couple of years. And part of that has been taking place during -- we've had one request for a new determination for the community of Moose Pass and I don't have the details right here in front of me but it is looking at changing the way the non-rural determination policy is put into place. So the one thing that I remember that is probably the biggest change, and, Pippa, if she's still on, she may be able to speak to this better, but in the past a number of communities were lumped together and in this case, Moose Pass had been lumped together with the community of Seward as well as a couple other small communities, in that area. And now we're looking at separating those out because of the distinct and unique differences in the community. For instance, the folks in Moose Pass do not really consider themselves a part of the Seward community and, therefore, they feel they should be able to have a rural determination status.

So that's just one example.

I don't know, Pippa, are you there still?

MS. KENNER: Yeah, I am. Hi, Greg. Yes, what you said is -- what you said is accurate and what I -- this is Pippa at OSM, what I'll do real quickly is address the changes in the non-rural determination process and those changes were minor and

they were only to clarify. The Board and Staff found there were a couple of areas in the policy, in the process that weren't very clear and they just put in wording to clarify the meaning of those parts of the process. So no substantial changes were made.

Thank you, Madame Chair and Greg.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Pippa.

MR. RISDAHL: Thank you, Pippa, for chiming in there.

MS. KENNER: You bet.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: And what was that third policy change, I didn't quite get that last one.

MR. RISDAHL: Let's see the third policy change was the Board approved revisions to the special action section of the tribal consultation implementation guidelines.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: You want to elaborate a little bit on that one too, please.

MR. RISDAHL: I'd like to pass that one off to Pippa, too, if she's available.

MS. KENNER: Yes, I am.

MR. RISDAHL: She can give you the details of that.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Hi, yes, and, again, there was a part of the protocols for tribal consultation when it comes to special action requests that was not clear and often times we have to work on these -- implement these special action requests so quickly, there really isn't time for tribal consultation and so I think it was just clarifying that OSM will do -- will conduct tribal consultation unless the time just doesn't allow it. And so as Greg said, that these had been presented to you, that was presented to you from Orville Lind, and the Board is just now acting on them.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, thank you,

Pippa.

MS. KENNER: You're welcome.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Any further comments or questions for Office of Subsistence Management.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, hearing none, we'll go ahead and move on our agenda. Thank you guys for being on line this long, we greatly appreciate all that you guys do and all the hard work in putting these meetings together because this is a lot of stuff to put together and a lot of time to put it together, so I really greatly appreciate all the work that you've done. Without all your work these meetings would not be possible.

Up next on the agenda we have identifying issues for FY2020 annual report.

Eva.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Madame Chair and Council. So if you'll look in your meeting book on Page 118 is an overview of the annual report process. And then you'll find on Page 120 is the Federal Subsistence Board's response to the Council from your previous year, your fiscal year 2019 annual report. So there's a full response including a lot of attachments to respond to the Council's request for information from the Board.

So please do take time to review that and we can review it again at the next meeting if you see information requested that you would like to followup on from the Board's response. Some of the -- some of the topics were outside of the Board's purview and in that case they referred to the agency that could address the issue. And so there's a number of attachments providing information from those agencies to respond to the Council's question. Some are topics the Board is going to take up at their January meeting including to recognize and honor our long time past Council Chair Harry Wilde, Sr., and so they're asking for the Council to share information that you would like to have included in that honor for Harry Wilde,

Sr. And a lot of the responses, though, are information that the Council would like, research the Council would like and those are directed either to me, as your Council coordinator, to ensure that we provide that information for the Council and we'll be doing that in the upcoming meeting, or be it through the FRMP Program and trying to coordinate with other agencies to address the Council's research.

So do take some time to read that and we'll be going back over it at the next meeting, too, so if there's anything you feel wasn't addressed fully we can be sure to include it in the next annual report.

So right now what we're going to do is just an overview of the annual report itself and identify topics that the Council would like to include for this year, for the 2020 annual report. The feedback that you provide me right now, and then I look through all of the discussion in the transcripts as well to see where there's information that the Council has asked for, areas of concern and include that in the annual report, too. And then we'll review the draft at the next meeting so there's an opportunity at that time to update it, add information, edit it, so this is just your first opportunity to identify the issues.

So, again, the annual report is established under Title VIII of ANILCA, and it is a way for the Regional Advisory Councils to bring regional subsistence uses and needs to the Secretary's attention. And, again, the Federal Subsistence Board, the Secretary has delegated responsibility to the Federal Subsistence Board, so you're really writing to the Board themselves and their reply is from the Board. And the annual report provide the Council an opportunity to address the directors of each of the four Departments of the Interior agencies and Department of Forest Service, for those in that region, as well. And the Board is required to discuss and to reply to each issue in every annual report and to take action when it's within the Board's authority. And if it's outside of the Board's authority then they'll provide information to the Councils on how to contact the agencies that might be able to take up that information but will try to respond as best possible even if it's beyond the Board's own authority.

And, so, again, this is part of Title

VIII of ANILCA, Section .805. And some of the key issues that the Board can and does and defers to the Council's recommendation on is identifying current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region; an evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife within the region; and recommended strategies for management of fish and wildlife populations within the region; to accommodate and ensure subsistence uses and needs continue; also recommendations concerning the policies and regulations for subsistence.

So any -- and, again, we always strive to address issues that are outside of the Board's direct jurisdiction as well, too. So I know there's a lot of interest and concern around climate change that's ongoing and research requests and encourage the Council to bring those forward too.

So we're just -- we're looking for what topics you'd like to include in this year's annual report and we'll compile that as best possible now and then I'll send you the draft for your review and we'll have a chance to review it at the next meeting in the winter as well.

Thank you, Madame Chair and Council. Any questions or recommendations.

(Pause)

MS. PATTON: Uh-huh, it's pretty quiet. Did I get cut off, or maybe folks are on mute or maybe you're thinking.

(Pause)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Hi, Eva, no I think it's just good silence right now.

MS. PATTON: Sure, take your time. Think of ideas. And, again, this is just the first step and we have a chance to revisit it again at the winter meeting, too. And I always go through the entire meeting transcripts and -- and -- and look for the issues of concern or interest and requests that have been brought up and add those to the annual report as well for your review.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Well, I guess I'll start off, Eva. The notes that I have taken from the beginning of the meeting, suggestions or some comments that were made for wanting more additional information or just concerns.

1. The first one up is management options for Zone 1 and Zone 2. As moose populations increase.

2. Research and study of setnet differences, the pros and cons in tributaries and the difference between 75 feet and 150 feet.

3. For meeting minutes, to go back to 15 to 20 pages. A RAC Council tool is needed to refresh Council members and public, communities that are still struggling with technology and don't have capability to download large files due to limited internet.

4. Further support for identifying the best net size to support subsistence harvest without damaging, conserve salmon for escapement.

5. Climate changes into our environment that baseline and more research data is needed to answer so many questions. This would help RACs make better recommendations for the Federal Subsistence Board.

6. Concern for subsistence needs not being met with the current pandemic at large. The subsistence resources are more important now than ever for survival. Encourage Federal Subsistence Board to support and encourage assisting with seeking relief funds for subsistence users for the YK-Delta and other regions that are affected. For allowing more opportunity for subsistence users to use the resources available to them during times of high populations or in times of need when there is no other sources of food available to them.

7. Continue support for caribou populations research and updating of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.

8. Concern for water quality in both the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. If this is affecting

salmon returning into the rivers resulting in salmon straying or moving to other rivers to spawn.

9. Support NOAA for more studies in juvenile salmon research.

And that concludes my notes that I've taken as action items and concerns for this fall meeting.

Thank you, Eva.

MS. PATTON: Excellent, thank you, Madame Chair.

MR. ANDREW: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Thank you. I have one -- I brought that up at on the last fish meeting that they were catching smaller chinook and smaller reds last few years is highly noticeable. And this summer chums were hardly showing up and it was in the news everywhere, too, not just on our river, Yukon, Bristol Bay, Cook Inlet, even Southeast, half the statewide now, do a study on trying to find out what's happening out there.

And the other one is we have more and more brown bears raiding fish camps over here. Besides raiding fish camps they prey on moose calves up in the hills back in the woods, and caribou up in the hills. We see more and more of that. Even hunters tell me that they hear howling out there, wolf packs howling when they're going after moose out there.

And there was another one, I think about, and I -- I can't remember it, I'm not sure what I wanted.

And I have too many things going on the last couple days over here, there was a death in the village and they're kind of throwing me off track, but those are some of the issues we need to take a look at.

Salmon. Declining salmon, they're getting smaller too -- oh, yes, on the predators. We have more wolves chasing our moose over here, even

coyotes are getting high in numbers too. Years ago there used to be hardly any -- when there was hardly any -- and no moose and the caribou -- when the caribou migrates down to our back there, there are the wolves that follow them.

Quyana.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Andrew. Anyone else have any additions they would like to make.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Oney.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Ray Oney. I'd like to take up Mr. Owen's comments that he had mentioned earlier this morning that the resources need to be protected for those that depend on the land and waters, especially those that have no choice but to live off the land and those that have limited income, and these are a majority of the people that are in rural villages and we need to take that consideration very seriously, how do we protect the resources that we depend on especially with this climate change that's happening. We do need to protect what we depend on rather than keep declining. And probably the next thing we might see is maybe it's not there anymore so we need to take seriously how we can protect those resources that we depend on.

Quyana.

MS. KENNER: Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yes, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Hi, this is Pippa Kenner with OSM. Eva, are you back on -- Eva was cut off and she was dialing in.

MS. PATTON: Yep, I'm back on, thanks Pippa. Yes, I missed the end of what John Andrew was saying and then came back on when Ray Oney was speaking, so thank you.

MS. KENNER: Okay. Well, Ray Oney was bringing up things I think for the annual report and I'm sure we've captured that in the notes.

MS. PATTON: Thank you. Thank you, Pippa, and I think I captured much of what Ray was speaking to here so I'll look to others who are taking notes if I might have missed your first few words there, Ray, so thank you everyone.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you. Anyone else on the Council who would like to add to our list.

MR. SLATS: Richard Slats.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Slats.

MR. SLATS: Madame Chair, thank you. I have taken some things for -- scribbled down some things but then I wanted to include, mitigation of climate changes and also to include the pandemic hardships that we're going through now.

And also like our ongoing concerns of the unusual mortality, seabird die-offs and, you know, even fish. That those be -- those concerns be addressed.

And also in our meeting packet there is a thing on Donlin Mine, to me that's still something, you know, of a concern.

And then climate change impacts to subsistence activities, travel and access to resources.

And also I'm thinking our access to these meetings, these teleconferences, you know, with the hardship of having too many people dropping calls and all of this stuff, that I'm wondering that if in the future we can explore the idea of videoconferencing with Zoom so that we can look at people's -- the important presentations as they're presenting them to us.

And then also to include addressing and declaring our emergencies that are going on so that these may be highlighted or put in the forefront when

these emergencies are going on.

And also to include local and traditional knowledge with our science.

Also the Mulchatna Caribou Herd needs to be ongoing. And all of our studies need to be ongoing, you know, test studies and all of those, funded, and be kept ongoing.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Slats. Any further.....

MS. PATTON: Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: .....comments from Council members.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, last call for any final comments or concerns or anything else that we might have missed that you would like the Federal Subsistence Board to address.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay, then.....

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Council members and Madame Chair. And, again, the draft annual report will be sent to you for your review in advance of the winter meeting and then we'll review it as a whole Council at the winter meeting and have additional opportunity at that time to add subject matters that come up that you would like to add or make changes or edits as well at that time. So there's still opportunity, and if you think of things, feel free to contact me too.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Let's go ahead and move on to the next agenda item which is confirming the winter 2021 and also selecting the fall 2021 meeting dates and locations on Page 222 and 223. Currently for the winter 2021 RAC meeting we have March

3rd and March 4th as our meeting dates for the winter 2021 meeting and it looks like we selected the location to be in Bethel if we were ever to meet face to face.

Does this meeting date still work for winter 2021 or do you guys want to change the date, the window is open from February and closes on March 26th. If those dates are still good to go for you guys we'll go ahead and keep them, if not, I'm up for suggestions.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair. I move that we keep the dates the same for the winter 2021 Regional Advisory Council meeting.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Oney. Motion's been made to keep the current dates and meeting location for winter 2021, can I get a second.

MR. MAXIE: Carl, second.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Maxie. All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Quyana. All those opposed say no.

(No opposing votes)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Alrighty. Fall 2021 meeting, the window's open on August 8th and closes on November 5th. Any suggestions between those dates. I do want to say that the first week of September is usually moose hunting season so that's probably not a good week for Kuskokwim. Any other timeframes that are not good for YK-Delta RAC that they now of.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay.

MS. PATTON: Madame Chair and Council, if I may. I know there were some extensions to the fall moose hunt for the Zone 2, Unit 18, Zone 2, we pushed back the meeting until this week, the first week of October, might be in the clear by that date again next year.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yep, thank you, Eva. Thank you. So that looks like that leaves us the month of August and the month of October, which ones do you guys want, August or October.

MR. MAXIE: Carl, Napaskiak. October, this week was fine, it was a good time, after moose hunting.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Maxie. Suggestion for putting our meeting again on the week of October 6th and 7th for fall 2021 meeting.

MR. LANDLORD: This James, October 6th and 7th sounds good.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. Could I get a motion on the floor for that date if that works for everyone else.

MR. LANDLORD: This is James. I move the fall 2021 October 6th and 7th, 2021 meeting dates for the meeting.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: And the location. If we had anywhere we could go in the world -- no, I joke.

(Laughter)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: What would your location like to be.

MR. MAXIE: Carl Hawaii would be fine so we could see the Bering and Peninsula area.

(Laughter)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right. With the YK-Delta, what village would you guys like to have the meeting in.

MR. LANDLORD: Bethel would be fine.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Okay. We'll go

ahead and make it for Bethel if there's no other suggestions.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All right, we can go ahead and finish with your motion and your location now. Could we get a second.

MR. MAXIE: Carl, seconds. Napaskiak.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Didn't you make the motion first Mr. Maxie, or did I get that wrong?

MR. MAXIE: I thought what's his name made a motion so I second that motion for fall meeting, October 6/7, 2021.

REPORTER: Alissa, James Landlord made the motion.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Sorry, I wrote that wrong then. Oh, okay, Mr. Landlord, thank you, Mr. Landlord. All right and a second. Motion made by Mr. Landlord for October 6th and 7th and for Bethel and then on the second was made by Mr. Maxie. All those in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: All those opposed say opposed.

(No opposing votes)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Alrighty, any closing comments.

Mr. Oney, would you like to go ahead and go down our roll call to get closing comments from our Council members.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. I'll go ahead and start off at the top of the list, John Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Oney. Thank you, Madame Chair. On closing comments, I'd like to thank everybody that participated and our Chair and

my fellow Council members and our Staff and the people who attended. It's been a long day and I was getting pretty frustrated and hungry, put something in the pot. And I managed to make it through, somehow. I had other things going on at the village that was getting me off track. And the other thing was my phone kept shutting off, maybe I had to dial about 14 times since yesterday.

I thank you all for being there.

Thank you.

Quyana.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Andrew. And thank you for being with us today and being a part of our meeting and participating as much as you did. I totally understand the complications. I, myself, too, had to keep calling in and having technical difficulties so I thank you for your patience and being with us.

Quyana.

MR. ANDREW: Quyana.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair. We have Thomas Alstrom next from Alakanuk and James Landlord.

MR. ALSTROM: Yes, hello, this is Thomas Alstrom. Madame Chair, could you hear me?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Yeah, I can hear you now, thank you.

MR. ALSTROM: Okay. All right, yeah, I would just like to thank everyone that called in to the meeting. Thanks for listening to my input and hopefully -- my understanding there's, I believe, five vacant seats and hopefully by the next meeting, this coming spring, we'll hopefully have some new board members. So other than that I'd just like to thank everyone for calling in.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Alstrom and being participating in our meeting. It's

always good to have new people on board and also have a variety of people on board from all over the place and I totally am in agreement with you, too, a full board is better than a no board and I thank you so much for calling in and being with us through this whole entire meeting.

Thank you.

MR. LANDLORD: This is James Landlord from Mountain Village. It's another interesting RAC meeting for our YK region. I think NOAA gave a good report, an interesting report. I didn't know that in the south the salmon were moving towards the north, didn't know that and the north were moving further north. Thanks for all the agencies that called in to make their report, helping us with all their information and data. I hope to see everybody, maybe, as soon as this Covid has passed, maybe another meeting in Bethel.

Quyana.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Landlord. Yeah, I sure hope to see guys all soon one of these days. It's pretty tough having meetings over teleconference. I thank you so much for being participative in our meeting and hanging in there through these past couple days.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair. Next is Peter Phillip, Sr., from Akiachak and Carl Maxie.

MR. PETER: Yeah, I want to thank everybody for participating in this meeting even though we have a tough time since April when we heard Covid19. But we're doing good because we've been taking care of by our Lord for our safety and continue on this meeting. I'm glad we -- we done our job, what -- what we're going to do. And I want to thank all the Staff, especially Eva, our Madame Chairman and board members.

That's all I have even though I got cut off, like I mentioned -- I don't know how many times but have a good fall season and also winter season. Hopefully we meet again in March.

Okay, thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Peter Phillip, bringing your words and wisdom and being here with us and making sure we are able to be reminded of things we need to be reminded of. It's always great to have your feedback and your information you always bring to the table. And I apologize that you had to keep calling back in over and over, I think we've all had to call in multiple times.

(Laughter)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Quyana.

MR. PETER: Okay.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Mr. Maxie.

MR. MAXIE: Yes. I'd like to thank all the rest of the board members for their -- even if we had a difficult time calling in, and the Staff, Eva and the Chair. Good work there. And the agencies, despite of the pandemic we had, they're calling in their reports. And with the implementation from Fish and Game, they're teaching our younger generation for all our future resources to protect and the moose population down at Goodnews, it grew from two to 400, that was a real good report there, how it can grow there. And I hope -- I'm very glad that NOAA came to our -- NOAA to our meeting, but having a survey along the -- all over State of Alaska, and hopefully include the monitoring in the Bering Sea.

And thanks again everybody, weather, and safety first, wear a mask and all that with the Covid.

Thank you, very much.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Maxie. Thank you for being with us through this whole entire meeting. We appreciate your participation and being with us and being patient with our technical difficulties. And if there's any more information you want about the Bering Sea we can definitely direct you to that avenue of people if you want more information.

Thank you.

MR. ONEY: And, Madame Chair, next is

Richard Slats, and me then Alissa Rogers.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Go ahead, Mr. Slats.

MR. SLATS: Am I on mute?

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I hear you.

MR. SLATS: Yeah, when I left at -- jumped off at 5:00 o'clock I felt like I was abandoning you guys, I almost turned back around half way over but then I figured I should go over because we just had our elections yesterday.

It was great to hear everyone again. Our work is important. To me this is something I hold, you know, close to my heart, because this is something that, you know, is like important to me.

Thank you, very much, Madame Chair for keeping everybody on line. I was just listening in and, you know, during the day and I just realized how many times you had to tell everybody to mute their phones and stuff like that so I know that that takes a lot, you know, it's commendable to listen and to hear somebody that's keeping everything on, you know, smooth sailing. Thank you Office of Subsistence Management and, Eva, I know there's more work than meets the eye. I want to say thank you for getting materials to me and making sure that I, you know, had the material in front of me. I appreciate everybody's efforts.

Thank you, Council members.

God bless all of you, be safe.

Quyana.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Slats. You just made my heart -- my heart warm again. You gave me a little bit extra energy to get through the rest of the evening.

Quyana.

MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to do a closing comment. In the last two days we've learned a lot. We've picked up a lot of information, you know, that's related to our way of life. And I thank everything who gave presentations during our meetings. And also thank Pippa and Eva for following up on issues that are of concern to us. And I'm sure we'll address more issues as we move along. And I'm very thankful for our young man here, Thomas Alstrom, I'm very happy that he's on board. I think that's something that I learned when I first got on this board, on this Council, being all elders, and they included me into their way of life, and it kind of reminds me of how I grew up, my way is what they were talking about, what I recognized growing up. And I'm glad to see that there's young people on board that can learn and to give input based on what they're seeing so I'm very happy to see young people on board. And I'd also like to mention that the older people, the elders, people that are -- that's something that I addressed at the beginning as a new Council member, that we needed elders to guide us as we go through our meetings and they were beneficial, very, very knowledgeable people that held on to their way of life and seen the changes. And I've seen the changes myself too, like I mentioned, growing up, living off the land, you know, going from camp to camp, whether it be in summer or in the winter. And the people around you that relied on the resource. And over the years we've seen changes and the changes that we've seen, we're addressing them as we see them.

And I thank Eva, Pippa and those before them that brought issues to us that are of concern and to address -- and we've seen a lot of positive things came out as a result of that -- of those concerns that we address.

I would like to continue to advocate for concerns of our resources in our area, things that we depend on throughout the season, those are important to us, we need to be on top of it if we are going to sustain our way of life.

And thanks again for those that gave presentations and all of those that participated in our teleconference. And I want to thank all the Council members that participated, and thank you for your input and also want you guys to stay safe, you know, social distance, wear a mask when you're out in public, I

think it's something that we're going to be dealing with for a long time so be safe and have a good winter.

Thank you.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Oney. It's always so good to hear your -- the things that you say and uplifts and bringing so much knowledge and passion and dedication in all the things that you do and hearing you throughout the years and growing to know who you are since I was little and being able to have you as a mentor has been really great and I wanted to thank you so much for being a part of these meetings and I really look up to you, all of you, and it really means a lot to me to hear from all of you and listen to you and take what you have to say and really try to do the best that I can to make sure that nothing slips through the cracks.

So I really appreciate everything that you say, Ray, and always bringing us back down to Earth and always being there, the extended voice that we really need, so thank you.

I want to say thank you so much to all of you. I appreciate you all so, so very, very much, you all mean so dear to my heart and being on the teleconference and not being able to be there in person, it really makes a big difference when it comes to these meeting and being able to share questions and feelings of how we feel on certain items and subjects and being able to share that. And then also having the side conversations during break time to discuss issues so that we could know what each other's thinking and it's really hard to do on teleconference because everything we say is right then and there, but we don't get that extra ample opportunity to really dive into what we want to know on the side while we're waiting and before we come back to the discussion again.

So I really appreciate all of your patience and dedication to listening to these past two days. I tried my best to make it as smooth and understanding as possible and I apologize for any mistakes that I have made and we were able to get through what we needed to get through on our agenda.

All of your kindness and all the help that everyone has done to make these meetings possible

and being there to support us and having to repeat and over and over and over again, even after months and months of putting these meeting packets and agenda items together for multiple Regional Advisory Councils, thank you so much for all of the work that you have done in putting these together. It takes a lot to compute all this and I really want to thank all of you for making this all possible. Without you guys our meetings wouldn't be possible. So I wanted to make sure that I really extend how grateful we are to have you.

We really made big, big, big, big leaps, jumps and strides in bringing youth into the science-based information gathering and also into the science-based positions that we have. This honestly has been one of the most youth Native meetings interactions, filling in positions, having Native-based biologists and Native-based monitoring programs that I've ever seen in any meeting I've ever been to. And like I said before, my grandfather's and his crew and all those people that were really, really pushing to have these done in their lifetime are definitely proud and if I know I'm this proud I can't imagine how proud they'd be for all of us right now. So congratulations to you all, keep pushing for those youths to come into those positions and keep striving for more of our youth to get into these science-based positions. The more we can get involved in these, the more we can continue having that hunger for gathering knowledge and understanding what's going on around us so that we can be better managers and make better recommendations.

I want to thank our elders for bringing all your wisdom and all your knowledge to these meetings. All of your advice is so important to our understanding what's going on now, what happened then, and what could happen in the future. It helps us to understand to make better recommendations as the best sound judgment recommendations that we can to the Federal Subsistence Board and it also gives us passion to fight for what is right and what we have been fighting for and the things that need to continue to be fighting for, are those lean topics that mean the most, that need to be continued and need to be heard and to have that support and knowing that helps to keep that going.

And I cannot express enough of my

gratitude to all of you for being there and thank you so much for another great meeting and having all of this knowledge in there. I thank all of you so much and can't wait to see you all again in person.

I really can't wait to see you all again in person.

(Laughter)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: I'm done. Alrighty, Eva, any agencies, would you guys like to make closing comments as well.

MS. PATTON: Hi, Alissa and Council members, this is Eva. And I would just like to say thank you so much. Thank you for all your good work and dedication and it is such an honor to work with each and every one of you and thank you for bringing forth your knowledge and wisdom and your care for everyone and all the communities.

So wishing you all well, for your families and your community, too, and we'll be in touch.

Thank you, so much.

Quyana.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Eva. This is Pippa. And I just wanted to repeat everything that Eva just said. I've really, really enjoyed this meeting. And Alissa you did a great job, thank you, all the Council members.

And, good night.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thank you guys so much, you guys are just amazing.

Anyone else who would like to make any more closing comments.

MR. RISDAHL: Madame Chair, this is Greg. I'd just like to say thank you again, too, for -- I don't want to repeat what everybody else said, but it really is -- it's an honor to be able to work with you all and I know we're all doing the best we can and

we will continue to persevere through this virus and all these other difficulties that have become a part of our lives. For me, a lot of it's technology and, you know, people are having to work at home, and there's just a lot of additional things happening that is making it more difficult so I really appreciate how much everybody is putting into being at these meetings, participating in these meetings and preparing for them and just working day to day. So thank you very much. You've done a great job, Madame Chair.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Thanks, Greg. Anyone else for closing comments.

(No comments)

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Alrighty. Hearing none, anybody like to adjourn with a motion.

MR. ONEY: Madame Chair, I move to close the meeting.

MR. PETER: Second.

MADAME CHAIR ROGERS: Motion made by Mr. Oney, second by Mr. Peter, Phillip. And all those in favor and aye, say, woo-hoo, we're done.

(Laughter)

IN UNISON: Woo-hoo.

IN UNISON: Bye.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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