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WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II
TELECONFERENCE
February 17, 2022
9:00 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jack Reakoff, Chair
Arnold Demoski
Timothy Gervais
Don Honea
Pollock Simon
Darrell Vent
Kevin Whitworth

Regional Council Coordinator, Katerina Wessels (Acting)

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

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(Teleconference - 2/17/2022)

4

5

(On record)

6

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8

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So this is Jack
Reakoff, it's 9:00 a.m. How many Council members do we
have on the call.

9

10

11

MR. SIMON: Pollock is here.

12

13

14

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Pollock, good
morning.

15

16

17

MR. WHITWORTH: This is Kevin.

18

19

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Kevin, good morning.

20

21

MR. WHITWORTH: Good morning.

22

23

24

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's 23 below with a
north wind of 10 and my chill factor thing says it's at
least 40 to 45 below chill factor.

25

26

REPORTER: Chilly.

27

28

29

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Just a normal day in
the Arctic.

30

31

REPORTER: Yes.

32

33

34

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Anybody else on the
call from the Regional Council.

35

36

37

MR. SIMON: 42 below in Allakaket.

38

39

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: 42 below, you got
wind though?

40

41

MR. SIMON: No wind.

42

43

44

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'd rather take no
wind than wind with this temperature.

45

46

47

MR. WHITWORTH: Lots of fresh snow here
in McGrath.

48

49

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Really, good.

50

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1 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, 10 degrees or so,
2 lots of fresh snow, we probably got a foot of snow and
3 we're supposed to get another 7, five or seven inches
4 today, the trails are real soft, deep. It's deep. I
5 went out last night and it was really deep, the trails
6 are not fun.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Yeah, I'm
9 really worried about those bison over there on the
10 Innoko with this stuff, all that rain and all this deep
11 snow, bad thing.

12
13 Any other Council members come on the
14 call, we got Pollock and Kevin and myself.

15
16 MR. GERVAIS: Good morning, Jack, it's
17 Tim.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Tim.

20
21 (Pause)

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any more Council
24 members on the call, this is Jack.

25
26 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, this is Katya.
27 Would you like us to reach to the other members and see
28 where they're at or wait a few more minutes?

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If you could start
31 contacting people I'd appreciate that.

32
33 MS. WESSELS: Okay, thank you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm the kind of
36 person who shows up early to a meeting, and I'm not
37 early, it's five after. We have important business to
38 do today, I take this stuff seriously.

39
40 MR. DEMOSKI: Mr. Chair, this is
41 Arnold, I'm calling in.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Arnold, good
44 morning.

45
46 MR. DEMOSKI: Good morning.

47
48 MR. VENT: Morning, Jack, this is
49 Darrell.

50

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1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

2

3 MS. WESSELS: Who was the last person
4 speaking?

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell.

7

8 MS. WESSELS: Oh, Darrell, okay.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We have six on the
11 call.

12

13 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, which means we have
14 quorum.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. One last call
17 to see if any other Council members are here, if you
18 could call Rebecca, Don, and I'm not sure whether
19 Tommy's going to come on here or not, Kriska. But
20 we'll get started now. So I'll call the meeting to
21 order, it's five after 9:00 on February 17, 2022,
22 Western Interior Regional Advisory Council, we're
23 taking up where we left off with our agenda. We start
24 out with public comments on non-agenda items. Is there
25 any person on the call that would like to speak to non-
26 agenda items from the public.

27

28 (No comments)

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So don't hear any.
31 So we were going to have Diana Stram on here. Are you
32 on the call this morning, Diana?

33

34 MS. STRAM: Hi, this is Diana, can you
35 hear me?

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can hear you
38 great.

39

40 MS. STRAM: Great. Great.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we would like a
43 bycatch update with you and discussion with you so if
44 you're ready to present go right ahead.

45

46 MS. STRAM: Sure, I'm ready. Thank
47 you. Good morning, members of the Regional Council
48 Advisory Council. My name's Diana Stram, I'm Staff
49 with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. I
50

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1 did give Karen some slides a while back, I'm hoping
2 that maybe you have that in your packet. I'm just
3 going to walk through some of the information and I'm
4 happy to answer questions on anything that you guys
5 could ask questions about.

6

7 MS. WESSELS: Diana, this is Katya.
8 Can I just make an announcement, please.

9

10 MS. STRAM: Of course, yes, go ahead.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

13

14 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, regarding your
15 presentation, it's available also on our website with
16 the materials for Western Interior RAC. And it's in
17 supplemental section of the materials under No. 6.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Katya. I
22 did get your presentation, it was emailed to me. So
23 continue, and do most Council members have her
24 presentation, the slide show?

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: One way or other,
29 continue.

30

31 MS. STRAM: Okay. And, again, I'm
32 happy, just interrupt if you have questions. Just to
33 remind you in terms of the Council's jurisdiction, the
34 North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the
35 National Marine Fisheries Service work together to
36 manage the State fisheries off Alaska, so that's all
37 fisheries three to 200 miles offshore. We also
38 coordinate and sometimes jointly manage with the state
39 of Alaska depending on the species that we're managing.
40 The Council formally makes policy recommendations to
41 the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the National
42 Marine Fisheries Service approves them and implements
43 and enforces them.

44

45 We have 11 voting members on our
46 Council. In the packet that you received, I tried to
47 update, we have some new members this year -- we have
48 11 voting members, seven are appointed, six are from
49 the state of Alaska, three are from the state of

50

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1 Washington, one is from Oregon and one is the National
2 Marine Fisheries Representative. We also have four
3 non-voting members, from U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the
4 U.S. Coast Guard, Pacific States Marine Fisheries
5 Commission and the State Department. And then also
6 sitting at the table, which of course for all of us
7 these last few years has been virtual, is our Executive
8 Director David Witherell.

9

10 The major species that we manage then
11 across the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea, we manage
12 king crab species jointly with the state of Alaska.
13 Some of the major finfish species we manage are
14 pollock, cod, mackerel, sablefish. We have allocation
15 privileges for halibut but we do not actually assess or
16 set the quotas for Pacific halibut.

17

18 So in terms of who manages what.
19 Again, groundfish we have primary management for three
20 to 200 miles in conjunction with the National Marine
21 Fisheries Service. The state of Alaska then manages
22 everything inside of three miles. For crab we jointly
23 manage with them. Scallops we manage as an Alaska-wide
24 stock, and we also jointly manage that with the state
25 of Alaska. Again for halibut we have a jurisdiction to
26 set halibut from regulations but the actual burden of
27 conservation and management in terms of assessing the
28 stock and setting quota for the stock falls on the
29 International Pacific Halibut Commission. And then for
30 species such as herring, salmon and other species,
31 those are solely managed by the Alaska Department of
32 Fish and Game and the state of Alaska. And in a minute
33 I'll talk to what our jurisdiction is as it relates to
34 salmon bycatch.

35

36 So there are eight fishery management
37 councils. The jurisdictions for all of the councils
38 are three to 200 miles offshore and, again, we're
39 responsible for the Gulf of Alaska, the Bering Sea and
40 the Arctic, for which we do not set any -- we don't
41 have any fishing in the Arctic, it's forbidden.

42

43 So moving on to bycatch then in
44 general. So bycatch, by definition, under the
45 Magnuson-Stevens Act, which is what our jurisdiction is
46 under, our fish that are harvested in the fishery but
47 which are not sold or kept for personal use, so that
48 includes any kind of economic discards and regulatory
49 discards. Economic discard are fish that could be

50

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1 legally retained but because of their value they are
2 not retained. Regulatory discards are ones that are
3 required by regulation to be discarded. And what we
4 are going to talk about today is what we have
5 designated as prohibitive species catch. So those are
6 fish that are caught that must be returned to the sea
7 with minimum injury and are not allowed to be retained
8 or sold, and that includes halibut, herring, salmon,
9 king crab and other types of crab.

10

11 (Telephone cutting in and out)

12

13 MS. STRAM: And in terms of the bycatch
14 controls that we have for prohibitive species,
15 specifically for salmon halibut is also, of course, are
16 crab and herring. They are what we define in our
17 fishery management plan as prohibitive species, so they
18 have to be avoided, they cannot be sold or retained,
19 other than to be counted, although an example, some are
20 donated to food banks, that's the only way that they
21 are retained.

22

23 The Council, over a number of years has
24 implemented additional measures for reducing bycatch in
25 groundfish fisheries. We have a number of bycatch
26 caps, they're also known as PSC limits for prohibited
27 species catch and that's what we'll talk about for
28 salmon. We also have that for halibut in the Bering
29 Sea and the Gulf of Alaska. There's also some time and
30 area closures where it's a fixed closure that is
31 triggered by reaching a limit and then fishing occurs
32 outside of that. We no longer manage salmon that way,
33 we used to back in the past, but that's problematic
34 because it's not very responsive to environmental --
35 changes in environmental conditions, which, as we all
36 know are happening rapidly right now in the Bering Sea,
37 in particular. And then the Council also encourages
38 industry efforts to reduce bycatch through gear
39 modifications and communications and that's
40 particularly important for salmon in terms of how
41 salmon is managed in the Bering Sea.

42

43 So I'm just going to walk through
44 management measures that are specific to the bycatch of
45 salmon. We have different measures in the Bering Sea
46 than we have in the Gulf. I'm going to focus on the
47 Bering Sea for the pollock fishery because that's where
48 the majority of the bycatch that's of interest to your
49 region is coming out of. So in the Bering Sea pollock
50

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1 fishery it is a fully rationalized fishery so that that
2 means that they have a cooperative structure whereby
3 they have a lot more ability to do innovative
4 management measures within the fishery because it's
5 fully allocated. So there is a hard cap for chinook
6 that is allocated. Then there's four sectors of the
7 pollock fishery and there are two seasons, and that's
8 important in terms of how and when they run into
9 chinook and chum salmon. Then they have certain
10 mechanisms within their fishery that allows them to
11 transfer between entities and the prosecute the fishery
12 under more (cuts out) at times that it's easier for
13 them to fish when they're not -- when they're in an
14 area that they don't -- are not catching a lot of
15 chinook.

16
17 So there's two different -- back in
18 2011 is when we implemented the first management
19 program under Amendment 91 for chinook salmon in the
20 Bering Sea pollock fishery and that put up a two cap
21 system, again, it's an overall cap but it's allocated
22 by sectors so that the individual caps themselves are
23 much smaller.....

24
25 (Teleconference interference -
26 participants not muted - echo)

27
28 MS. STRAM:than the overall
29 numbers that we indicate. But the important part of
30 that is that there is a lower number and a higher
31 number and the industry was encouraged to establish,
32 and they did these incentive plan agreements where they
33 have individual management on a much more responsive
34 measures than we can do on a regulatory aspect. So
35 there's a program in place within each sector that has
36 its own rules and regulations to encourage the
37 avoidance of chinook bycatch at all levels of
38 encounter. And that includes Pacific hot spot
39 closures, which are short closures that the industry
40 can impose upon itself and move away from areas of high
41 bycatch. They also can have regulations for salmon
42 escape panels, which is an area of the trawl net where
43 chinook are able to escape through a hole because they
44 can swim faster than pollock at that area in the net,
45 and, again, to the extent possible, any chinook that is
46 caught is voluntarily donated to food banks, and the
47 industry and the agency has been working really hard
48 with Sea-Share to insure that anything that is donated
49 to food banks makes it way back to Western Alaska.
50

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1 Recently then in 2016, in understanding
2 the low abundance of chinook in Western Alaska the
3 Council took action to lower the cap and so we set up a
4 system under what's called a 3-river index and so
5 that's an index that's based on the proposed season in-
6 river run size for the Kuskokwim, the Unalakleet and
7 the Upper Yukon and when that -- when the sum of those
8 three run sizes is less than 250,000 the cap dropped to
9 a lower level for that next year. And that is in place
10 this year and it was in place last year as well under
11 this new system.

12
13 So just to be clear, salmon is fully
14 retained because either donated or returned to the sea
15 with a minimum of injury but essentially it is dead
16 when it is brought back on board. There is an census
17 of salmon, so the number of salmons that are caught as
18 bycatch is extremely precise because it's -- one of the
19 things that went into place with these management
20 programs was a full census. So (cuts out) they're
21 recovered and a census, every salmon that is brought on
22 board is caught whether it's chum or chinook. We also
23 do systematic genetic sampling and on an annual basis
24 the Council is provided with results of the genetic
25 sampling of chum and chinook in the Bering Sea.
26 There's some sampling of genetics in the Gulf of Alaska
27 but the more systematic is what's occurring in the
28 Bering Sea.

29
30 Reports from the industry called IPA
31 reports, or Incentive Plan Agreement reports, are
32 reported to the Council annually in terms of their --
33 the measures that have been in place within the last
34 year to reduce the levels of chinook as well as reduce
35 the levels of chum. At the same time we take up
36 reports from the genetics group on chinook and chum,
37 stock of origin in the Bering Sea as well as the Gulf
38 of Alaska, but focusing more on the Bering Sea and as
39 I'll go into in a minute, we will be bringing back a
40 more comprehensive report in June.

41
42 In terms of trends and genetic
43 breakouts, this is a slide that's in your packet, I'll
44 just try to describe what's on it for folks that aren't
45 on the phone and don't have access to this packet.
46 This is a historical overview of the chinook and chum
47 numbers of bycatch from 2003 through 2021 as well as
48 the most recent genetic update on the river of origin,
49 stock of origin for chum and for chinook. And the most
50

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1 recent year, which was 2019, we will be getting an
2 updated report, again, in June on that. So just to be
3 clear then in terms of genetic breakout, we can't
4 resolve two rivers of origin in Western Alaska so they
5 all get lumped in together into what's called the
6 Coastal West Alaska grouping. We can break out the
7 Upper Yukon from that grouping, but we cannot break out
8 across the rest of the Western Alaska stocks so when we
9 talk about the stock of origin we're talking about the
10 coastal West Alaska grouping, which is basically all
11 of the rivers across Western Alaska in aggregate with
12 the exception of the Upper Yukon, and that compromises
13 about 40 percent of the genetic breakout of the stock
14 of origin of chinook, it's a much less proportion for
15 the chum where that tends to be much more Asian
16 oriented -- of Asian origin.

17
18 So in terms of more recent numbers
19 then, the numbers for chinook were trending -- the
20 trend is upwards a little bit in 2019 and 2020 but have
21 dropped off significantly in 2021. So the most recent
22 update of the chinook caught as bycatch in the last
23 year was 13,783. For chum then those numbers have been
24 trending upwards since 2020 and in the 2021 estimate --
25 or not estimate -- the numbers of bycatch of chum, from
26 this most recent fishery, we were at about 530,000
27 fish.

28
29 In terms of the impact rate then, what
30 we look at in order to estimate how many of those fish
31 would have gone back to the aggregate river of origin,
32 we look at -- for chinook we look at the combined --
33 again, we get the run strength for the combined Western
34 Alaska rivers and then we do an estimate of what's
35 called an adult equivalency so using the age of the
36 fish that are caught in the bycatch, an estimate of the
37 year in which of those ages would have gone back to the
38 river of origin, so they're maturity, and as well as
39 the numbers that are caught, we can then estimate an
40 adult (cuts out)

41
42 (Teleconference interference -
43 participants not muted)

44
45 MS. STRAM:for those years and
46 how many fish of the ones that were caught as bycatch
47 might have returned to the aggregate.....

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Diana.
50

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1 MS. STRAM:river and then.....

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Diana. Diana.

4

5 MS. STRAM:we divide that by
6 the.....

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Diana, stop for a
9 second. Diana.

10

11 REPORTER: Hang on. Hang on.

12

13 MS. STRAM: Oh, I'm sorry.

14

15 REPORTER: Go ahead, Jack.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There's a whole
18 bunch of background noise, somebody's got their --
19 there's people with their phones unmuted and they're
20 doing stuff and if you're going to listen to this
21 meeting you got to push star, six so we can hear the
22 speaker. This is a serious meeting, it's not some
23 sport, sit in your office or your home to listen to
24 this meeting, if you want to participate, if you want
25 to listen to this meeting use you have an obligation to
26 -- because we're on this call to do the right thing and
27 so star, six, not hard to do, and so we have to be able
28 to hear this stuff.

29

30 So go ahead, Diana.

31

32 REPORTER: Thank you.

33

34 MS. STRAM: Okay, sure. So just going
35 back in terms of trying to estimate the impact rate,
36 and I would note that we have not updated this and this
37 is part of what we'll talk about for what's coming back
38 to the Council in June. We haven't updated this impact
39 rate. So the way to think about the impact rate is in
40 aggregate, it's really important to understand that
41 we're talking across all Western Alaska rivers in sum.
42 We look at the number of fish, given their age, their
43 maturity and the number that were caught that would
44 have returned in an individual year, in aggregate
45 across all Western Alaska and then dividing that by the
46 run strength to look at a percentage impact. And so
47 what the percentage impact has been in recent years
48 since this program's been in place has really -- for
49 chinook has hovered around two percent, so in the

50

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1 absence of any bycatch, a maximum of about two percent
2 of fish would have come back to all, in aggregate,
3 Western Alaska rivers -- again, we can't resolve to an
4 individual river such as the Lower Yukon or the
5 Kuskokwim, that's based solely on genetics and right
6 now they can't resolve to that level. We can resolve
7 the Upper Yukon separately but this is just talking
8 about coastal west Alaska. And, again, we haven't
9 updated that since 2017.

10

11 So in terms of a similar impact rate on
12 chum, this is based on some genetics that we had at the
13 time with an.....

14

15 (Teleconference interference -
16 participants not muted)

17

18 MS. STRAM:average across 2005 to
19 2009 by region, and for that when we had the highest
20 levels of chum bycatch in 2005 we still showed less
21 than a half of percent of an impact rate to coastal
22 west Alaska and about a one percent impact rate to
23 Upper Yukon.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That was in.....

26

27 MS. STRAM: So just fin.....

28

29 REPORTER: Diana.

30

31 MS. STRAM:so just finally.....

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Slow down for a
34 second.

35

36 MS. STRAM: I'm sorry, go ahead.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's 2012, what do
39 you got for now.

40

41 MS. STRAM: So that's what we're
42 working on now, so that's the last slide that I have in
43 this packet is what we're doing right now.

44

45 The Council has been interested in this
46 in the last several years. We provide a genetics
47 update on an annual basis but we don't do the adult
48 equivalency update but the Council has been asking for
49 that for recent years so that is what we're working on

50

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1 currently, is updating this adult equivalency analysis
2 for chinook salmon. And the important part of that is
3 that when we did this before, and, again, the updates
4 we've done since, we're using an age length key from
5 Kate Meyers' work in the mid-90s and the agency
6 geneticist has been working on updating and the state
7 of Alaska Staff have been aging the chinook -- the
8 scales that we've had in more recent years so we have
9 results from the last 10 years, 2010, 2020, ages from
10 those chinook and as I'm sure you're aware the length
11 of -- the general size at maturity for chinooks has
12 decreased in the Bering Sea so that does have an impact
13 on the relative impact rates so it's important, we've
14 been waiting to get this revised age length key before
15 we updated the adult equivalency analysis to see --
16 compare it against historical impact rate assessment.

17
18 So that is currently happening and we
19 are working on then -- to have that, using that with
20 the -- the updated information on genetics, that'll be
21 for chinook through 2020 so that we can update that
22 impact rate assessment of the AEQ divided by the run
23 size, again, by the stock groupings of the Coastal west
24 Alaska stock and the Upper Yukon stock and we'll be
25 presenting that in June to the Council.....

26
27 (Teleconference interference -
28 participants not muted - on hold)

29
30 MS. STRAM:both at the current
31 bycatch levels as well as the current cap levels and
32 the cap, again, has been fluctuating depending on the
33 assessment of above or below the 3-river index break
34 point. The state of Alaska will also be providing the
35 Council with a stock status.....

36
37 (Teleconference interference -
38 participants not muted - on hold)

39
40 MS. STRAM:update for both
41 Western Alaska chinook and chum stock. And -- and then
42 we are to have a discussion of how best to evaluate the
43 chum bycatch on the pollock fishery. We're not doing
44 an AEQ analysis for chum at this point but we will be
45 presenting the most recent chum genetics data so that
46 will include the fishery (cuts out) to look at if there
47 has been any shift in the genetic breakouts of the chum
48 that was caught in the (cuts out) fishery and then look
49 at how best to assess what the impact the pollock

50

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1 fishery is having on chum in the Bering Sea at that
2 point.

3
4 So we will have updated adult
5 equivalency for chinook salmon for the coastal Alaska
6 grouping and the Upper Yukon and that will include this
7 new age length key and.....

8
9 (Breaking up)

10
11 (Teleconference interference -
12 participants not muted - on hold)

13
14 MS. STRAM:we'll be comparing it
15 against the previously estimated impacts to see if
16 there is any difference based on the new age data.

17
18 So, Mr. Chairman, that's all I have and
19 I'm happy to answer questions on anything that folks
20 may (breaking up) have.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Salena, that
23 dialing number, is that somebody trying to dial out on
24 this or.

25
26 REPORTER: So that is -- what it is is
27 somebody on this call put us on hold to take another
28 call and then it interrupts this call. So while I know
29 that person can't hear us, you know, everybody please
30 keep your phone muted because as you could hear we had
31 a huge echo in Diana's presentation at the end, which
32 means there's a lot of phones unmuted. Please don't
33 put your phone on hold because as you can now here it
34 interrupts the meetings. The only way I can fix that
35 is to call the operator, we'd have to take a break and
36 disconnect that line, otherwise we can hope they take
37 us off hold soon.

38
39 So go ahead.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So hopefully they'll
42 get off there.

43
44 REPORTER: Okay. But, please, everybody
45 try to look at your phone now, put yourself on mute,
46 star, six, or the little mute button because it does
47 create an echo if there's too many lines unmuted.

48
49 Thanks.

50

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1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So everybody star,
2 six unless you're going to talk and I want the Council
3 members to interact with Diana. Do we have Council
4 members that would like to ask questions or make
5 comments on the presentation.

6
7 MR. DEMOSKI: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is
8 Arnold. I have some questions.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Arnold.

11
12 MR. DEMOSKI: Okay, thank you for your
13 presentation Diana, there was a lot of information.
14 The question I have is there a weekly update on bycatch
15 that can be shared by email. I just want to see how
16 the -- I want to see how the bycatch numbers, and I
17 know tribes from different regions are concerned with
18 halibut bycatch like we were for salmon.

19
20 (Teleconference interference -
21 participants not muted - on hold and echo)

22
23 MR. DEMOSKI: What is the survival rate
24 of salmon and halibut when pollock fishery.....

25
26 (Teleconference interference -
27 participants not muted - on hold and echo)

28
29 MR. DEMOSKI:to throw back in.

30
31 MS. STRAM: Thanks for your question.
32 To answer the second one first. So in terms of
33 mortality there annually estimated discard mortality
34 rates and those are applied to by fleet in assessing
35 the mortality of halibut and there's been a lot of
36 efforts with deck sorting to try to get the biggest
37 halibut back into the water as soon as possible to
38 decrease the discard mortality so those -- those vary
39 by state. I don't know off the top of my head what it
40 is for the pollock fleet. The pollock fleet does not
41 catch very much halibut, it's the flatfish fisheries
42 that catch the halibut so our efforts recently in doing
43 additional management efforts are also just on the.....

44
45 (Teleconference interference -
46 participants not muted - on hold and echo)

47
48 MS. STRAM:but it's the combined
49 flatfish because that comprises the majority of halibut
50

0186

1 bycatch, pollock doesn't catch very much in the way of
2 halibut. I think that the halibut bycatch is assumed
3 to be 100 percent dead but, again, it is not -- it does
4 not make up very much of the halibut bycatch, that is
5 -- that is really in the combined.....

6
7 (Teleconference interference -
8 participants not muted - on hold and echo)

9
10 MS. STRAM: As far as salmon, salmon is
11 assumed at 100 percent mortality.

12
13 You had another question, oh, about
14 weekly updates. So I provided information to Katya, we
15 don't provide a weekly update but the National Marine
16 Fisheries updates their website basically weekly so a
17 weekly data update of real-time bycatch. Again, you
18 have to understand that their data stream gets revised
19 often during the year because they get more observer
20 data and it changes their estimates. But they have
21 annually and weekly updates of bycatch and I could send
22 those links to the RAC Coordinator so that you all have
23 access to them. The salmon ones are provided
24 historically, the rest of the data is updated weekly
25 and then you can get the annual estimate, but the
26 salmon, because of recent (indiscernible - cuts out) --
27 the salmon ones have been provided both weekly as
28 historical updates so it goes with.....

29
30 (Teleconference interference -
31 participants not muted - on hold and echo)

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So that answers your
34 questions Arnold, does anybody else have questions.

35
36 MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah, no, this is Arnold.

37
38 MR. GERVAIS: Jack.

39
40 MR. DEMOSKI: Thank you. I was talking
41 about the pollock fishery, about how the bycatch.....

42
43 (Teleconference interference -
44 participants not muted - on hold and echo)

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're getting so
47 much noise on this phone, let's take a five minute
48 break and disconnect and everybody dial back in.

49
50

0187

1 REPORTER: So, Jack, I can go have that
2 line disconnected, I don't know that everybody needs to
3 disconnect and dial back in.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, let's stay on
6 the line and let Salena get this.

7
8 REPORTER: Yeah, and take the five
9 minute break though so.....

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We need about a five
12 minute break to get this fixed so just standby.

13
14 (Off record)

15
16 (On record)

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're going to
19 continue on here. Regional Council members, are there
20 more questions for Diana on this presentation and about
21 this bycatch issue. Go ahead, who's got a question.

22
23 MR. DEMOSKI: Jack, no, this is Arnold.
24 I just have one more thing to say just before -- I want
25 to.....

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

28
29 MR. DEMOSKI: I know there's no halibut
30 bycatch in the pollock fishery, it was just a general
31 question about halibut bycatch and other fisheries that
32 are a concern to other tribes. Yeah, that's all I had.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so
35 much. You got any questions Kevin.

36
37 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
38 Kevin, how'd you know that.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I just assumed that.
41 You got questions, go ahead.

42
43 MR. WHITWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Thanks for that presentation and update. I just want
45 to make a comment, I don't have a question. Just the
46 comment that I have, and Diana's probably aware of
47 this.

48
49 But you know the Yukon River, this last
50

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1 year, was heavily restricted. They had no opportunity
2 for chinook or chum salmon, coho salmon came back not
3 very strong at all. People are having to target white
4 fish now. The Kuskokwim River has been heavily
5 restricted for a decade, fish species, salmon species,
6 in particular. And so -- but the biggest drastic thing
7 last year on the Yukon River, no opportunities for
8 chinook salmon and chum salmon, yet the bycatch numbers
9 for chum salmon last year, for instance, was over
10 500,000 and, yes, I agree that not all of those are
11 coming back to the Yukon River, but it just seems that
12 this industry is more toward commercial fisheries,
13 making its money and not thinking about the subsistence
14 users on these rivers as much as I think they should
15 be.

16
17 The people last year are struggling to
18 fill their freezers, struggling to catch some fish,
19 just a little bit of fish.

20
21 But I realize the North Pacific
22 Fisheries Management Council are trying to limit
23 bycatch. 2007 there was over 120,000 from bycatch on
24 chinook salmon, it's gone down a lot since then. Maybe
25 it's because the population of chinook salmon is just
26 drastically lower than it was in 2007. But the point
27 is there's a big difference between what's going on out
28 in the ocean and what they're allowed to do and what
29 the people here on the river are having to deal with
30 and that's no opportunities. No time for cultural,
31 traditional practices to be taught to the younger
32 people, the older people not passing that stuff down to
33 the fishermen and fisherwomen.

34
35 That's all my comment is, thank you,
36 Jack.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, appreciate
39 those comments. Other comments. Tim.

40
41 MR. VENT: Yeah, Jack, this is Darrell.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell, go ahead.

44
45 MR. VENT: Yeah, just a comment that I
46 think, you know, we should be trying to figure out, you
47 know, that's a lot of chum there that two percent
48 there. The thing that I'm wondering about is, you
49 know, that overseas in the market they're selling
50

0189

1 Alaska chum and king, and it has a pretty good price on
2 them. I'm hearing people talk about how they sell
3 these chums and kings because they're bycatch, you
4 know, and it's giving them a good market with the other
5 fish that they're fishing. So I'm just wondering, you
6 know, do we have any idea how much fish that they're
7 taking out of the water. That's just my question.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have a
10 response to that Diana.

11

12 MS. STRAM: Sure, Mr. Chairman. You're
13 asking about foreign fishing or foreign bycatch,
14 unfortunately we don't have any, if at all, information
15 from the Russians. We try hard to get that
16 information, it's always voluntarily disclosed and
17 recently has not been disclosed. So if there is any
18 that's on a global market it's not coming out of our
19 fishery because our fishery has regulations where none
20 of that can be retained or sold. But unfortunately we
21 have very limited information. We do try, there's
22 bilateral meetings that are held and there is often
23 inquiries made as to their bycatch of salmon in their
24 pollock fishery. I believe the last time we heard
25 something is they claimed they had none, which, of
26 course, we know isn't true but we don't have a good
27 handle on that.

28

29 So sorry about that but we are trying.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you. So
32 any other questions. Tim, you got questions.

33

34 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
35 Yes, I have two questions. Hello, Diana, this is Tim
36 Gervais. Thanks for presenting today.

37

38 What is your professional assessment of
39 the effectiveness of the Bycatch Reduction Program that
40 the North Pacific Council has put in place regarding
41 salmon?

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

44

45 MS. STRAM: Through the Chair. Thanks
46 Tim. You know it's really challenging. I think that
47 the way that the program was put in place has -- has
48 really focused on chinook salmon bycatch avoidance. I
49 think the efficacy of that has been really good. They

50

0190

1 really have modified their behavior and all the
2 measures to avoid chinook. But, unfortunately, it's
3 like a bubble, like a balloon, you prioritize -- you
4 have to prioritize some things over things and I think
5 that's where we're looking for innovative measures and
6 I would really encourage the Council and the public to
7 listen in or comment to our meeting in June because
8 that's why the Council's bringing this back up because
9 there's been a lot of notice on the other aspects of
10 the pollock fishery where bycatch and other species has
11 been -- has not been as well managed as the way that
12 the pollock fishery has managed. So as a general
13 efficacy I would say the chinook salmon bycatch
14 measures in the pollock fishery are very effective.

15

16 I would say that there's room for
17 improvement in managing the other species of bycatch
18 and that includes chum.

19

20 Hopefully that answers your question.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.

23 Tim, you had another one.

24

25 MR. GERVAIS: Yes. So based on what
26 we're seeing with our missing of biologic escapement
27 goal and declining quality of fecundity, would that
28 escapement where we're not in a position to -- if you
29 look at this bycatch number for last year, the 13,700
30 number and multiply that by 40 percent for the Western
31 Alaska, that's 5,500 chinook, and due to the biologic
32 problems with our runs, the Council doesn't feel like
33 that amount of bycatch should be taken out of the
34 Bering Sea anymore because it's not -- it's not enough
35 fish to spare. We can't be giving up that much fish.

36

37 This Amendment 91, I think one of the
38 reasons why it's failed is it wasn't implemented until
39 20 years after the start of the BSAI trawl fishery.
40 There was no index put into it to compensate for the
41 unreported bycatch that occurred prior to 2010. There
42 was not an allocation made to give back or to
43 compensate for the massive amount of bycatch that was
44 incurred during 2005 and 2009, just to get the chinook
45 stock back on itself. And then the overall bycatch
46 limits were too liberal.

47

48 So at this point, what this Council
49 would be interested in is instead of managing the
50

0191

1 fishery for maximum sustainable yield, we'd like to
2 switch to something like maximum sustainable bycatch.
3 What's the process that this Council and the Federal
4 Subsistence Board can manoeuver or initiate so that we
5 can change the protocols that the North Pacific Council
6 is managing the fishery by? We've been in this -- the
7 trawl fishery's existed for 30 years and the trend is
8 ground down and down on numbers of escapement and the
9 quality of the escapement so the existing protocols in
10 place to protect the chinook is not enough. And we've
11 already taken out -- extincted the upper age classes of
12 our Yukon River chinook, we need to do a better job.
13 So what -- how do we go about creating a new amendment
14 or how do we create better awareness amongst the voting
15 members and the Staff members of the North Pacific
16 Management Council that we need to have better bycatch
17 protection?

18
19 MS. STRAM: Sure, thanks for that. A
20 couple things. Just to be clear that is was not that
21 the bycatch was unmanaged prior to Amendment 91, we
22 were managing it with time, area closures. And as
23 information evolved we realized that those were static
24 and ineffective and that's why we moved to a new
25 program after that real high in 2007 and that is
26 exactly what spawned the political impetuous to create
27 a new bycatch management program, is that the time,
28 area closures were clearly not effective and that's how
29 Amendment 91 came about.

30
31 I also just want to be clear, and,
32 again, this is what we're doing for June, you can't
33 just take those numbers, the 13,783, and say that 40
34 percent of that would have gone back to coastal Western
35 Alaska, it really depends on the age and the maturity
36 of the fish that are caught as bycatch. So that would
37 be the absolute upper maximum as if every single one of
38 those fish were coming back to the river in that year
39 and we know that's not true. So that's why we do do
40 the analysis of the adult equivalent (indiscernible -
41 cuts out) relative estimate of the impact and then we
42 can compare it to last years.

43
44 (Teleconference interference -
45 participants not muted)

46
47 MS. STRAM: And so that's the first
48 step in June, specifically, by the Council is to look
49 at has our impact changed based on environment
50

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1 conditions, based on genetic breakout, you know, the
2 age at maturity and the age length -- basically the age
3 of the fish in the bycatch. So that's an important
4 step that the Council has.....

5

6 (Teleconference interference -
7 participants not muted)

8

9 MS. STRAM:and specifically to
10 look at what is the impact and has it changed. And
11 that's, I think, the first step towards whether or not
12 you need to make a change in management programs.

13

14 So I think that the important part
15 about what the Council's looking at in June is to
16 evaluate exactly what you're asking for, should there
17 be a change in the management program and, if so,
18 what's our impact, how has it changed, how has
19 regulations been working recently and is there room for
20 improvement. And I think that's the nature of the
21 conversations that will be occurring at the Council
22 meeting specifically to address the concerns that
23 you're raising.

24

25 Hopefully that gets to your question.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're still getting
28 a lot of background noise off these phones that are
29 unmuted. Star, six, mute your phones. There's so much
30 echo here it's ridiculous. So people who want to
31 participate in this meeting you have to star, six if
32 you want to participate or just go do something else.
33 So we need to have a clean up here, we're adults, grow
34 up, you should be able to do this kind of stuff.

35

36 So do you have another question, Tim.
37 Does any other Council members have questions for
38 Diana.

39

40 MR. GERVAIS: Jack, I just wanted to
41 clarify Diana's response.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

44

45 MR. GERVAIS: So in June the Council is
46 going to meet and discuss the bycatch issue. So it's
47 just internal debate amongst the voting Council members
48 on whether another amendment needs to be implemented to
49 change the bycatch regulations?

50

0193

1 MS. STRAM: Through the Chair, no.
2 What's being requested is an information update. So --
3 and it'll go through all our committees. They've
4 requested that our Staff and the National Marine
5 Fisheries Service and State of Alaska.....

6
7 (Teleconference interference -
8 participants not muted - on hold and echo)

9
10 MS. STRAM:come back to them with
11 an analysis of the adult equivalency of the chinook
12 bycatch combined with an impactory assessment using the
13 run strength to see if our impact rate, how that has
14 shifted over time. They're also asking for a stock,
15 status update on all Western Alaska stock, both chinook
16 and chum, and some assessment of how do we look at the
17 impacts that the pollock fishery bycatch might be
18 having on chum bycatch as well. And with all that
19 information in front of them, they will then discuss
20 whether or not they are interested in changes and so
21 that all happens in a public setting. There can be --
22 there's public comment available at both our
23 (indiscernible - cuts out) Advisory Panel and the
24 Council itself on whether or not there's.....

25
26 (Teleconference interference -
27 participants not muted - on hold and echo)

28
29 MS. STRAM:to take action based
30 on the information available. So we can't
31 (indiscernible - cuts out) like what action but that
32 (indiscernible - cuts out).....

33
34 REPORTER: So, Diana. Diana. Diana,
35 can you hold up. Diana, please, so I'm not getting a
36 lot of what you're saying. You're extremely choppy. I
37 don't know if you're on a speaker home, if you could
38 change that at all, but you're very choppy.

39
40 Thanks.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, you're echoing
43 -- I'm echoing, and I think there's a lot of mics that
44 are open here.

45
46 REPORTER: Yeah, everybody's echoing.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can't even hear
49 myself talk, listen to it.

50

0194

1 MR. GERVAIS: Jack, why don't we
2 disconnect and have everybody call back in. I'm not
3 getting clear communication.
4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's out of control.
6 Council members, please redial in. I want to continue
7 this meeting.
8

9 (Off record)
10

11 (On record)
12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are we back on the
14 recording?
15

16 REPORTER: Yes. Yes, we are.
17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right, we're
19 going to continue. So Tim had a followup, go ahead,
20 Tim.
21

22 (No comments)
23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you there Tim.
25

26 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I'm here. Yeah, I
27 was asking Diana, Dr. Stram, to clarify that when the
28 North Pacific Council has their meeting in June will it
29 be up to the members, the seated members of the Council
30 to determine if another amendment needs to be
31 initiated. What I'm -- the line of my questioning is,
32 I don't feel that -- because of the state of the
33 biologic condition of our runs in Western Alaska, I
34 don't feel that we should be allowing the 5,500 chinook
35 salmon as bycatch anymore and I was trying to get some
36 direction from Dr. Stram on how the WIRAC or the
37 Federal Subsistence Board can move forward with
38 requesting additional regulation so that we can reclaim
39 the 5,500 fish, and whatever the bycatch may be going
40 forward so we can have more fish available to rebuild
41 our stocks.
42

43 MS. STRAM: Through the Chair, this is
44 Diana. So what I -- I think before it broke up, I was
45 trying to explain what the Council consideration in
46 June is. And the important part is that we're coming
47 back with a data report. So we're coming back with an
48 updated analysis of the impact of the chinook bycatch
49 on the overall runs to Western Alaska and how that
50

0195

1 compares to our estimate of impact in the past and one
2 of the major changes there again is the change in the
3 -- in the age, length key that we're using to estimate
4 the ages of the fish in the bycatch and their relative
5 maturity estimates by river. So we'll be bringing that
6 back for chinook for Western Alaska and for the Upper
7 Yukon. We'll also be bringing back genetic information
8 from the most recent fishery on chum bycatch and how
9 that compares to genetic information for chum bycatch
10 in previous years. And then an overview from the State
11 of the stock, status of both chum, and chinook stocks
12 in Western Alaska.

13
14 All of that information will be
15 presented to the Council and to the committees for the
16 Council, so the scientists (indiscernible - cuts out)
17 committee and the Advisory Panel and then, what action
18 they take, yes, is up to their discretion. But they
19 will be doing it in a public meeting with public input
20 both in writing in advance of the meeting, verbally,
21 during the meeting and so there's no presupposing what
22 management they may or may not recommend. Yes, it does
23 come from the Council members themselves making a
24 recommendation for an action but it is in a public
25 meeting and encouraging of public input as to what
26 action the stakeholders, the public, the committees
27 would like to see the Councils take based on the
28 information that's available to them.

29
30 Hopefully that helps.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So does that answer
33 your question, Tim.

34
35 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, thank you very much.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Anybody else
38 have questions for Diana. I have a couple comments and
39 questions.

40
41 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, go ahead.

44
45 MR. HONEA: Yeah, this is Don. I'd
46 like to ask -- well, it's more of a comment than
47 anything else. As Mr. Tim Gervais mentioned here,
48 we've been dealing with this, what, 20, 30 years, and
49 quite frankly there's a lot of questions surrounding
50

0196

1 the bycatch numbers. Are these boats being monitored,
2 et cetera, for the numbers.

3

4

5 I live in the Middle Yukon here and I
6 just wanted anybody to know that, you know, as the
7 Chairman mentioned this is a very serious thing here.
8 Last summer, you know, the chinook are gone basically,
9 I mean from the waters, but we were pretty surprised of
10 the numbers of the summer chum are gone, the fall chum
11 are gone. And this is really serious. You cannot get
12 a fish out there to eat. A guy had a dog team there
13 and the only way that we could fish is when the ice
14 start running and gosh darn if you were to depend on
15 fishing you're going to starve out here.

15

16

17 And Tim brought up some interesting
18 things here and I was just wondering if at some point
19 we got to take it on to an international level. It's
20 really a humanitarian crises and I don't think the
21 North Pacific Management Council realizes that. When
22 we're talking about bycatch numbers, gosh dang, that's
23 just a drop in the bucket to what we're actually going
24 through. So I was wondering if at some point, in the
25 past, has it ever gone to a humanitarian commission or
26 something, maybe that -- I think we might have to try a
27 different route here because it just doesn't seem like
28 anything is really working.

28

29

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

30

31

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46

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CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Don. Any
other questions, comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So looking at these,
makeup of the Council, you have the State Department
and they're involved in the process, has the North
Pacific Fisheries Management Council discussed the
carrying capacity of the ocean for salmon, they're a
management council, and the hatchery release from
Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, Alaska and the
Pacific Rim are dumping all these million of smolt into
the ocean, if you look at the bycatch for the Bering
Sea it's predominately dominated by Asian chum and that
tells me they're dumping a heck of a lot of chum when
our stocks are dwindling away from over competition.
Is this Council talking about carrying capacity,
internationally, with all of the states that are

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1 involved with the North Pacific Fisheries Management
2 Council and with the other countries, with the State
3 Department; is that occurring, Diana?

4
5 MS. STRAM: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Those
6 conversations are occurring. They're not occurring at
7 our Council table per se. We do receive updates from
8 the agency on an annual basis on a broader ecosystem
9 look at the Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska, Arctic and part
10 of that is looking at salmon and carrying capacity and
11 general health of various aspects of fish stocks in the
12 Bering Sea. That happens on an annual basis to the
13 Council. There's also additional bilateral meetings
14 which our Council participates in. We haven't had, to
15 my recollection, in recent years, the discussion at the
16 Council table with respect to specific carrying
17 capacity of salmon. When it comes to chum, that's
18 always been tricky when we discuss management measures
19 at the Council because of exactly what you're saying,
20 how much hatchery smolt for chum is being released on
21 the Asian side, and that's why chum has always been a
22 difficult management aspect because we can't manage for
23 how much hatchery releases are going in on the western
24 side of the Pacific and so that's why provide the
25 genetics updates every year and that's why this one in
26 June will be really interesting, to see if there's been
27 any change or if we're still really being swamped by
28 the hatchery releases in primarily, Japan and Korea.

29
30 So that doesn't really get at your
31 question.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: When you're doing
34 genetic work for the Gulf of Alaska, are you
35 differentiating Alaska stocks as hatchery fish and wild
36 stock, are they genetically different and do you -- you
37 know this is a big issue, this is not a little issue,
38 this is a giant issue. The North Pacific Fisheries
39 Management Council is to manage fisheries three miles
40 to 200 miles off shore. This is a giant management
41 issue. It's affecting the people here because all of
42 this hatchery release on a marine cycle downturn, and
43 you can tell it's a marine cycle downturn, you're a
44 Doctor, and when you see this kind of Asian stocks,
45 they don't have that kind of stock, that's hatchery but
46 we can control, in America, well Washington, Oregon and
47 Alaska, we can control how much fish is released into
48 the ocean and the Management Council should start
49 talking about that because this is a big issue.

50

0198

1 The bycatch is a burr under their
2 saddle, they don't want to address that. But the other
3 issue is they're not managing for sustainability with
4 this hatchery fish and they need to start thinking
5 about it.

6
7 MS. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Wouldn't you say?

10

11 MS. STRAM: So the hatchery fish, so
12 that's -- we get updates and we provide data from the
13 NPAFC on the number of hatchery fish that are released.
14 When it comes to the bycatch, they look genetically
15 identical. The only way we can tell whether it's
16 hatchery or not -- so we make the blanket assumption
17 that the Asian origin fish are hatchery because of how
18 much is swamped there. When it comes to Alaska chum,
19 for instance, unless the otolith is thermally marked,
20 they -- the genetics don't differentiate so we look at
21 coded wire tags and so we get a lot of those,
22 particularly coming through the Gulf of Alaska to give
23 us a better estimate of hatchery releases from the West
24 Coast and Alaska. So we are looking at all that
25 information and we can look and see -- I have an
26 informal working group that discusses all of these
27 issues and we have been talking about updating the
28 coded wire tag estimates to try to see if any of that
29 has changed.

30

31 So those discussions are happening.

32

33 Generally the way, as you probably
34 know, our Council works, we bring all this information
35 together when we're analyzing a management action. So
36 what we're trying to do right now is bring all the
37 information that we can together in advance to
38 basically let the Council know what the situation is
39 currently to see whether -- to help them inform what
40 action they might want to take. When and if they
41 decide to take some action, then we bring all of this
42 information forward in an analysis to give an idea of
43 the overall picture and what other things are
44 influencing, what's happening in the environment as
45 well as a tailored management action that the Council's
46 looking at.

47

48 So that is all occurring.

49

50

0199

1 I understand the frustration and we're
2 trying to fit it in to how best it fits into our system
3 and our management.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, here's the
6 issue. All of Alaska chum salmon stocks are on the
7 rocks, yet there's still all this bycatch. And a lot
8 of that bycatch could be hatchery fish but Alaska,
9 Oregon and Washington, they have to stop dumping all
10 this fish on a marine downturn. They have to stop.
11 You calculate how much smolt they're dumping into the
12 ocean when we have a marine downturn, they're
13 annihilating the wild stocks, it's graphic.

14
15 Why are we screaming at you about our
16 people starving. We got brown bears running all over
17 the place that don't have salmon to eat, they're
18 killing all the moose. We got bad things happening
19 because of this. And the North Pacific Fisheries
20 Management Council has to come up with a sustainability
21 aspect for a marine cycle -- not static, El Nino, La
22 Nina, the Blob, the decline in productivity of the
23 ocean, they have to stop, they have to restrict. As a
24 management council, they have to restrict how much
25 smolt is dumped into the ocean, at least in America,
26 let alone British Columbia and they should partner
27 about these marine cycles and about how much fish can
28 actually be sustained. Apparently it's completely
29 destroying our wild fish stocks and they're obviously
30 sitting there getting updates but don't talk about it.
31 No, they're a management council, they need to start
32 talking about it because those smolts are going out in
33 your area, three to 200 miles.

34
35 So any other questions for Diana on
36 this North Pacific issue.

37
38 MR. VENT: This is Darrell.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

41
42 MR. VENT: Yes, I just wanted to
43 comment that, you know, if we are going to start making
44 headway on anything maybe we have to write letters. I
45 mean the Council's stating that, you know, this stuff
46 should be looked at and because -- you know we're doing
47 a lot of talking but things but if we don't have it
48 documented -- I mean it's being documented but if we
49 don't write letters -- maybe if we give them -- you
50

0200

1 know, like what you're saying there, Jack, and what
2 others are saying, you know, we need to get a handle on
3 this and it's going to get worse if we don't, you know,
4 start directing our efforts towards this hatchery
5 system out there in the ocean.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

8
9 MR. VENT: And if we don't have any
10 idea of any percent of what that hatchery fish are, you
11 know, with the natural stocks, I'm just curious, you
12 know, how much of it is our problem.

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I think we should
15 write a letter to the North Pacific Fisheries
16 Management Council. I would like to have this Western
17 Interior Regional Advisory Council members to call in
18 to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
19 meeting on June 6th. We should write a letter to the
20 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council expressing
21 our deep concerns because of their dereliction of duty
22 not monitoring the ocean productivity and allowing
23 America -- at least American states to dump competitive
24 hatchery fish with our wild stocks coinciding with the
25 out-migration of our own stocks, competing with our own
26 stocks and seeing the pathetic returns that we have.
27 And so the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
28 has to start doing more management for this hatchery
29 issue and trying to get these -- ensure returns for our
30 salmon stocks to get -- stabilize our wild fish stocks.

31
32 This is a giant issue.

33
34 And apparently the North Pacific
35 Fisheries Management Council they don't want -- they
36 look across the table, well, I'm releasing salmon,
37 ADF&G's on that, and we're releasing a lot of salmon to
38 bolster our commercial seine fishery for roe stripping
39 for chums in Southeast, we got all kinds of things
40 going on. Everybody's got egg on their face but nobody
41 wants to look in the mirror and go, we're the problem,
42 we're part of the problem. And the North Pacific
43 Fisheries Management Council needs to step up to the
44 plate and direct NOAA to come up with a sustainability
45 proto -- ocean productivity and sustainability for
46 hatchery, at least in America and talk seriously
47 through the State Department, who has a membership, or
48 an Advisory on that Council, to the other countries.

49
50

0201

1 This is a giant issue.

2

3

4 And so I would like to have this letter
5 transmitted to the North Pacific Fisheries Management
6 Council and also the other points that the Council
7 members made to reduce any -- we cannot sustain even a
8 5,000 chinook salmon harvest mortality -- incidental
9 harvest mortality that are affecting our AYK stocks.
10 We don't have the fish to give. We're almost in crises
11 here.

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So the Chair will entertain a motion
for that letter to be written and we'll discuss after
that who might want to comment to the North Pacific
Fisheries Management Council.

MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this Kevin.

MR. VENT: This is Darrell, I make a
motion.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell makes a
motion to write that letter to the North Pacific
Fisheries Management Council. Do we have a second.

MR. GERVAIS: Seconded, Tim.

MR. DEMOSKI: Arnold, second.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Arnold second.
Discussion by the Council on the motion.

MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
Kevin.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

MR. WHITWORTH: So just -- we do have
an action item, a joint letter for review and adoption
of bycatch -- on bycatch, so there is a letter that's
been drafted. It's a joint letter between Yukon Delta
RAC, Western Interior, Eastern Interior, Seward
Peninsula addressed to the Chair of the North Pacific
Fisheries Management Council. So that is coming up and
if you guys -- are we taking that up right now, is that
what the motion's all about.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we're going to
take that up but I want to -- there is some issues that

0202

1 are not in this letter about the sustainability, ocean
2 sustainability. There's things that are in this letter
3 that -- you know, it's a good letter, it's a great
4 letter, but it doesn't have the direction requesting a
5 direction to the North Pacific Fish -- or to NOAA to
6 analyze the productivity of ocean marine cycle --
7 productivity to restrict hatchery release. That's not
8 in the letter that I saw. Is that there, Kevin?

9
10 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
11 Kevin. I don't think that language is in this letter
12 but it is valuable that we have the five RACs wanting
13 to sign this letter, if you guys agree, and we could
14 probably add language. There's some areas in there
15 that they're looking for input from the RACs so -- and
16 we could add bullet points and language like that --
17 now, it would have to go through the motions again to
18 get approved by the other Councils but at this point,
19 no, that language is not in there.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Which Councils.....

22
23 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:have already
26 met, Katya.

27
28 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair and Council
29 members, this is Eva.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Eva.

32
33 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
34 Council members. An excellent discussion. And Kevin
35 is correct this preliminary draft letter that the
36 YKDelta RAC had developed and was reaching out to the
37 other Councils that may wish to support, the key points
38 in this letter were only addressing bycatch cap for
39 chum and chinook salmon and then requesting a seat --
40 two subsistence or tribal seats on the North Pacific
41 Fisheries Management Council. So it doesn't address
42 the hatchery issue or get into broader Bering Sea
43 ecosystem concerns.

44
45 And the YKDelta RAC is also submitting
46 their own letter that has more detail-specific to that
47 region's Council concerns addressing coastal
48 communities and halibut bycatch and other issues, so I
49 would certainly encourage all the Councils to submit
50

0203

1 your own letter in addition to the agreed upon joint
2 letter that would further address your Councils
3 concerns and greater details, other aspects of the
4 North Pacific Fisheries Management. So the Council, by
5 all means, can do both, and would encourage the Council
6 to express your concerns directly.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Eva, the YKDelta
9 RAC, they added their letter as an addendum to this or
10 did they just send a separate letter?

11

12 MS. PATTON: They will be finalizing a
13 separate letter as well. And we can, you know, if all
14 the Councils also have their own letter, we can include
15 those letters as enclosures along with this joint
16 letter, that might be one way to, you know, have a
17 collective input so that those individual RAC letters
18 are also noted as enclosures.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

21

22 MS. PATTON: So the YKDelta RAC is
23 still finalizing their latest letter that would go in
24 along with this joint letter.

25

26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

29

30 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
31 Kevin.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

34

35 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, thanks for that.
36 And I do like the idea of having two -- both letters.
37 This letter here that is the joint Council letter plus
38 our own letter. So if we want to do two motions, and
39 sorry if I've confused this up, but if we could just do
40 two motions, one for the joint letter and then
41 Darrell's motion that's on the table now, we could do
42 that -- discuss that one just separate.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the discussion
45 that Darrell was having was keying off of my discussion
46 about ocean sustainability with ocean modulations with
47 productivity and there are modulations. Warmer and
48 colder waters cause modulations in productivity of the
49 ocean, right, Diana? So the reality is they need to be
50

0204

1 able to track that and they need to realize that
2 there's a sustainable amount of hatchery relief, that's
3 that letter.

4
5 So do we have a second to that, Darrell
6 made a motion.

7
8 MR. VENT: I think Arnold or somebody
9 seconded it.

10
11 REPORTER: There is a second, Arnold
12 did.

13
14 MR. DEMOSKI: I seconded that, yes.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Further
17 discussion about that particular letter by the Council,
18 Western Interior Council.

19
20 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
21 Kevin.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

24
25 MR. WHITWORTH: I think we should get
26 the -- I think we should send it -- like Don Honea was
27 saying, the Council seems like it's -- I mean we're not
28 getting much out of the North Pacific Fisheries
29 Management Council, I think we should send this letter
30 to also NOAA, the NOAA Staff, whoever that might be,
31 and then the Fish and Game, either the Commissioner of
32 Fish and Game as well as the Chair of the North Pacific
33 Fisheries Management Council, and make sure that all
34 three entities hear what we have to say.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's excellent.
37 Also the Commissioner of Fish and Game for Washington
38 and Oregon. They need to be -- everybody has to be on
39 the same sheet of music. All these states are ignoring
40 their hatchery problem, their contribution to the wild
41 stock problem and so I think that is great. The
42 Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game,
43 Commissioner of Fish and Game, the Chairman of the
44 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, the
45 Director of NOAA -- is there an Alaska region, Diana?

46
47 Diana?

48
49 MS. STRAM: Yeah, it -- sorry, I'm
50

0205

1 here, it would be -- you would probably be wanting to
2 send that to the Regional Administrator for the
3 National Marine Fisheries Service for the Alaska
4 region.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Okay, for
7 Alaska region, thank you. Then how does this Council
8 feel about sending it to the heads of Fish and Game in
9 Washington and Oregon as a carbon -- as a CC also?

10

11 MR. VENT: This is Darrell, I agree
12 with you, Jack.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Kevin.

15

16 MR. GERVAIS: Jack, could we.....

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

19

20 MR. GERVAIS: Could we have the same
21 letter go to the Board of Fish meeting this spring
22 that's regarding bycatch, or regarding hatchery
23 production.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

26

27 MR. GERVAIS: Did you recall the -- the
28 mention of that meeting earlier, yesterday?

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Yeah, we did
31 hear that didn't we. So, yes, that should go to the
32 State Board of Fish, I think it was some subcommittee
33 -- Board of Fish, March 8th, hatchery subcommittee or
34 something like that they were telling us. Yes, you're
35 right. So this letter would need to be -- the hatchery
36 letter should be produced relatively quickly to make
37 sure that it gets into that Board of Fishery process
38 also.

39

40 Any further discussion.

41

42 That was an excellent point.

43

44 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Mr. Chair.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

47

48 MR. HONEA: Yeah, this is Don. Anyway,
49 I think it's imperative that State of Alaska, at least

50

0206

1 the Board of Fish get a copy of this letter. And just
2 as a comment I'd like to -- if there's anybody out
3 there, YRDFA, or the Hunting and Fishing Task Force, or
4 something that want to sign on to this. The ACs, I
5 think this is a joint effort in anything that we should
6 -- that we could have sign on to strengthen these
7 measures.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we can add on
12 to the list with our partners, TCC, AVCP, InterTribal
13 Fish Commission for -- Kuskokwim InterTribal Fish
14 Commission, Yukon InterTribal Fish Commission and who
15 else -- Middle Yukon AC, Advisory Committees also. So
16 we could add on to the list. But the reality is, you
17 know, the wider it's heard -- it should be on the Yukon
18 Panel, they also should receive this letter. Because
19 everybody's fairly myopic, they don't know -- managers,
20 in-system managers don't really know what's going on on
21 the ocean and so they're relying on some -- few studies
22 in the Bering Sea but there's a little bigger -- quite
23 a bit bigger picture with ocean -- warmer ocean
24 temperatures in the North Pacific and Gulf of Alaska
25 and the Bering Sea. Those have oscillation problems.

26

27 So any further discussion by the
28 Council on this particular letter be written.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do we have a
33 question.

34

35 MR. WHITWORTH: Question.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.
38 Those in favor of transmitting a letter regarding the
39 marine cycle monitoring for NOAA and the North Pacific
40 Fisheries Management Council area and regarding
41 hatchery release signify by saying aye.

42

43 IN UNISON: Aye.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we should take up
46 this other letter, the joint letter now since we're on
47 this issue. And so let's take up the RAC draft for
48 Council review, this letter that was -- you want to
49 take the lead on this, Kevin, since you worked on this.

50

0207

1 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, this is Katya.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, go ahead,

4 Katya.

5

6 MS. WESSELS: Yes, I would suggest that
7 maybe Eva Patton, one of our Council Coordinators who
8 drafted the letter can introduce it to the Council
9 first.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, that'd be
12 great, go ahead, Eva.

13

14 MS. PATTON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair
15 and members of the Council. For the record, Eva
16 Patton, Council Coordinator for the Yukon Kuskokwim
17 Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

18

19 And at the YKDelta RAC fall meeting,
20 the Council had requested to initiate a draft joint
21 letter that other Western Alaska Regional Advisory
22 Councils may be interested to support and sign on
23 addressing the North Pacific Fisheries Management
24 Council, the Bering Sea/Aleutians fall fisheries
25 chinook and chum bycatch, and also requesting two
26 subsistence seats or tribal seats on the North Pacific
27 Fisheries Management Council. And there were some
28 details of the letter -- there was actually a North
29 Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting happening
30 at the same time as the YKDelta RAC was meeting so
31 there wasn't an opportunity for salmon bycatch updates
32 at that time and also due to the overlap of the RAC
33 meetings themselves opportunity for the YKDelta RAC to
34 initiate a draft letter, which is coming before you
35 now, and will go before -- first to meet and review of
36 this letter -- the YKDelta RAC will meet themselves
37 March 1st through the 3rd, and Seward Peninsula RAC,
38 the Norton Sound region March 3rd and 4th, and then
39 finally the Eastern Interior RAC will meet on March 8th
40 and 9th. So you're the first Council to review
41 and.....

42

43 (Teleconference interference -
44 participants not muted - on hold)

45

46 MS. PATTON:you know add any
47 edits or additions that you think should be included.

48

49 The main thing that I would like to

50

0208

1 note is that the Council had a lot -- there was a lot
2 of public feedback asking for, you know, zero bycatch,
3 a complete closure and the Council -- the Yukon Delta
4 Council had discussed that they fully understand those
5 concerns and those requests but had felt that, you
6 know, a zero bycatch would likely be rejected and they
7 wanted to pose substantial reduction in bycatch but
8 something that might be able to be adopted in the near
9 future here.

10

11 So key things in the letter: They had
12 previously requested a chinook hardcap of 16,000 and
13 whether the Council wants to support that or propose
14 another number. And we didn't have current chum salmon
15 bycatch reports at the fall meeting either and so the
16 Council, again, had requested, you know, a reduction, a
17 hard cap reduction in chum bycatch, or non-chinook
18 salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea by at least half, but
19 didn't have a specific number.

20

21 So those numbers are up for
22 deliberation by this Council here, if you have
23 recommendations that you'd like to pose to the Councils
24 moving forward.

25

26 And, again, the third specific request
27 in this letter was four representation, subsistence
28 representation on the North Pacific Fisheries
29 Management Council and a request for two subsistence or
30 tribal seats.

31

32 So those are the three primary asks,
33 and also if there's any additional supporting
34 information that this Council, that the Western
35 Interior Council would like to add or edit to this
36 letter.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Eva. So,
41 Kevin, you have additions to her comments on the letter
42 since you worked with her with this about those hard
43 caps.

44

45 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
46 Kevin.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

49

50

0209

1 MR. WHITWORTH: Well, at the last
2 meeting we had agreed that I would help, what ended up
3 happening was Eva worked with her Staff, I think, or
4 whoever, and they wrote the letter. I didn't. This is
5 the -- I saw it the first time, the same time you all
6 did, so I didn't have a part in writing it.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, I see.

9
10 MR. WHITWORTH: But it is a good letter
11 so far.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So what do you think
14 about.....

15
16 MR. WHITWORTH: But I would like to
17 comment, if I could, on the letter.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So did you want to
20 make comments on the letter.

21
22 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah. So Eva brought
23 up the chum cap being reduced -- I mean the chinook cap
24 being reduced to 16,000 fish and then there is no cap
25 right now for chum and in this letter there's no
26 recommendation so far.

27
28 On those two points, so the -- Terese,
29 yesterday, had brought up a letter that was sent to the
30 Council, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council,
31 this letter came from the five tribal consortiums, the
32 AYK tribal consortiums, the Kuskokwim River InterTribal
33 Fish Commission, Yukon InterTribal Fish Commission,
34 TCC, Kawarek, and AVCP and they asked for zero chinook
35 bycatch because apparently talking to fishermen in
36 these trawl boats, they say it is possible to have zero
37 bycatch on chinook salmon and still not harm the
38 industry of the -- the fishermen are still going to be
39 able to fish, but what they could do is area
40 restrictions, gear restrictions. For instance, right
41 now, this fishery, the pollock fishery has two seasons.
42 They're basically open 12 months of the year, there's
43 two months out of the entire year that they are
44 actually closed and there's areas that are -- have very
45 high chinook bycatch and if you avoid those areas you
46 can lower the -- there is stuff like that. So they've
47 seen it on the Lower Yukon, too, where trying to have a
48 commercial fishery, there are people using dipnets for
49 commercial fishing so that they can avoid chinook

50

0210

1 salmon.

2

3 It is possible to lower, is my point,
4 is to lower that bycatch to zero without -- so that was
5 their recommendation.

6

7 They also had set a -- they didn't have
8 a number in that letter for chum bycatch but they
9 wanted a cap. They wanted -- I can't remember the
10 exact language, I don't have that letter in front of
11 me, but they wanted a cap established. Right now there
12 is no cap at all for chum salmon and there should be
13 one.

14

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

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So other
18 Council comments on the letter. I assume the Council
19 members have the letter, it was sent out.

20

21 Tim.

22

23 MR. VENT: Hey, Jack, this is Darrell.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Darrell, go
26 ahead.

27

28 MR. VENT: Yeah, I don't have anything
29 in my email, I've been looking for it.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Karen sent it out, I
32 forget.....

33

34 MR. VENT: Oh, yes, I found it. I
35 found it.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So you can
38 look it over.

39

40 MR. GERVAIS: What's the date of the
41 email Darrell.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You got comment Tim.

44

45 MR. VENT: Yeah, I got it.

46

47 MR. GERVAIS: Darrell, this is Tim.
48 What's the date of the email?

49

50

0211

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh.

2

3 MR. VENT: Hold on, let me look.

4 2/8/22.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So how many Council
7 members actually have the letter. Arnold, do you have
8 the letter?

9

10 MR. DEMOSKI: I think it's in my email,
11 I'm just trying to find it.

12

13 MR. VENT: Yeah, it's dated 2/8/22.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Karen sent this out
16 and said that it was going to be supplemental to our
17 packet, it didn't make it into our original sending.

18

19 MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah, I got it in my
20 email.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Pollock wouldn't
23 have it. So would you like to insert cap language into
24 this letter, Kevin?

25

26 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
27 Kevin. Are you referring to the chinook or chum or
28 both?

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Both. Both. Cap
31 recommendation.

32

33 MR. WHITWORTH: I think for chum
34 salmon, I think they -- maybe we don't establish a
35 number cap, but I think a cap should be -- language
36 should say something like a cap should be established,
37 or should be able to analyze the data and figure out a
38 starting point, at least some recommendations.

39

40 For chinook salmon, I'd hate to go
41 against whoever drafted up the 16,000, I don't know who
42 did that. If that came from the Yukon Delta -- it
43 probably did, I think it did, Eva was mentioning that,
44 but that's a good starting point. It reduces the cap
45 at least for chinook salmon. I mean, personally, I
46 think zero, if it is possible to do zero, like
47 fishermen say it can be done, then that's where we
48 should be. People in the Norton Sound area really
49 believe that this cap can be reduced to zero without
50

0212

1 any harm to the industry.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Diana, are you still
4 on the phone -- Diana?

5

6 MS. STRAM: Yep, I'm still here.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So what's the
9 realistic ability of the fleet to have a zero bycatch
10 for chinook?

11

12 MS. STRAM: Totally unrealistic to be
13 perfectly honest, that -- it's not possible. Not for
14 the Bering Sea pollock fleet to have a zero bycatch
15 cap, I mean that's -- it's just not. I'm just being
16 honest, it's not possible.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: A reduced bycatch to
19 16,000, would be doable, if they avoid -- truly
20 avoidance of hot zones?

21

22 MS. STRAM: I honestly can't speak to
23 what they could do more than what they're doing right
24 now for chinook. I do know that they're employing all
25 measures that they can right now, or have at their
26 ability for chinook so -- but I'm not in a position
27 where I could say that they could reduce even further
28 than where they are right now. That -- that's
29 something that would have to be taken up with the fleet
30 with the Council itself. But -- but it's really --
31 just to be -- just to be perfectly honest, it's not
32 possible that they can ever catch pollock and never
33 catch a single chinook, not -- you wouldn't -- they
34 wouldn't be able to prosecute a fishery if one single
35 chinook would shut them down.

36

37 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
38 Kevin.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

41

42 MR. WHITWORTH: Could pollock be caught
43 with pots like the crab fishery or the cod fishery in
44 the Gulf, could pollock be caught using pots? Diana?

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Diana.

47

48 MS. STRAM: It's an interesting
49 question. I really don't know that I could effectively

50

0213

1 answer that. It's an entirely different fishery. It's
2 a mid-water fishery, it's different from fisheries that
3 are prosecuted with pots and it's on -- on the scale
4 that it is, a mid-water net is the most efficient, most
5 effective and I mean pots bring other problems too.
6 But I think the scale of the pollock fishery and the
7 ability to even consider doing it with pots wouldn't
8 really match up, but, again, I'm just speaking on my
9 own.

10

11 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, go ahead.

14

15 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, it would be very
16 challenging to have a zero bycatch on chinook. When I
17 talk about gear restrictions, I mean it would probably
18 close down -- if it went zero it'd probably close down
19 the trawl fishery, but there are other ways, thinking
20 outside the box, to capture pollock, not with a 200,
21 300 foot processor boat -- you know, catching boat, but
22 anyhow that's -- we could just leave it at 16,000, I'm
23 fine with that.

24

25 Diana, I'm curious, is a chum cap
26 realistic?

27

28 MS. STRAM: Thanks for the question.
29 You know chum's challenging. We used to have a chum
30 cap that closed -- time, area closures. When we moved
31 to the new program and then when we modified it in
32 2016, it was to give the industry the ability to avoid
33 chum with real-time, time, area closure focusing on
34 Western Alaska chum. So that's the way their agreement
35 is written. So the -- but the important part of that
36 is prioritizing chinook above all other bycatch
37 avoidance measures that the pollock fishery is under.
38 So it's -- so I can't say whether a chum cap would be
39 reasonable or not reasonable, it's just a balancing act
40 because they have to prioritize something over
41 something else and chinook has been the priority.
42 There's probably room for improvement in their bycatch
43 management of chum, I don't know what the specific
44 measure would be but I'm sure that encouraging some
45 improved measures of bycatch avoidance of chum is
46 reasonable.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Diana, wasn't the
49 avoidance of chum had to do with time, the time of year
50

0214

1 when chum are present and they avoided those times of
2 year -- now, they're open up pretty much all the time
3 and so could it revert back to some kind of a chum cap
4 and some kind of a time avoidance?

5

6 MS. STRAM: Yeah, thanks, Jack. So
7 what we used to have was a large time area closure for
8 chums. They only catch chum in the summer season, they
9 don't catch it at all in the winter. And what we've
10 been trying to do with the genetics reporting that
11 we've been bringing -- that the agency brings back, is
12 breaking it out by time and by area to look at where
13 Western Alaska chum are being caught in order to help
14 inform what management measures could either be taken
15 within the fleet itself on a real-time basis, or
16 externally for the Council to look at measures for
17 chum. And so we have been looking at when -- when the
18 Western Alaska chums are coming across the grounds,
19 across weeks of the summer season, what areas they're
20 being caught, where those are focused on to help the
21 fleet focus their, currently, internal measures for
22 bycatch avoidance around where they might run into
23 Western Alaska chum. So we prioritize the avoidance
24 Western Alaska chum in their management measures but
25 there is no cap that they're managing to, they're
26 moving off of those aggregations of chum as they run
27 into them by their hot spot and communication measures
28 within the fleets themselves.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So basically all
31 chum are moving from the North Pacific Gulf of Alaska
32 into the Bering Sea in the summer season and are not
33 actually rearing on the Bering Sea, is that your
34 perception?

35

36 MS. STRAM: No, we run into -- there
37 are Western Alaska chum that are in the Bering Sea. I
38 don't have maps in front of me right now in terms of
39 what ages and migration they're running into.....

40

41 (Teleconference interference -
42 participants not muted)

43

44 MS. STRAM:but we've been trying
45 to piece that (indiscernible - cuts out) genetics in
46 terms of breaking them out by management areas.

47

48 I think we'll have a lot more
49 information in June and, obviously, any ideas you all

50

0215

1 have on what information you'd like to see and on what
2 -- what kind of a spacial or temporal basis is super
3 helpful too.

4
5 (Teleconference interference -
6 participants not muted)

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, I remember
9 when they had time and area and basically those areas
10 where they catch them are lined up with the passes
11 going through the Shumigan Islands and the Alaska
12 Peninsula. So it's always been my perception that
13 chum, predominately.....

14
15 (Teleconference interference -
16 participants not muted)

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:yeah, there's
19 immature chum and juvenile chum moving through the --
20 out to the Gulf and back through in the summer season
21 going to their destination and they bring other
22 (indiscernible - cuts out).....

23
24 (Teleconference interference -
25 participants not muted)

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:with them to
28 spawn on the Asian side also.

29
30 MS. LAVINE: Hold on Jack. Hold on
31 Jack. This is Robbin.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, go ahead,
34 Robbin.

35
36 MS. LAVINE: Hello, everyone online,
37 this is Robbin, the Subsistence Policy Coordinator for
38 OSM. We are getting some background chat, it sounds
39 like a quiet discussion but it is interfering. Please
40 remember to star, mute your -- or to mute your phone,
41 star, zero [sic] when you're not speaking.

42
43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Star, six. So.....

46
47 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
48 Star, six, yes.

49
50

0216

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I do feel that
2 there.....

3
4 (Teleconference interference -
5 participants not muted - on hold)

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:the fleet --
8 and apparently they're not restricting themselves
9 enough because the chum bycatch is going up and up and
10 up and we have a decline of stocks all over Alaska. So
11 those few that are Alaska fish predominately Asian
12 stocks are still intolerable to these.....

13
14 (Teleconference interference -
15 participants not muted - on hold)

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:that's why they
18 caught 950,000 chum salmon in the Area M (indiscernible
19 - cuts out)

20
21 (Teleconference interference -
22 participants not muted - on hold)

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:fisheries. So
25 the reality is, the North Pacific fishery trawl fleet
26 is not doing enough to reduce their bycatch of chum.
27 They should have some kind of incentive, either close
28 the areas where the chum salmon -- you knew where they
29 pass through, close those areas. If the fleet can't
30 stay out of those areas and control themselves then the
31 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council needs to
32 control them. So there are ways that were utilized
33 previously to move them away from those bycatch areas
34 for chum.

35
36 It's intolerable to decimate the wild
37 stocks of chum -- have you reviewed the in-shore return
38 for Yukon River chum and Kuskokwim River chum this
39 year? Diana?

40
41 MS. STRAM: I have, yes.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So you know
44 that it's a bleak situation here and this increasing
45 and escalating bycatch by the fleet for chum salmon is
46 intolerable, we can't keep going with this. They need
47 to have a bycatch cap or a reduction or an area, time
48 and area closure, because apparently the fleet is not
49 self-regulating as they told the Council they would.

50

0217

1 They're still having excessive amounts and they need to
2 have a cap, an incentive not to keep going. They have
3 no restriction, they say they're going to do it
4 themselves, well, they're not doing it and it could get
5 worse.

6
7 And so that's an issue with this
8 Advisory Council and needs to be addressed.

9
10 So in our letter we should suggest that
11 there is a reduced cap of 250,000 chum salmon, the cap
12 and an area and time restriction to move the fleet off
13 of those zones, where the -- the -- no one knows those
14 fish move through there in the summertime -- don't you
15 know -- don't you Diana?

16
17 MS. STRAM: I think it's perfectly
18 reasonable to ask the Council to reevaluate management
19 measures for chum. That's about all I can really say
20 on it.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. So I feel the
23 specific language, Kevin, or Tim, this chum salmon cap,
24 there needs to be a cap. They have no cap. They need
25 to have a cap. And they need to have time and area,
26 when they can fish where those chum salmon are
27 migrating through. There's specific zones, basically
28 lined up on the Passes where those chums are going
29 through there.

30
31 So is this Council's insertion into
32 this letter, what do you feel is an adequate cap for
33 chum salmon to reduce their escalating take of chum
34 salmon on the Bering Sea.

35
36 Kevin or Tim.

37
38 MR. GERVAIS: Jack, this is Tim. I
39 wouldn't be able to put forth that with some research
40 on it. I'm not up to speed on the numbers and the
41 areas that they're catching the high incidences of
42 bycatch. So I can't -- as of this meeting time I can't
43 put forth any type of reasonable estimate on that
44 number.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we could say that
47 we want a significant reduction, by half, of the chum
48 salmon bycatch and to utilize time and area as the
49 mechanism to move the fleet away from the migration
50

0218

1 zones of chum salmon moving into the Bering Sea.
2 That's a reasonable statement to the North Pacific
3 Fisheries Management Council.

4
5 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
6 Kevin.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

9
10 MR. WHITWORTH: About the chum cap,
11 yeah, the burden -- the burden on us public members
12 trying to digest all those numbers, like Tim refers to,
13 the numbers of chinook and the numbers of chum, that's
14 really hard to do. I mean that's going to take a lot
15 of time and a lot of work. NOAA has that data, they
16 should be able to analyze and come up with a
17 recommendation for North Pacific Fisheries Management
18 Council. But I do like the starting point of 250,000
19 just as a starting point, even though we don't have a
20 good analysis on that cap, at least it is a starting
21 point for the other Councils to think about, maybe
22 recommend that. So I would go with just setting at
23 250,000 like you had mentioned.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, all right, we
26 will insert a non-chinook salmon bycatch of 250,000,
27 which is predominately chum. And so we -- and then
28 that the Council -- the North Pacific Fisheries
29 Management Council shall direct NOAA to have closures
30 for time and area for avoidance of chum salmon.

31
32 The fleet has proven that they will not
33 restrain themselves, their catches are increasing --
34 bycatch is increasing for chum and we have an abysmal
35 situation going on with chum salmon. We can't tolerate
36 any more of this escalating chum salmon bycatch.

37
38 So if they move off and get into more
39 chinook they're going to have to close up there too.

40
41 So the bottom line is we're suggesting
42 a 16,000 chinook bycatch, a reduced bycatch for
43 chinook, and they got to get their act together with
44 this chum salmon thing also. So time and area was
45 instrumental in maintaining lower bycatches. Right
46 Diana?

47
48 MS. STRAM: That is how we've managed
49 in the past and that is what my understanding of what
50

0219

1 the fleet, at least, is trying to do under their
2 current management, again, within their own fleet, is
3 looking at chum from time and area and management; that
4 seems to be the most effective.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: NOAA identified
7 those hot spots of migration zones of where chum salmon
8 were moving through and they closed those areas at
9 specific times of the year. We've been doing this for
10 a long time with NOAA. e had a meeting down in
11 Anchorage with the cyrstally chandeliers in the room
12 and I remember you giving us all these maps, or NOAA
13 did, and we saw these closure zones. Well, that got
14 thrown out the window and now the bycatch is going
15 through the roof and our stocks are going over a cliff,
16 and so this isn't working. And the North Pacific
17 Fisheries Management Council has to come around to
18 reimplementing -- they reinvented the wheel, well, it
19 didn't work and they need to go back to what actually
20 was effective at reducing the bycatch of chum salmon in
21 the Bering Sea as they migrated through the Bering Sea.

22
23 So we.....

24
25 MR. GERVAIS: Can I make a point here
26 that's relevant.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

29
30 MR. GERVAIS: This is Tim. So if we
31 look at the way Amendment 91 came out, that really high
32 chinook bycatch in 2007 season and there was -- they
33 just kept fishing on it, they just kept slaughtering
34 the king salmon throughout the season because they were
35 operating within the -- in the boundaries of the
36 regulations as they were during that year. And then
37 after -- after all the king salmon are killed, taken
38 out of the ecosystem, then they said, oh, we need to do
39 something about this, so then in 2009 we're doing
40 testimony -- well, they're having a North Pacific
41 Council meeting March of 2009 setting up the bycatch
42 cap and then it gets implemented in 2011, so four years
43 after the big hit is when a regulation is taking place.

44
45 So I would like to insert some kind
46 language where they take restrictive measures up front
47 and then as the four year process works its way through
48 and they fleece out the details, they can move it up or
49 down from that point. But we can't afford to have this
50

0220

1 high incidence of chum bycatch for the next four years.

2

3

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

4

5

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7

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MR. GERVAIS: That just -- at the rate that these regulations are coming into effect is not slow enough to -- to preserve the stocks, and that's as a huge of a problem as the bycatch itself, is the slowness of conservation action. The conservation action should go in place right now and then if the conservation actions are enough of an economic deterrent then I guarantee you the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council will find a way expedite the final rule on these measures.

So I'm open to suggestions, I don't have an exact mechanism but I think we should put forth in the letter that they need to take the conservation management -- or the conservation measure up front and then adjust it with the research and with the approval of all the members of the North Pacific Council.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So there's the Council recommends that the chinook salmon bycatch cap in the Bering Sea, BSAI commercial fishery be reduced and it should say immediately to no more than 16,000. No more than 16,000 chinook.

Non-chinook salmon bycatch should immediately, I'm going to scratch out dramatically, immediately be reduced, at least by half, with time -- for non-salmon, non-chinook, by area and time restrictions used by NOAA in Amendment 91.

MR. GERVAIS: Well, or just let their -- they have a lot of -- NOAA and the North Pacific Council has a lot of experience with bycatch management, why don't we just allow them to achieve the method as -- as they determine appropriate.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, that's to let the fleet regulate themselves and that's what the problem is. The fleet's been reg -- well, the bycatch for chums has gone right through the roof and they don't seem to be regulating themselves enough. They must be fishing where they're migrating. So the problem is that they relied on the fleet to stay off the chum salmon but they don't have a cap, there's no ramification. There's no cap. They don't have a cap.

0221

1 So chum salmon cap should be, a starting point, or non-
2 salmon, should be at 250,000. And they accomplish that
3 whether it's other salmon, whether it's sockeye or
4 chum, those are migrating at that time of the year.
5 They know when they migrate through those Passes, and
6 they stayed off of those previously. Well, they relied
7 on the fleet to self-regulate, well, it's not working.
8 There's too much economic incentive to continue the
9 bycatch to keep escalating. So there's no incentive to
10 stop. If they had a 250,000 cap, they would stop
11 themselves. Oh, my gosh, we've got to stop.

12
13 But right now time and area was a big
14 deal, but the cap was the driver. They need to have a
15 cap and they have to have a reduced cap because of the
16 abysmal situation on the AYK stocks for chum moving
17 through the Bering Sea.

18
19 So that's kind of in that language.

20
21 And immediate reduction. You're
22 talking about it took four years. These have to be
23 immediate, these are emergency measures that need to be
24 taken.

25
26 So is the Council fine with that type
27 of language for that paragraph on the second page,
28 highlighted in yellow.

29
30 Comments from the Council.

31
32 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, that's appropriate.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Kevin.

35
36 MR. WHITWORTH: Yes, I agree. This is
37 Kevin.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Arnold.

40
41 MR. DEMOSKI: Yes, I agree.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell.

44
45 MR. VENT: Yes, I agree.

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Pollock.

48
49 MR. SIMON: Yes.

50

0222

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Pollock sometimes
2 has a -- Don -- Pollock can't get his phone unmuted
3 sometimes.
4

5 REPORTER: I heard Pollock, he said
6 yes.
7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Don. Is that
9 you Don.
10

11 MR. HONEA: Yeah, I agree completely.
12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So I've lost
14 track -- have we made a motion to adopt this letter
15 with the amended language, and the bullet is in the
16 center of this letter on the second page, third
17 paragraph down, it was highlighted in yellow, we
18 changed some of the language to make this an immediate
19 action and setting hard cap -- a hard cap on chum of
20 250,000 with time and area that was used in Amendment
21 No. 91.
22

23 REPORTER: You do not have a motion
24 right now.
25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.
27

28 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair.
29

30 REPORTER: I'm sorry, Katya.
31

32 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I was going to just
33 say the same thing, you do not have a motion right now.
34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And so the
36 Chair will entertain.....
37

38 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
39 Kevin.
40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.
42

43 MR. WHITWORTH: I'll make a motion.
44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Kevin motions, do we
46 have a second.
47

48 MR. VENT: Darrell will second.
49
50

0223

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell seconds.
2 Further discussion. We've had a lot.

3
4
5 (No comments)

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Anybody call
8 question.

9
10 MR. VENT: Question.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.
13 Those in favor of transmitting that letter to the North
14 Pacific Fisheries Management Council signify by saying
15 aye.

16
17 IN UNISON: Aye.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Opposed, same
20 sign.

21
22 (No opposing votes)

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And the OSM Staff
25 will inform the other Councils what actions we've taken
26 on that language -- slight language changes.

27
28 So thanks so much Eva. Thanks so much
29 Diana for being on our call to give us an update and
30 interact with our additional questions, I appreciate
31 that Diana.

32
33 MS. STRAM: You're welcome. I'm always
34 happy to, thanks a lot, Mr. Chair.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right.

37
38 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, this is Katya.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Katya.

41
42 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I just wanted to
43 remind the Council, unless I missed it, you were going
44 to select a Council member to attend the North Pacific
45 Fisheries Management Council meeting.

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes. Well, either
48 telephonically or in person, the meeting is in
49 Anchorage, I understand, is that correct?

50

0224

1 MS. STRAM: No, Mr. Chairman. The
2 meeting is scheduled for Sitka in June.

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Sitka, okay. But I
5 would like one of the Council members to at least
6 comment to the North Pacific Fisheries Management
7 Council about the dire situation that we have in our
8 region and the need for these additional measures.

9
10 Who would like to volunteer to do that?

11
12 MR. GERVAIS: I would, Jack, this is
13 Tim.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

16
17 MR. GERVAIS: But I think -- I don't
18 know, I'd be willing to -- I mean there's several
19 people else on the Council that are integral to what's
20 going on so Kevin or Darrell or if anybody wants to do
21 it, or do it in addition, it's fine with me.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: How many volunteers
24 do we have to do this.

25
26 MR. VENT: This is Darrell. I'll
27 volunteer. Just give me a reminder and I will.

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So anybody
30 else.

31
32 MR. GERVAIS: And if it's
33 telephonically there's no reason why multiple members
34 couldn't do it but I guess you would -- unless you only
35 want one specific WIRAC representative, that's
36 different, but other members could comment from the
37 WIRAC or individually in addition.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like to
40 have.....

41
42 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, perhaps we
43 could ask DeAnna what's the -- Diana what's the
44 protocol at the meetings in terms of testifying.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Diana.

47
48 MS. STRAM: Sure. Sure, thanks for
49 that. Obviously it's a moving target, we are assuming
50

0225

1 that Sitka will be in person but we're working on our
2 ability to provide for remote testimony even when we
3 come back into session in person. So we're working on
4 this sort of hybrid nature. I can't give you an answer
5 yet because it's all in progress but there is
6 significant interest in allowing for remote testimony
7 even at an in-person meeting. So that's kind of
8 something we're moving towards, but, again, it's all in
9 flux right now as we try to go back to in-person
10 meetings.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Question for
13 you.....

14
15 MS. WESSELS: But the question also is
16 -- sorry -- will there be multiple testimonies allowed
17 on behalf of the Western Interior Council?

18
19 MS. STRAM: Thanks for that. Sure, so
20 the way it works, when we do public testimony, if
21 you're testifying on behalf of an organization such as
22 the Western RAC, you would have one person that would
23 have six minutes of testimony but individuals can also
24 testify for three minutes as an individual. You could
25 also note in your individual testimony that you are a
26 member of the RAC. But the RAC, itself, would get --
27 the Western Interior RAC would get one person
28 testifying on behalf of the actual Western Interior
29 RAC. But other members can testify as a person and a
30 stakeholder and identify that you are affiliated or a
31 Council member as well.

32
33 I hope that helps.

34
35 MS. WESSELS: Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I would.....

38
39 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, that helps a lot.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And question for
42 you, Katya. Will OSM send a representative from the
43 WIRAC down to Sitka?

44
45 MS. WESSELS: We can ask, the Council
46 can put that request in and it will go to our ARD and
47 then.....

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, I feel that
50

0226

1 they've got plenty of money leftover because we've been
2 on the phone here for like a year and a half. So we
3 haven't had any travel.....

4

5 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, well, I'm just
6 telling you of protocol, you know, that's all.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

9

10 MS. WESSELS: I can't promise anything
11 in the meeting.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

14

15 MS. WESSELS: But if you're requesting
16 it we'll make sure, you know, it goes to the proper
17 person and we'll let you know.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Well, there's
20 absolutely no reason why they cannot send a -- we used
21 to have representation at various Board of Fish, Board
22 of Game meetings and various entities and this is such
23 an important issue to this Council, I feel that they
24 can spring for at least one representative.

25

26 I would also like to have three Council
27 members -- we have three volunteers -- we got Tim and
28 Kevin and Darrell, so I would like to have all three of
29 you participate in one capacity or another. Somebody
30 to go to Sitka but also we need the Kuskokwim to
31 testify, Kevin; we need the Yukon testify, Tim; and we
32 need the Koyukuk testify, that would be Darrell. So
33 the reality is we need to impress upon, and so if you
34 can use -- so two of our members can use three minutes
35 and one use six for answering questions with the North
36 Pacific Fisheries Management Council, that'd be great.
37 Because there should be dialogue with our Council
38 members.

39

40 So can we -- is that acceptable to the
41 Council to have those three members volunteer, those
42 three members would interact with the North Pacific
43 Fisheries Management Council? Is that acceptable?

44

45 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
46 Kevin.

47

48 MR. DEMOSKI: Yes, that's acceptable.

49

50

0227

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

2

3 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, in June, I don't
4 like to commit to something like this, if I can, just
5 other duties of my own.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

8

9 MR. WHITWORTH: But I need to see --
10 but I am willing to help, you know, Tim and Darrell on
11 testimony and helping write, get things together, bring
12 things from the Kuskokwim, I could help with that,
13 that's no problem.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Well, that's
16 great.

17

18 MR. WHITWORTH: Or help review your
19 guys' testimony and stuff like that.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That'd be great. I
22 you could at least write from the Kuskokwim
23 perspective, Tim or Darrell can go from their
24 perspective, to this Council, the North Pacific
25 Fisheries Management Council.

26

27 So that would be good if you'll commit
28 to that part.

29

30 MR. WHITWORTH: Yes, I will.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, Darrell, and
33 Tim, which one of you.....

34

35 MR. VENT: Yes, this is Darrell. I --
36 you know, if you give me enough information I can write
37 something up and that way I can present it from our
38 area.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, Kevin's going
41 to write up some stuff for the Kuskokwim and then you
42 can work with Nissa developing a letter from the
43 Koyukuk perspective and Tim -- all of this stuff is
44 going to be going through Nissa and so Tim you can
45 write a perspective and then utilizing this document
46 that we just passed, the joint letter here to the North
47 Pacific Fisheries Management Council and reiterating
48 that there are four Councils -- five Councils signed on
49 to this letter; it's a big deal over here.

50

0228

1 So is that acceptable?

2

3 MR. VENT: Yeah, Jack, that's
4 acceptable. I'll also be in a meeting with TCC
5 Taskforce and maybe I can show them what I got and then
6 we could proceed from there.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

9

10 MR. GERVAIS: Diana, if you're still
11 online, what is the -- is there a title or a
12 designation for what this discussion is going to be
13 about, what is it bycatch in general or salmon bycatch,
14 what's it called.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Salmon bycatch.

17

18 MS. STRAM: Sure. And we don't have
19 the agenda title yet but it will be something along the
20 lines of salmon bycatch because there'll be a number of
21 different issues taken up under it. There'll be a
22 report from the agency on research, there will be the
23 updated genetics information, there'll be our analysis
24 of the AEQ and the impact rate and the impact rate and
25 there'll be reports from the industry. So it will be
26 under a salmon bycatch agenda item in June.

27

28 So I think if you're writing your
29 letter prior to us drafting that agenda, if you just
30 noted it as salmon bycatch agenda item taken up at the
31 June meeting -- if you're drafting your letter later we
32 might actually have the agenda number but our Staff
33 will know where to put that in terms of putting the
34 letter associated with the public comment for that
35 item.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

38

39 MR. GERVAIS: One more question, Diana.
40 What -- are the Bristol Bay rivers included in that
41 Western Alaska bycatch percent, or is that different?

42

43 MS. STRAM: Yes, no, they are. Yes.
44 In terms of the overall runs, runs that we compile to
45 use for the impact rate, the Nushagak is one of the
46 ones included in there. In terms of the three river
47 index that helps us determine whether or not they're
48 high or low, no. That's just the Unalakleet, the Upper
49 Yukon and the Kuskokwim. And that was by design

50

0229

1 because the Nushagak swamped the system.

2

3 MR. GERVAIS: All right, thank you.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we need a motion
6 to appoint these members to be our delegation to the
7 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to bring the
8 various issues on bycatch. Can you telephonically or
9 in person Tim? And are you going under TCC, Darrell?
10 Is that what you said, Darrell?

11

12 (Teleconference interference -
13 participants not muted)

14

15 MR. VENT: No, I'm just going to get
16 advice from them in order to write a presentation.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

19

20 REPORTER: Somebody needs to please
21 mute your phone. I think we have children in the
22 background, if that's you, please mute.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Tim or Darrell,
25 who is going to travel if it's approved? Darrell says
26 he can travel, you can travel too, Tim, or not?

27

28 (No comments)

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you there Tim?

31

32 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, I would be able to
33 travel.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. We'll work
36 that out.

37

38 REPORTER: Okay, whoever was unmuted,
39 you may have now gone to your vehicle, if you could
40 please mute your phone. Whoever's driving right now,
41 could you please mute your phone.

42

43 (Teleconference interference -
44 participants not muted)

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. We need a
47 motion to appoint these three members. Kevin will
48 write language regarding the Kuskokwim River issues;
49 Tim will write stuff about the Yukon; Darrell about the

50

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1 Koyukuk. If Darrell travels under TCC, Tim will
2 represent the WIRAC, and Darrell can say he's on the
3 WIRAC if that ends up being two members there, that'll
4 be better.

5
6 So those are the three members that
7 will represent the Western Interior Regional Advisory
8 Council to the North Pacific Fisheries Management
9 Council; do we have a motion to that effect.

10
11 MR. DEMOSKI: This is Arnold, I make
12 that motion.

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Arnold made the
15 motion, do we have a second.

16
17 MR. GERVAIS: Seconded by Tim.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Second by Tim.
20 Further discussion.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do we have a
25 question.

26
27 MR. DEMOSKI: Question. This is
28 Arnold.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question is called.
31 Those in favor of that motion signify by saying aye.

32
33 IN UNISON: Aye.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

36
37 (No opposing votes)

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So hearing none. So
40 thanks so much, again, Diana, for sticking with us on
41 that one.

42
43 MS. STRAM: You're welcome.

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to
46 move on on the agenda. We have Yukon Delta National
47 Wildlife Refuge, Kuskokwim River salmon and Refuge
48 report. And that'd be Boyd and Aaron, are you on the
49 call.

50

0231

1 MR. MOSES: Hi, Mr. Chair, can you hear
2 me?

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can hear you, go
5 ahead.

6
7 MR. MOSES: All right, thank you for
8 letting me talk. I will start first and then Boyd will
9 go right after me and give an update on fisheries. I'm
10 here today to talk about waterfowl. One of the first
11 things I'm going to talk about is Emperor geese, you
12 guys don't get Emperor geese but they're a large
13 population on the Refuge. And like I said, in the fall
14 the Emperor geese population is only a thousand birds
15 above the threshold of 23,000 and so there's going to
16 be talk with the Waterfowl Conservation Committees and
17 AMBCC and other waterfowl groups on closing the harvest
18 of Emperor geese in 2023.

19
20 This summer all our field camps are
21 being -- are going to be out on Kigik Island. Seasonal
22 Staff are being recruited so if anybody's interested
23 please email our waterfowl biologist, Brian Daniels.

24
25 An update on caribou, the Yukon Delta
26 Staff have been working with the Alaska Department of
27 Fish and Game and Togiak Refuge to provide information
28 and outreach on the current harvest closure for this
29 species. We conducted many tribal consultations
30 focusing primarily on Kwethluk, Akiak, Akiachuk and
31 Tuluksak since the caribou are closest to those
32 communities. Tribal consultation resulted in tribes
33 along the Kuskokwim deciding to protect the Mulchatna
34 Caribou Herd in a similar fashion to the moose
35 populations during the moratorium.

36
37 At the early part of the season non-law
38 enforcement Staff at Yukon Delta made several
39 observations of harvest during the closure. These
40 observations were circulated to both the State and U.S.
41 Fish and Wildlife enforcement to provide protection for
42 the herd. The law enforcement was able to make several
43 cases in different communities at around the same time
44 tribal outreach was taking place. One lesson we
45 learned for local Staff is to have one on one
46 conversations with tribal leaders before the first snow
47 appears in the area. The caribou population got very
48 close to numerous villages before conversations took
49 place, however, the outreach effort was substantial
50

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1 earlier in the summer and fall from both Alaska
2 Department of Fish and Game and Fish and Wildlife.
3 But, I'll hand it off to Boyd.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank.....

6
7 MR. BLIHOVDE: Hey, Mr. Chairman, this
8 is Boyd.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Standby. Standby
11 one second. Appreciate that update, Aaron, about the
12 Mulchatna caribou and I appreciate that there was
13 enforcement. When the communities went to moratorium
14 there's certainly individuals who apparently are going
15 to continue to harvest and that is intolerable, at
16 12.800, that's intolerable to harvest. Any cow caribou
17 are absolutely necessary for the rebuilding of the
18 herd. So I appreciate that effort for outreach and
19 effort for enforcement.

20
21 Go ahead, Boyd.

22
23 MR. BLIHOVDE: Yes, sir, just to add to
24 that. I would just like to say I'm very impressed with
25 the local community leaders, tribal leaders who have
26 promoted the closure to their tribal members and the
27 community and we saw that there was virtually no
28 harvest that we witnessed and law enforcement witnessed
29 after roughly December. Early in the year in December,
30 there was some harvest, I think, partly because the
31 caribou herd did come close to villages but also
32 because there were folks who may have been unaware of
33 the closure. So I agree with you, that it's a concern,
34 the population is so low we got to protect the herd and
35 build it back. But thanks for the comment.

36
37 And I think it's a good segway into
38 salmon management and you heard from the InterTribal
39 Fish Commission on the Kuskokwim yesterday and I don't
40 want to state anything that's already in the packet.
41 Our information, our summary is brief, it's just two
42 pages, but it's already in the packet. But under
43 fisheries I just want to summarize that I think 2021
44 was about as good as could have been expected for what
45 we were dealt with here at the Kuskokwim. Obviously a
46 lot of eyes and attention are on the Yukon but the
47 Kuskokwim River, the InterTribal Fish Commission, the
48 Refuge, Fish and Wildlife Service and ADF&G, we've been
49 working on this issue for over 10 years now with
50

0233

1 restrictions and subsistence users having to deal with
2 those restrictions that are difficult. So I won't go
3 into a lot of detail but I will say that for 2022 we
4 are concerned with the salmon numbers and the
5 projections. The preliminary estimates from ADF&G are
6 similar to last year so far. We are still waiting on
7 the State run reconstruction to be finalized, but we do
8 expect that it will be similar to last year's numbers
9 for chinook and unfortunately for chum. So our plan,
10 in discussions with InterTribal Fish Commission, in-
11 season managers and the communities, so far, has been
12 to have similar restrictions as last year, however,
13 this year our plan would be to have official and formal
14 restrictions on chum salmon as well as chinook salmon.
15 I will just reiterate what a local tribal leader said
16 earlier this year and that is that the reds saved us
17 last year. We had a lot of sockeye in the Kuskokwim
18 which is something that the Yukon doesn't have so we
19 were very fortunate to have reds that subsistence users
20 could have on their drying racks and fill their
21 freezers with so we're hoping that that will occur
22 again this year. But we are very concerned that the
23 chum salmon are going to be low again this year and so
24 we would plan to protect them as well as chinook.

25
26 We've been starting tribal
27 consultations. We've luckily been able to have in-
28 person meetings already with two villages on the Kusko
29 this year and some villages are still closed due to
30 Covid so we will have teleconference communication with
31 those villages and continue to work with InterTribal
32 Fish Commission very closely. I'm very proud of the
33 relationship we have them and they are our strongest
34 ally on protecting salmon on the Kusko and rebuilding
35 the population.

36
37 So a lot was mentioned by the
38 InterTribal Fish Commission yesterday and just to save
39 time I won't repeat all of that but I will just say
40 that the previous discussion on the Bering Sea is
41 something that was brought up with the Yukon as well.
42 And both Holly and I, we do our best to communicate the
43 issues and concerns up to Fish and Wildlife Service
44 leadership that is in the regional office and to
45 others. I think that was mentioned yesterday, or
46 questioned, yesterday, in regards to advocacy and
47 trying to advocate for salmon. We can always do better
48 but I will say that we've had briefings with
49 Congressional Delegations, we've had salmon roundtable
50

0234

1 discussions. We are trying to communicate our concern
2 as best we can.

3
4 So just that's really all I had for
5 fisheries.

6
7 And just the last update for the Refuge
8 is the Staffing changes that have occurred recently.
9 We have a new Staff person named Kira O'Neill (ph) who's
10 a Wildlife Refuge Specialist. We have another Staff
11 person I'm very proud to have onboard from the local
12 community, grew up in Kwethluk and has been a very star
13 employee for us so far and we're really excited to have
14 Emmitt Nicori on board who is right from the Kuskokwim
15 River and has a lot of knowledge about the local
16 culture and biology and wildlife. Emmitt Nicori is a
17 Refuge Information Technician. And I mentioned
18 yesterday we have two additional Refuge Information
19 Technicians we're trying to hire, probably one we'd
20 like to target on the Yukon, as I mentioned yesterday,
21 to be hired from maybe Emmonak or another village along
22 the Yukon. And then the other RIT might be focused on
23 the Kuskokwim. So if you have anyone that you know
24 that's interested in those positions, please, my email
25 is in the information packet again like I mentioned
26 yesterday and please have them contact us. We want to
27 have strong candidates who are from this local area to
28 fill those positions.

29
30 And, lastly, our fisheries biologist is
31 leaving. We hope to advertise that position, obviously
32 important for us to have a fisheries biologist who has
33 knowledge of the local salmon fishery to advise us but
34 our current biologist is leaving in a couple weeks and
35 we hope to advertise that very soon.

36
37 And that's the end of our report, thank
38 you.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Council member
41 questions for Yukon Delta Wildlife Refuge presentation.

42
43 MR. GERVAIS: Jack, this is Tim, I have
44 a few questions.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

47
48 MR. GERVAIS: On the fisheries side,
49 how far up river did the sockeye go, does anybody know
50

0235

1 where they're spawning?

2

3 MR. BLIHOVDE: Yes, through the Chair
4 this is Aaron and Boyd, we can comment.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

7

8 MR. MOSES: Tim, we have a pretty good
9 understanding on where the sockeye are spawning. We
10 have a majority of lake type -- or a river type,
11 sockeye, and we do have one weir way up on the
12 Telaquana Lake which is closer to Anchorage than it is
13 here where they get a really high number of sockeye
14 spawning in their lake. So yeah like the -- I believe
15 it was over 100,000 on the Telaquana Lake alone. So we
16 do have a -- we've been having higher and higher
17 numbers of sockeye coming in on the Kuskokwim. And
18 also they're spreading out and Kevin might know how
19 many they got up there but they saw some sockeye going
20 up past McGrath and that usually happens.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Other
23 questions, Tim.

24

25 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, do you know.....

26

27 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
28 Kevin.

29

30 MR. GERVAIS: Do you know if there's
31 any proposed king salmon fishery that's going to be
32 conducted out in Kuskokwim Bay, like around Quinhagak?

33

34 MR. BLIHOVDE: Through the Chair, this
35 is Boyd. The question was a commercial fishery for
36 kings; is that correct?

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

39

40 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, two years ago there
41 was quite a long king salmon drift fishery that was
42 opened up around Quinhagak and I was curious to know if
43 that was still in a projected management program?

44

45 MR. BLIHOVDE: Through the Chair, this
46 is Boyd. And those are State waters that we don't
47 manage out -- at least out in Kuskokwim Bay. We do have
48 the authority to manage in the rivers coming in from
49 there. So if there's anybody on from ADF&G that might

50

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1 be able to comment to that that'd be great, but I can't
2 comment on that.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do we have ADF&G
5 Staff for Kuskokwim on this call?

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don't hear anybody.
10 So other questions for YKD Refuge.

11

12 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
13 Kevin.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

16

17 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, Tim had asked
18 about sockeye salmon and if I could elaborate a little
19 bit of what Aaron was saying.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Sure.

22

23 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, a lot of the
24 sockeyes that we see here in the upper Kuskokwim go up
25 to Telaquana Lake that Aaron had referred to, that's up
26 the Stoney River past Lime Village and Lime Village has
27 a very big, good sockeye run there at the village that
28 they can utilize. Very few chinook and chum -- they do
29 get chum there, too, but sockeye is their main target
30 fish species. Some, it's rare, and it seems like it's
31 getting more, but it's rare that fish -- the sockeye
32 salmon go past the Stoney River, they do come up to
33 McGrath, I mean when I'm fishing chum salmon -- last
34 year I was not able to because there just wasn't
35 enough, there was very few, but when I am fishing for
36 chums I do catch a few. You know, if I caught two or
37 300 chum, I'll catch five sockeye and I caught a couple
38 that were edible but most of them, by the time they get
39 up here I call them jello fish, they're very not
40 edible. But they are coming up here.

41

42 But people who -- on harvest surveys
43 you'll see for sockeye in the Upper Kuskokwim, like
44 McGrath, you'll see that there is sockeye that they
45 have caught, a lot of that is caught because people
46 here in McGrath will travel down stream to the Stoney
47 River area where these fish are going up towards Lime,
48 or Georgetown or below -- well below McGrath, it's a
49 very long drive. If you know families down there that
50

0237

1 you could fish with, these are the people that go down
2 there, but very few people take that opportunity to do
3 that. So even though sockeye here in the Kuskokwim,
4 people in the Upper Kuskokwim, in the TCC region, at
5 least, they don't -- they cannot reliably rely on
6 sockeye to fill the loss of chinook and chum.

7

8 That's my point, thanks.

9

10 And if I could make more comments about
11 -- a comment about the presentation.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

14

15 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, thank you Aaron
16 and Boyd. Really appreciate you guys taking the time
17 to be here with the Western Interior RAC. You guys had
18 a lot of good comments. I'm involved working with you
19 guys on the fisheries issues. I do appreciate the
20 partnership immensely, Boyd had mentioned that. And
21 the Staff that you have around fisheries, and fisheries
22 issues, Aaron, Spencer, Chris Tulik, it's a very good
23 Staff, we have a very good working relationship with
24 your guys Staff there.

25

26 This past year it was challenging in a
27 lot of ways because of the lack of fish. Trying to
28 catch sockeye salmon when they are there in Bethel when
29 you have a conservation concern for chinook and chum,
30 it's very challenging. I think we should try to think
31 about other ways of other means, gear types instead of
32 driftnets and setnets for sockeye, like we've mentioned
33 before, dipnets do work. And, Aaron, I know you are
34 doing that successfully in Bethel, drifting with
35 driftnets to catch sockeye when there's, you know,
36 100,000 let's say in front of Bethel but we are
37 restricted with driftnets and setnets. So maybe this
38 summer we can promote the use of dipnets for sockeye
39 salmon more in the Bethel region so we can try to
40 conserve the chinooks and the chum.

41

42 Also I just want to mention that this
43 partnership that we have working with you all and since
44 Federal management has taken place. I think this is
45 the eighth year for Federal management on the river.
46 Because of conservation concerns for chinook salmon and
47 restrictions on harvest triggered Federal salmon
48 management under provisions of ANILCA, that is why we
49 have Federal management here on this river. And I do

50

0238

1 appreciate Boyd, and your Staff, you think of
2 management not just within your Refuge, you think of it
3 river-wide, especially in the area where I'm from,
4 where I live in McGrath, it's not in State waters, but
5 most management decisions, most harvest takes place
6 within Yukon Delta Refuge and it's very helpful for the
7 people up here in the Upper Kuskokwim above Aniak to
8 have this conservation mindset to try to rebuild and
9 try to have equitable harvest for this resource that is
10 very -- right now it's very hard to equitably allocate,
11 if you will -- or not allocate, but anyway everybody is
12 suffering. It's very low numbers, everybody's
13 suffering, but we are trying to get fish up in the
14 spawning grounds, we are trying to get equitable
15 harvest within all the communities and I appreciate you
16 guys taking that effort. I appreciate you guys taking
17 the effort also to work with the Fish Commission on a
18 joint management plan. The Fish Commission has been
19 working on this management plan for three or four years
20 now. Just last year Fish and Wildlife Service adopted
21 this management and this harvest strategy with us, the
22 Fish Commission, and that was a huge success. There's
23 projectives in this management plan to try to rebuild
24 the chinook stocks and now we've added in chum, like
25 Boyd had mentioned, to try to do what we can to try to
26 conserve and rebuild the chum salmon, and also try to
27 allow for some harvest, still, even though there isn't
28 enough chinook salmon and chum to go around for
29 everybody, trying to allow a little bit so people can
30 practice their traditional ways and culture and get a
31 little bit of a taste even though it's very challenging
32 for in-season managers sometimes when we're trying to
33 balance conservation with harvest opportunities.

34
35 And also another big success, in my
36 opinion, was the adoption of the assessment package.
37 It's a joint assessment package that the Fish
38 Commission, the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish
39 Commission and the Fish and Wildlife Service Yukon
40 Delta had drafted. It's an in-season data information.
41 Basically it gives the in-season managers information
42 real-time, as fast as we can get it to the managers to
43 make in-season management decisions and so this
44 assessment package, whether it looks at Bethel test
45 fish data, sonar data, community harvest data and also
46 brings in traditional knowledge. Brings in traditional
47 knowledge that is brought to the table by in-season
48 managers from the Fish Commission, in-season managers
49 that are from the river-wide, not within just the
50

0239

1 Refuge, these in-season managers also live in State
2 waters and they are at the table helping to make
3 decisions that are very challenging, openers and
4 closures. And, anyhow, this assessment package was
5 very successful and hopefully we can continue with
6 using that here in the next year.

7

8 There's a lot to be thankful for with
9 that partnership and it's just been really great to
10 have Boyd, you as the new Refuge manager, you know, the
11 Georgia Boy, I was questioning that -- my dad's a
12 Georgia Boy, too, but it worked out for us and you have
13 been very great for us, you, as the Refuge Manager, you
14 look out for the local people. You got people on your
15 Staff, your fish Staff are local people, which really
16 means a lot.

17

18 So anyhow I'll just leave it at that.
19 I do appreciate you, Boyd, and your Staff thank you for
20 all you do.

21

22 MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you, Kevin.
23 Thanks for what you do, appreciate it.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you for all
26 those comments, Kevin, those are very important and I'm
27 really happy you're on this Council from the Kuskokwim.
28 So any other questions.

29

30 MR. SIMON: Mr. Chair.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

33

34 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Jim
35 Simon for the record. I'm a consultant with TCC and
36 the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission. In
37 the absence of a response to Tim's question about the
38 commercial harvest of chinook in Kuskokwim Bay, in
39 looking up the November 4th preliminary Kuskokwim area
40 season summary from the State, announcement No. 4,
41 there were 2,468 chinook salmon harvested commercially
42 and sold from District 4 in 2021 and 114 chinook salmon
43 harvested commercially in District 5 of Kuskokwim Bay,
44 Goodnews Bay.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate those
47 numbers, Jim. That should not be happening.

48

49 MR. BLIHOVDE: Mr. Chairman, this is

50

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1 Boyd. Thank you, Jim Simon. I just was about to try
2 to give out those numbers as well. So Tim asked about
3 next season, I'm assuming the State would try to do the
4 same thing and this is kind of new to me and this is a
5 concern that there would be a commercial fishery right
6 outside the Kuskokwim River with the numbers so low so
7 I think it's something we definitely need to discuss
8 with the State.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for that
11 important question. Tim brought that up. That's a big
12 issue, that should not be happening, they should go to
13 a different type, you know, just like they are on the
14 Yukon and if there's a prosecuted commercial fishery it
15 should not be using drift gillnet that have mortalities
16 on stocks -- severe stocks of concerns.

17
18 Other Council questions for YKDelta.

19
20 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, Jack, I just have
21 one comment on that Kuskokwim Bay fishery. Yeah, when
22 we spoke with the ADF&G manager in -- let me get my
23 years right here, in 2020, when they had a fairly
24 substantial king harvest in that Quinhagak area, I
25 don't know the fishing districts unfortunately. The
26 ADF&G manager was fairly convinced that the stocks they
27 were fishing on were local to Kuskokwim Bay in a way
28 that they weren't fish that were heading towards the
29 Kuskokwim River. So that -- that's what I remember
30 from his comment, that he thought that when he was
31 fishing those outside districts he was not affecting
32 the Kuskokwim stocks. But I never saw any genetic --
33 the information if that was a correct assessment or
34 not.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for that
37 information, Tim. Other comments from.....

38
39 MR. SIMON: Mr. Chair.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

42
43 MR. SIMON: Thank you. For the record,
44 again, Jim Simon. Tim raises a very good point. I do
45 believe that there was a study done by the State
46 sometime in around 1983 or 1984 there were some local
47 people that worked on that project, which is the only
48 basis, as I understand, to presume that most of the
49 chinook salmon are returning to the Kanektok, the local
50

0241

1 rivers there in the Quinhagak District 4 and 5 area.
2 However, there's only that one data point from the
3 early 80s and it's unclear whether or not that
4 information is on the genetics of chinook salmon
5 harvested from the Kuskokwim Bay still bear truth to
6 what's happening there. So it's definitely an area
7 where more research is needed.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks for
12 that input Jim. Other Council member comments on the
13 Yukon Delta Wildlife Refuge Kuskokwim River salmon and
14 Refuge report.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Hearing no more
19 comments. All the work that Yukon Delta Wildlife
20 Refuge is doing and especially the tracking of the
21 caribou. It was actually Aaron Moses that informed us
22 of winter caribou harvest in March of 2019, that when
23 the numbers came out that fall of '19, and were bleak
24 for caribou, his report actually cued me up on where
25 was that harvest happening and when was it happening
26 and come to find out it was winter harvest that the
27 Department of Fish and Game didn't really realize and
28 so it drove the conservation forward. And that
29 information to this Council was integral on jump
30 starting a conservation effort for the Mulchatna
31 Caribou Herd. So I highly appreciate Yukon Delta's
32 input into this Council. For many years we had no idea
33 what was going on down there. But appreciate YKDelta's
34 participation at this meeting.

35

36 So I think we skipped over the special
37 action request from Charlie Wright for the Yukon Delta.
38 It's coming down on noon here. So have Council members
39 reviewed that special action request for the Yukon to
40 basically go to an .804 rural participation in any kind
41 of salmon harvest on the Yukon River. I know you've
42 looked at that Kevin. And so who would like to discuss
43 this special action request now or after.....

44

45 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
46 Kevin.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

49

50

0242

1 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, I don't think we
2 skipped over it, it is our next bullet item, so FSA22-
3 01 closure to -- and Pippa will speak to it. But I --
4 if you guys don't mind, if we could take a lunch break
5 and then we could take this up because I think the
6 discussion could be pretty lengthy.

7

8 MS. KENNER: Mr. Chair, this is Pippa.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Pippa, go ahead.

11

12 MS. KENNER: Yes, thank you. I just
13 wanted to let everybody know that the materials for
14 this presentation have been added to our web page at
15 the supplemental materials for this meeting, and also
16 at doi.gov/subsistence, click on fisheries, click on
17 fisheries special actions and find the fact sheet for
18 FSA22-01 near the top of the page. So that's
19 doi.gov/subsistence, fisheries, special actions, and
20 the fact sheet at the top of the page.

21

22 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you. So
25 Kevin wants to go to lunch, we'll go to break now, and
26 we'll come back on at 1:00 o'clock. Is that okay with
27 the Council.

28

29 MR. VENT: That's agreeable, this is
30 Darrell.

31

32 MR. SIMON: Okay.

33

34 MR. WHITWORTH: Yes.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So we're
37 going to go to break now and we'll hear you back on at
38 1:00 o'clock sharp. We've got a lot of agenda to go
39 here so we got to be back on the call sharp at 1:00
40 o'clock. So thanks so much, have a great lunch, okay,
41 bye.

42

43 (Off record)

44

45 (On record)

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Jack is back on
48 the call, we'll wait a couple more minutes here.

49

50

0243

1 (Pause)

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do we have any
4 Regional Council members on the call.

5

6 MR. GERVAIS: Hi, Jack, Tim's here.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Tim, good.

9

10 (Pause)

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any other Council
13 members come on the call. Are you here Katya.

14

15 MR. DEMOSKI: Arnold. Arnold's here.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Arnold. Thanks,
18 Arnold.

19

20 MS. WESSELS: I'm here, Mr. Chair.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is that you Katya?

23

24 MS. WESSELS: Have you heard me, Jack
25 -- have you heard me Mr. Chair, I'm on.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If you're too far
28 from your mic you break a little bit.

29

30 MS. WESSELS: Sorry, is it better right
31 now?

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's great.
34 Pollock.

35

36 MR. SIMON: Pollock is here.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, good. Kevin.

39

40 MR. WHITWORTH: Kevin's here.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, cool.
43 Darrell.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don, are you on
48 here?

49

50

0244

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we need a couple
4 more.

5

6 (Pause)

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you there
9 Darrell or Don.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We need one more.
14 Is Rebecca on here or Tommy?

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell messaged me
19 that Jenny's brother passed away.

20

21 (Pause)

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don or Darrell, are
24 you on here?

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, would you like
29 us to reach out to them.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, I just
32 messaged Darrell, I says we're on the call and he goes
33 okay but I don't know why he's not on here.

34

35 REPORTER: So Darrell was on, even
36 through the lunch break. Darrell, are you muted still?

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell, are you
39 muted still, I can't hear you if you're saying yes.

40

41 REPORTER: Oh, well, I thought he was
42 on.

43

44 (Pause)

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Don or Darrell,
47 are you on here?

48

49 (No comments)

50

0245

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can't hear you if
2 you are. Is that you Darrell -- I can see he's getting
3 my messages, don't know.

4
5 MS. WESSELS: Perhaps they are having
6 trouble getting in because one time I called back and
7 it wouldn't accept my participant passcode.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

10
11 MR. VENT: Yeah, this is Darrell, I
12 finally got on.

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

15
16 REPORTER: Okay, there's Darrell.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Who's.....

19
20 MR. VENT: This is Darrell, I finally
21 got on.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You're there
24 Darrell?

25
26 MR. VENT: Yes, I am.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, good. And,
29 Don, did you show up.

30
31 (No comments)

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Or Tommy or Rebecca.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we have quorum so
38 we're going to go forward with this agenda. The next
39 thing we're going to visit is this FSA22-01, which is
40 the Charlie Wright request for closure to non.....

41
42 (Teleconference interference -
43 participants not muted)

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Who's on there, it's
46 really echo. Did somebody say something.

47
48 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
49 Kevin.

50

0246

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I was getting
2 a big echo.

3
4 MR. WHITWORTH: Just, yeah, I have a
5 procedural question if you guys would be up to it.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah.

8
9 MR. WHITWORTH: After Pippa presents
10 the special action request, before we go into
11 questions, after Pippa's presentation, would you guys
12 be open for Charlie Wright to present his special
13 action request, he is on the line.....

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

16
17 MR. WHITWORTH:and willing to do
18 that.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you there
21 Charlie.

22
23 MR. WRIGHT: Yes, sir. Yes, sir, Mr.
24 Chair, I'm here.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, standby. So
27 we're going to have Pippa, are you there Pippa.

28
29 MS. KENNER: I'm here, Mr. Chair.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And what tab
32 are we under -- what was that under?

33
34 MS. KENNER: These materials were just
35 added to the web page as supplemental materials for
36 this meeting.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. I have.....

39
40 MS. KENNER: And it's also at.....

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have the special
43 action request, I didn't have time to hunt that down on
44 the website. So you're going to give us a
45 presentation, so go right ahead Pippa -- there are
46 several members that aren't going to.....

47
48 MS. KENNER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair
49 and members of the Council. For the record.....
50

0247

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You're too far --
2 you're too far from your mic Pippa, it might have went
3 to speaker.....

4
5 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Try it again.

8
9 MS. KENNER: My name is.....

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You were good to
12 start with.

13
14 MS. KENNER: Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You're still echo.

17
18 REPORTER: So Pippa, you're like coming
19 in very muffled. I don't know you were clear as a bell
20 and now you're really muffled so try again.

21
22 MS. KENNER: Am I muffled right now.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

25
26 REPORTER: Yeah.

27
28 MS. KENNER: Just a second, I'm going
29 to try one thing and/or I could try calling back in.
30 Just a minute please.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Or are you too far
33 from your mic.

34
35 MS. KENNER: Is this better.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's great.

38
39 REPORTER: Much better.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go right ahead.

42
43 MS. KENNER: Let me know if you lose
44 me.

45
46 REPORTER: Thanks, Pippa.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You're loud and
49 clear now, you're back to where you were, five by five,
50

0248

1 go ahead.

2

3

4 MS. KENNER: Excellent. Good
5 afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Council. For
6 the record, my name is Pippa Kenner and I'm an
7 Anthropologist with the Office of Subsistence
8 Management here in Anchorage. And I'm presenting
9 Fisheries Special Action Request FSA22-01. Again, I'll
10 repeat materials for this presentation have been added
11 to our website at the supplemental materials for this
12 meeting and also at doi.gov/subsistence, click on
13 fisheries, click on fisheries special actions and find
14 the fact sheet for FSA22-01 near the top of the page.
15 That's doi.gov/subsistence, fisheries, fisheries
16 special actions.

16

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This special action requests the
Federal Subsistence Board to close the Yukon River
drainage for the harvest of chinook and chum salmon
except by Federally-qualified subsistence users for the
upcoming 2022 season and to, further, reduce the pool
of eligible Federally-qualified subsistence users based
on an ANILCA Section .804 analysis. Today we are
asking your Council to make a recommendation to the
Board regarding this special action request.

OSM received this request last week.
I'll read to you the proponent's justification for his
request.

The proponent says he's asking the
Board to uphold the conservation priority, consumptive
uses provision under Title VIII of ANILCA by assuming
management of Yukon River drainage chinook, summer chum
salmon through the 2022 season. He continues:
Significant changes have occurred since the Board last
considered Yukon River drainage salmon special action
request in 2015. Yukon chinook and chum salmon
populations have suffered catastrophic declines in
abundance in recent years. In the 2021 season there
were no opportunities to harvest Yukon chinook and chum
salmon creating significant food security concerns
along the Yukon River tribes and residents. In the
proposal, and the proponent explains, that the current
Yukon River salmon management system wherein the State
manages the chinook and chum salmon fisheries with
passive consent, but no direct intervention by the
Federal in-season managers for over a decade is not
working and has repeatedly failed to uphold the

0249

1 provisions of ANILCA. Over the past decade this
2 pattern of passive and ineffective Federal oversight of
3 State management has allowed:

4
5 1. Other uses, including commercial
6 fishery to have priority over subsistence harvest,
7 including during years when our long-term average
8 customary harvest amounts of chinook salmon were not
9 achieved.

10
11 2. Escapement goals necessary for
12 conservation and rebuilding of our declined chinook
13 salmon runs have not been met in a number of years,
14 including the failure to meet escapement goals to
15 Canada in 2007, '08, '10, '11, '2019, 2020 and 2021.

16
17 3. Inequity of harvest wherein some
18 portions of the Yukon River drainage were open for
19 chinook salmon harvest while other portions were
20 arbitrarily closed to the harvest.

21
22 The proponent finishes by stating,
23 Federal management is necessary to ensure the healthy
24 conservation of chinook and chum salmon stocks as
25 required by ANILCA in order to support future
26 subsistence harvest. Without Federal management, when
27 a sustainable harvest of chinook and chum salmon is
28 available in the future, Federally-qualified users will
29 not be insured the priority and opportunity for
30 customary and traditional uses that is required by
31 Title VIII of ANILCA. Our customary and traditional
32 subsistence uses will be compromised by other
33 regulatory regimes that do not prioritize subsistence
34 uses.

35
36 So there we have the proponent's
37 justification for submitting his special action
38 request.

39
40 The next steps are to receive
41 recommendations from the four affected Councils, which
42 are the Western Interior, Eastern Interior, Yukon
43 Kuskokwim Delta and Seward Peninsula Councils. The
44 last of these Council meetings will end on March 9th.
45 OSM's also in the process of scheduling hearings to
46 hear from the public and for tribal consultation.
47 Public hearings will be announced in news releases and
48 information will be posted at OSM web page, Council
49 Coordinators will send these announcements to Council
50

0250

1 members. And for the last step, OSM is in the process
2 of scheduling a public meeting of the Board to act on
3 this special action request. This meeting is
4 anticipated to occur in late April. Again, Council
5 Coordinators will send this announcement to Council
6 members.

7

8 Holly Carroll, our Yukon Federal
9 Fisheries Manager is on the line to help me answer your
10 questions regarding this special action request.

11

12 Thank you for your time, Mr. Chair, and
13 members of the Council.

14

15 Again, this is an action item on your
16 Council's agenda. We are asking you to make a
17 recommendation to the Board to either approve, approve
18 with modification, reject or defer the special action
19 request until the next regulatory cycle. Again, this
20 special action request is to close the Yukon River
21 drainage to the harvest of chinook and chum salmon
22 except by Federally-qualified subsistence users during
23 the upcoming 2022 season. This means Federal
24 subsistence fishing schedules, openings, closures and
25 fishing methods would be determined by the Federal
26 fisheries manager and during this closure the
27 commercial fishery would not open. Additionally, the
28 special action request asks the Board to further reduce
29 the pool of eligible Federally-qualified subsistence
30 users based on an ANILCA Section .804 analysis.

31

32 Thank you, Mr. Chair, that's the end of
33 my presentation.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pippa.
36 Questions from the Council regarding that with either
37 Pippa or Holly Carroll.

38

39 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
40 Kevin.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, go ahead.

43

44 MR. WHITWORTH: Just anticipating lots
45 of questions here, could we have Charlie Wright speak
46 on behalf of this special action request?

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, he could go
49 first, that's a good idea, thank you. So, Charlie, can
50

0251

1 also lay -- answer questions, you can make a statement
2 if you like, whatever you want to do, go ahead.

3

4 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I'd
5 like to make a few statements. Thank you, Mr. Chair
6 and respected Council members.

7

8 This Yukon River salmon Special Action
9 Request FSA22-01 you have in your packets is very
10 simple. If our Yukon River salmon situation fits under
11 the provisions of ANILCA, this special action request
12 simply asks the Federal Subsistence Board to do their
13 jobs by limiting harvest to Federally-qualified users.
14 You, as a Board, has some proposed regulations in your
15 packet to be discussed that asks for the closing of
16 certain units of Federal public lands to caribou and
17 moose hunting by non-Federally-qualified users. You
18 also have the statement in your draft annual report.
19 The Council further recommends that all provisions of
20 ANILCA be upheld by the Federal Subsistence Board. At
21 all times, including those provisions require that
22 harvest be limited to Federally-qualified subsistence
23 users when a resource in Federal waters declines to the
24 point harvest must be restricted to meet subsistence
25 needs in the region.

26

27 The SAR is simply asking for something
28 -- asking for the same thing that all provisions of
29 ANILCA be upheld by the Federal Subsistence Board at
30 all times.

31

32 We are committed to protecting our
33 subsistence rights. ANILCA, our Federal law that makes
34 conservation and subsistence the highest priority just
35 can't be turned on and off at will. The whole aim of
36 ANILCA is to provide a subsistence priority during
37 times of restricted for rural communities who have no
38 reasonable access to other resources.

39

40 Before lunch, and for about a little
41 bit more, we talked about bycatch -- or you guys did,
42 and you want action from the Western Arctic Herd
43 Working Group Board also, to take action on the
44 bycatch. That's simply all this is is to take action
45 for the people along the Yukon. The people on the
46 Yukon have been restricted, conserving for a long time
47 now and our culture, our salmon culture along the river
48 is going away. It's physical, mental and spiritual
49 along the river to have that food and it's food

50

0252

1 security in their freezers for all winter.

2

3

4 The key question is, if our harvest had
5 been restricted for many years, why hasn't the Federal
6 Subsistence Board been managing our salmon, limiting
7 harvest of Federally-qualified users from years ago.
8 Katie John fought hard to make sure the subsistence
9 protections of ANILCA apply to fisheries in Federal
10 waters. At this time because of failures by the
11 Federal Subsistence Board, Katie John subsistence
12 protections are dead on the Yukon River. It says right
13 in the special fact sheet that the Board just put out,
14 there are 60 communities that has been -- had severe
15 restrictions, moderate to severe restrictions and have
16 impacted subsistence uses throughout the Yukon River
17 drainage. If that doesn't say we need to take some
18 action, what is it going to take. The people along the
19 river need to eat, there's stores that don't have one
20 thing on the shelf. People have been restricted.

20

21 There has been no assumption of Federal
22 management for Yukon River salmon since 2009. Clearly
23 the current arrangement is totally inadequate and has
24 failed subsistence dependent communities. This SAR
25 asks for the Federal Subsistence Board to assume
26 management at the beginning of the 2022 season. This
27 is a very different approach than current practices.

28

29 The severe declines require that the
30 Federal Subsistence Board and Federal managers take the
31 lead in management to go forward for the season.

32

33 I thank you for your time, Mr. Chair,
34 that's probably all I have right now.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
37 all those comments Charlie. Council members got any
38 questions for Charlie or discussion for Charlie, the
39 proponent.

40

41 MR. VENT: This is Darrell.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

44

45 MR. VENT: Yeah, just discussion. I
46 know that we are really being truly affected by this
47 loss of salmon, I'm noticing it up in the Koyukuk River
48 also. And, you know, it's becoming a problem for
49 everyone, whether it's predation, whether it's hatchery

50

0253

1 fish, whether it's the climate, there's a lot of things
2 that are really hurting our people there. And people
3 are starting to see, you know, what we're missing.
4 Because, you know, it's a staple that's really
5 dependent on and once, you know, we lose one staple
6 we're running out of other options. Just hopefully the
7 management, if we have to do closures that'd be great
8 because the way the current management is working right
9 now we're not fixing any problems, we're not adequate
10 enough.

11

12 Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Darrell.

15 Any other questions or comments for Charlie.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You were real clear,
20 Charlie. I just wanted to make sure to give the
21 Council a chance to talk to you.

22

23 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
24 Kevin.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

27

28 MR. WHITWORTH: Just a simple question
29 for Charlie. Pippa had mentioned that this special
30 action request was just received last week, Charlie,
31 when did you send this special action request in to the
32 OSM office, I'm just curious because it had been
33 circulating in public for a little while now, but when
34 did you send it in Charlie?

35

36 MR. WRIGHT: I don't have that -- I've
37 been so busy I don't have that exact date but it's been
38 a couple weeks now.

39

40 MR. WHITWORTH: Okay, good enough,
41 thank you.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right. Any
44 other questions, Council questions for Pippa and Holly
45 regarding this special action request.

46

47 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
48 Kevin.

49

50

0254

1 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

4

5 MR. WHITWORTH: Go ahead, whoever was
6 that first.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, who was it.

9

10 REPORTER: That was Don.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

13

14 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, hey, I had
15 a question -- I mean not so much a question for
16 Charlie, I appreciate what you're trying to do. But I
17 believe that's been in a thorn in our sides for years.
18 I don't really know how we can, as a body, help you out
19 because if you look back in the history -- I don't know
20 what it says in there, the MOU between the Federal
21 government and the state of Alaska concerning that but,
22 you know, I've mentioned this numerous times, whether
23 it was hunting and fishing, seminars and stuff, that
24 the Federal waters -- or the Federal government is
25 going to mirror what the State and the State is -- has
26 got to say on this. So, you know, I wish you luck. I
27 wish there was something that we could do, you know,
28 this special action thing, but I believe I know on the
29 Yukon -- for instance right across from Ruby here all
30 the way up to the Boneyard below Tanana is Federal
31 waters but they are going to mirror what the State says
32 and if somebody says differently, hey, I would like to
33 see an argument for that. But I just wanted to mention
34 that.

35

36 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Don. Other
39 comments.

40

41 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
42 Kevin.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

45

46 MR. WHITWORTH: I have a question for
47 Pippa. So this special action -- 2022 special action
48 that we have in front of us here, it is -- there was a
49 special action that was submitted in 2015, I think four

50

0255

1 or five different tribes submitted special actions in
2 2015, I just want to ask Pippa, those 2015 special
3 actions, were they similar to this special action that
4 is before us now? And I have a followup question too,
5 thanks.

6
7 MS. KENNER: This is Pippa, through the
8 Chair. Yes, they were similar. They asked for the
9 closure to non-Federally-qualified users to include all
10 salmon.

11
12 MR. WHITWORTH: So my followup
13 question, Mr. Chair, if you don't mind, to Pippa, OSM
14 had did a Staff analysis at that time for 2015 special
15 action request and the Staff analysis, you know, it's
16 public information, it's out there, and I was just
17 wondering, could you just tell us what the
18 recommendation from OSM was at that point.

19
20 MS. KENNER: Yeah, thanks for the
21 question, through the Chair. I'm not 100 percent sure.
22 Can I get back to you in about two minutes, I just want
23 to make sure I have this correctly.

24
25 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
26 Kevin.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

29
30 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, that's no
31 problem, Pippa. I reviewed that emergency special
32 action from 2015 and the Staff analysis, and OSM
33 supported the special action request in 2015. The
34 biggest difference that I found on that 2015 special
35 action request that was put forward by those different
36 tribes up and down the river was in 2015 there was very
37 -- very few chinook salmon. Chum salmon at that time
38 were doing better. Now with this new special action
39 request, as far as the biology is concerned, the
40 special action request today we have chinook salmon
41 populations worst, if not the same as 2015 and also we
42 have chum salmon crashes for the past two years on the
43 Yukon River that the 2015 SAR does not include because
44 chum salmon was doing just fine then. This 2022
45 special action request, with two crashes in chum salmon
46 the past two years and we have also a chinook salmon
47 crash, so biology speaking that was the biggest
48 difference that I found so I would think if OSM does an
49 analysis, at least the biology would be telling us that
50

0256

1 the runs are worse and that we -- the special action
2 request would -- I mean the Staff analysis would
3 support this 2022 special action request.
4

5 Also now the 2022 -- 2021 we had zero
6 harvest opportunities and in 2015 we had more harvest
7 opportunities, now we're looking at zero harvest
8 opportunities for people, and 2022 is looking, from
9 what I've heard from different managers it looks like
10 next, 2022 management, is going to be for zero harvest
11 opportunities, which ANILCA -- anyway I'm going to stop
12 there. I appreciate it.
13

14 I do have other followup questions but
15 can come later.
16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So I have a
18 question for Charlie. Charlie, how come you put
19 chinook and chum salmon but you didn't include coho
20 salmon which is also critical resource also, did you
21 have a reason for that?
22

23 MR. WRIGHT: No, the reason, it just
24 slipped by me. (Indiscernible - cutting out) near
25 Rampart and just slipped my mind, but all salmon
26 species should be included in my mind.
27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.
29

30 MR. WRIGHT: And I wish I had put it
31 that way. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So if this proposal
34 is adopted by the Council it should be modified to
35 chinook, summer chum, all chum and coho salmon, except
36 by Federally-qualified subsistence users on Line 5 of
37 the first paragraph. So is that agreeable to you,
38 Charlie?
39

40 MR. WRIGHT: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr.
41 Chair.
42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And any other
44 Council members have questions or comments for Charlie
45 or Staff. Kevin, you have more questions.
46

47 MR. WHITWORTH: I don't have any other
48 questions for Charlie or Staff at this time. But I
49 think there are other people, if you guys would like, I
50

0257

1 think there are other people looking to testify.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh.

4

5 MR. WHITWORTH: I'm not sure if that's
6 a good time to do it now.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So is there other
9 people on the phone that would like to testify
10 regarding this special action fisheries request for a
11 closure to non-subsistence users on the Yukon River,
12 FSA22-01.

13

14 MR. GERVAIS: Jack, this is Tim, I had
15 a clarification. What -- so is it the entire river, or
16 just the Federal waters on the Yukon?

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This would be the
19 Federal waters, which would be under Federal
20 management, which is associated to Federal -- so like
21 from just where the Novi, the Innoko Refuge starts,
22 that becomes Federal waters, you know, from the Kaiyuh
23 down, that's Federal, it's patchy. Yukon Flats goes
24 into pretty much -- Yukon Flats lots of Federal water
25 there. And the Lower Yukon is -- Yukon Delta all the
26 way up is Federal water.

27

28 MR. VENT: Jack, this is Darrell.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

31

32 MR. VENT: Yeah, is there also closures
33 going on down in the Lower Yukon also or is just
34 Charlie's proposal.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, there's been
37 Federal regulation of the Yukon Delta Wildlife Refuge
38 and there's hardly any Federal water above that on the
39 Kuskokwim River but not on the Yukon so this -- there
40 was these special action requests back in '15 but we
41 had a lot of testimony from family members and people
42 that said they wanted to have their family members come
43 from wherever to help them fish. But that was before
44 it became this critical. And so at this point,
45 juncture, this is -- we're going to be sort of
46 revisiting the issue again here.

47

48 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
49 Kevin.

50

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1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

2
3 MR. WHITWORTH: I can help with Tim's
4 question about Federal waters on the Yukon. So about
5 50 percent, 50/50 State and Federal. What we've seen
6 here on the Kuskokwim, we've had Federal management for
7 eight years now, I think we're going on eight years, at
8 least seven, and a lot of the Federal management
9 decisions that are made on this river are made within
10 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, which is the
11 lower part of the river. It's the first place that the
12 fish enter the river so the people who are in that
13 region have the first take, normally, so, you know,
14 it's the same thing on Yukon. You have Yukon Delta
15 National Wildlife Refuge and there's been cases where
16 there's been commercial openers or subsistence openers
17 within the Delta Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
18 where people in the middle river and the upper river
19 haven't had a chance yet. So U.S. Federal management,
20 like I was mentioning after Boyd had spoken, with
21 Federal management in place in Yukon Delta Refuge on
22 the Kuskokwim, that management framework has big
23 advantages for people -- for the entire river. It's
24 made for more equitable harvest. It's made for robust
25 rebuilding framework and escapement goals and the
26 partnership that has gone in place with the Refuge
27 manager and the delegated authority that he has for
28 Federal management of the fishery, there's a lot of
29 advantages that -- I wasn't going to bring up -- you
30 had brought up how much land was Federal management --
31 or Federally-managed.

32
33 And also I wanted to make a comment
34 about something that we see here on the Kuskokwim as
35 well and that's -- the people from the Yukon Delta
36 Refuge within Federal waters, there's a lot of people
37 who have moved into Anchorage, they've moved out and
38 they still want to fish, and they still can. They
39 still can go to Akiak or Kwethluk, or Bethel or
40 wherever they're from within the Delta, within the
41 Refuge, they can still fish. I don't know the
42 particulars, they cannot pull a net or a fish out of
43 the net, but once that fish is in the boat, they can,
44 those people who come in from Anchorage, or in the
45 Yukon's case, if people want to participate in -- from
46 Fairbanks, they can, they can help. They can cut, they
47 can dry, they can collect firewood for fish camp, they
48 can be part of the culture and tradition, they're not
49 excluded entirely from participating in this fishery,
50

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1 it's just they cannot be -- I can't remember the exact
2 wording, but actively catching the fish.

3

4 I just want to make that clarification.
5 So I think it's been a long time coming for the
6 Kuskokwim, and people at first did not want to have
7 Federal management, but people in our, along the river,
8 every year, more and more people are seeing the
9 benefits of what Federal management is doing on the
10 Kuskokwim and it can be the same way on the Yukon, and
11 I really do feel like there's a lot of similarities on
12 the Yukon and the Kuskokwim and it's not complex.
13 ANILCA is very straightforward on what it says. ANILCA
14 is the same on the Kuskokwim as it is on the Yukon.
15 People will try to make it sound complex on the Yukon
16 because it's -- there's land jurisdiction, it's
17 checkerboarded, there's more people, there's people
18 from Fairbanks and stuff like that, but ANILCA's real
19 clear on exactly what its intent is.

20

21 So I'll stop there, thanks.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And my
24 question regarding -- that wasn't the interpretation
25 previously in 2015, they couldn't participate at all,
26 they couldn't be in the boat. In fact one of our
27 Council members took a ticket because of that when
28 there was a limited subsistence priority.

29

30 So can the participant at that point
31 take the resource home, I mean they help dry, do all
32 the stuff, can they utilize the resource if they
33 participate but don't touch the fish while harvesting.
34 That's kind of my question.

35

36 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
37 Kevin. And the answer is yes, but I don't want to --
38 you know, OSM, Pippa, she probably knows the regulation
39 better than I do but, yeah, folks from Anchorage or
40 Fairbanks, they can take these resources home, it's
41 just the actual take of the fish, resource, that they
42 can't participate in. I don't even think they can drive
43 the boat, they can be in the boat as a passenger, watch
44 the fish get caught and then they could participate
45 from there forward, they can participate. So that's
46 very valuable when it comes to culture and tradition,
47 older people need help, if they have a younger person
48 in Anchorage that want to come out and help them, they
49 can. But the Federally-qualified subsistence user does
50

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1 have to catch the fish.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I was just
4 clarifying what you were saying there. So any other
5 comments or questions from Council members. Arnold.

6

7 MR. SIMON: Jack, this is Pollock.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Pollock, go
10 right ahead.

11

12 MR. SIMON: I would like to make one
13 little comment.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go right ahead.

16

17 MR. SIMON: Yeah, we never had salmon
18 running for few years and it's getting worse. First it
19 was king salmon crash and we were restricted to fish
20 and then a couple years ago there was chum salmon
21 decline and now last year there was no fishing except
22 for small fish nets and the people around here are
23 getting concerned about no fish. People hardly even go
24 to fish camp around here anymore. Like when king
25 salmon season was closed they -- king salmon is the
26 main fish diet for people up and down the river and you
27 can't fish for king salmon so they don't fish at all.
28 So it's kind of hard time with no fish. We're
29 depending kind of heavily on the whitefish and sheefish
30 and I'm getting kind of worried that we don't want to
31 deplete those sheefish and whitefish also -- whitefish
32 is pretty good fish too but not as good as king salmon.

33

34 I'd like to support this kind of
35 action. Maybe the king salmon will come back and we'll
36 get fish during the winter, (Indiscernible) sent some
37 fish out but it doesn't taste as good as the ones we
38 pull from the river. So this kind of action, I'd like
39 to support it.

40

41 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pollock for
44 those comments. Any other Council members comments.

45

46 MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah, this is Arnold.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Arnold.

49

50

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1 MR. DEMOSKI: I just have a question.
2 So -- yeah, I just have a question so my brother and my
3 nephews, they come down to help whenever we're allowed
4 fishing, they always come down and help us out and my
5 oldest nephew he's really learning all the cultural --
6 all our cultural and traditional ways, he's really
7 going out and fishing with us, helping around the
8 smokehouse. They come down every year -- or whenever
9 we have openings, they come down to help, I was
10 wondering how -- would this affect them from coming
11 down and helping or no?

12
13 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
14 Kevin.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead and redo
17 that Kevin. Go ahead.

18
19 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, Mary Peltola is
20 on the line and she just text me and she participates
21 in this fishery as a Federally-qualified subsistence
22 users, but can she speak on this topic, she actually
23 lives it down there more than I do. So is that okay?

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Mary, go
26 ahead.

27
28 MS. PELTOLA: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.
29 Thanks, Kevin. Yeah, so I live in Bethel on the Lower
30 Yukon and I've got a couple kids still in high school
31 here in Bethel. And some of you might know my husband,
32 Gene Peltola, Jr., he has a job in Anchorage that
33 requires him to live in Anchorage. But his dad and I,
34 since Buzzy -- since Gene went to Anchorage, Buzzy's
35 dad and I are fishing partners. The kids that I -- we
36 have seven kids, five of them are grown now, they're in
37 college and working and they have summer jobs and the
38 younger kids aren't really big enough to use a chainsaw
39 and some of the bigger jobs at fish camp so we really
40 rely on Buzzy -- on Gene, Jr., to come home and help
41 with the enterprise of fishing. And he has a
42 background in law enforcement and he is really black
43 and white on, you know, laws, and the way that he
44 interpreted the law is you cannot -- if you are not a
45 Federally-qualified user you cannot be an active part
46 of the take. I think that's the way it's written. An
47 active participant in the take of the fish. So he
48 cannot drive the boat to the fishing place, he can't
49 set the net or pull the net and he can't, you know,
50

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1 even take the fish out of the net. But he can do
2 everything else. He helps, you know, with gas money,
3 he does all the boat and trailer stuff, he keeps all
4 the outboards going, and all the maintenance on the
5 boats, he makes sure the fish camp maintenance is all,
6 you know, like the smokehouse roof is on, he gets all
7 the smoke wood and he helps cut fish and he's a part of
8 everything except setting the net, pulling the net,
9 driving the boat or picking the fish out of the net.

10

11 I'm wondering how the law would be
12 interpreted when it comes to fishwheels. Because I
13 know like Charlie Wright operates a fishwheel, Ben
14 Stevens and some other people, I think that you -- you
15 know, I asked Gene about this, and he said he thinks
16 that fishermen, even if they're non-qualified users,
17 could help set up the fishwheel but maybe not pull them
18 out of the well. But once that fish is at camp -- and
19 the way that we share our take is we divide it between
20 three households so Gene gets a third of the finished
21 product.

22

23 So that's how we've done it and, you
24 know, there's still -- you know, except for not being
25 able to pull the fish in and, you know, pick the net,
26 Arnold's brother and nephew would be able to do
27 everything else. That's the way we interpret it and
28 maybe Pippa has a different opinion, but that's our
29 experience.

30

31 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks, Mary.
34 So we don't want to get into a long.....

35

36 MR. DEMOSKI: Thank you, Mary.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

39

40 MR. DEMOSKI: I just wanted to say,
41 thank you, Mary for that response. This is Arnold,
42 thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Arnold. We
45 don't want to get into a lot of public comment because
46 this is going to go through a public comment period but
47 that was important information for deliberation so
48 appreciate that perspective Mary.

49

50

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1 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
2 Kevin.

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

5
6 MR. WHITWORTH: I don't get not having
7 public input or comments, where is that on our -- when
8 is that coming up?

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're not
11 deliberating -- we could but we might be here all
12 afternoon, but the reality is this is going to come --
13 it's going to have a special public hearing process and
14 there's going to be a lot of public comments on this
15 at, how many meetings, Pippa, two, three or several?

16
17 MS. KENNER: Mr. Chair, this is Pippa
18 for the record. Well, I can tell you right now
19 there'll be at least one, there might be more.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So this is --
22 at this deliberation the Council's going to make a
23 motion to adopt, vote it up or down and that's -- I
24 intend to vote for the FSA22-01, it's a valid concern
25 and the input that we've had, it won't really affect
26 family participation so I -- I'm in favor of the
27 proposal.

28
29 (Teleconference interference -
30 participants not muted)

31
32 MR. VENT: Jack, this is.....

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If the Council wants
35 to continue to deliberate the proposal we.....

36
37 MR. VENT: Jack, this is -- okay.....

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Who do we got.....

40
41 MR. VENT: This is Darrell, I vote that
42 we vote for the proposal.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We need a motion.

45
46 MR. VENT: Yes, I make a motion for the
47 proposal, that way we can get on with this and then
48 when it comes to deliberation we can go into more
49 discussion.

50

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1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. So Darrell's
2 got a motion to support proposal FSA22-01, do we have a
3 second.

4
5 MR. WHITWORTH: Second.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Kevin.
8 Further discussion on the proposal.

9
10 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
11 Kevin.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

14
15 MR. WHITWORTH: I'm getting the feeling
16 that Council members want to move on but there are a
17 couple people online that would like to say just a few
18 words. People from different parts of the river so I
19 think it's important that we hear the public, if that
20 is okay with the Council.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I thought we --
23 well, okay, brief comment. So who's on this call.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is there anybody on
28 the call who wants to comment on Proposal FSA.....

29
30 MR. PAUL: Yes, can you hear me, Mr.
31 Chair.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

34
35 MR. PAUL: Yes, my name is Eugene Paul,
36 I'm from the village of Holy Cross.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

39
40 MR. PAUL: So I'm the one who submitted
41 the first one back in 2015 for this special action
42 request. It's in the ANILCA, Section VIII, asking the
43 Federal management to recognize us Federal subsistence
44 users as the first people that rely on this -- all the
45 stocks of salmon so we, as the community of Holy Cross,
46 I could say maybe 20 miles away, closer to Federal
47 waters below us. And, you know, as a food gatherer and
48 a father of five children, I'm the provider of my
49 family and, you know, in the ANILCA -- when the analyst
50

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1 -- it says in there that we are number 1 as subsistence
2 users so that was my interpretation of, you know,
3 asking the Federal Board to enact this special request.
4

5 So I know it's kind of difficult, as we
6 go forward, because of the salmon -- you know when I
7 first introduced this as the tribal chief of my
8 village, which I am still the chief of my village and
9 that is what we, as the village, intended to ask the
10 Board to help us to conserve what we have and as
11 subsistence users be a priority of this.
12

13 So, thank you, Mr. Chair and the Board.
14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
16 those comments, Eugene. I think I -- I know I met you
17 down there when we had a meeting in Holy Cross several
18 years ago.
19

20 REPORTER: Yep.
21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is there somebody
23 else on the call that wants to comment on FSA22-01,
24 unmute your phone.
25

26 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
27 Kevin.
28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.
30

31 MR. WHITWORTH: I'm not hearing any
32 other testifiers, I'll call for question.
33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called on
35 the motion FSA22-01 special action request to close to
36 non-subsistence users to utilizing salmon including
37 chinook, summer and fall chum and coho on the Yukon
38 River using .804 ANILCA priority, those in favor of the
39 motion signify by saying aye.
40

41 IN UNISON: Aye.
42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.
44

45 (No opposing votes)
46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Motion carries
48 unanimous. So thanks so much Charlie and Pippa and
49 Staff for assisting us with this request. We're going
50

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1 into Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko National Wildlife Refuge
2 report. And are you there Bob and Jeremy.

3

4 MR. HAVENER: Hey, Jack, this is
5 Jeremy.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Jeremy, all
8 right, go ahead.

9

10 MR. HAVENER: Yes, good afternoon
11 everyone, Mr. Chair and Council members. Can everybody
12 hear me okay.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can hear you
15 great, go right ahead.

16

17 MR. HAVENER: Excellent. For the
18 record, my name is Jeremy Havener, I'm the Refuge
19 Subsistence Coordinator for Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko
20 National Wildlife Refuges out of Galena. And I just
21 wanted to start off with our update real quick. I want
22 it to be known it that it was noted by me with the one
23 applicant for the WIRAC and I just wanted to let the
24 Council members know that I'll talk with our RIT and
25 we'll try to help spread that message as much as we can
26 here before the February 28th deadline and hopefully
27 help get some people to put in applications to
28 represent subsistence users in this area.

29

30 Next.....

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can I stop you there
33 for a second.

34

35 MR. HAVENER: Yeah.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go down there to
38 Holy Cross and give Eugene Paul one of those
39 applications. He's a very active person and I'd
40 appreciate he got one of those applications.

41

42 MR. HAVENER: I have that noted, Jack,
43 thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go right ahead.

46

47 MR. HAVENER: And next I wanted to take
48 a second here just to apologize, we've been trying to
49 get a Refuge update in the packet for the last couple

50

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1 years here in this winter meeting and just with work
2 load and some Covid things with our Staff I wasn't able
3 to get our program to give me all the information I
4 needed to put in a report, so I apologize for that. I
5 will say once we finished our moose survey report we
6 did send those out to all the tribal councils and to
7 some members of the Regional Advisory Council so they
8 have that information. Again, just want to apologize
9 there.

10

11 But moving into my report, first thing
12 I want to start off with is the Staff updates for our
13 Refuge. First one is Bob Rebarchik is our Refuge
14 Manager and he just announced that he's going to be
15 retiring here and I think it's going to be in June and
16 so we're going to have some changes there. We do have
17 a Deputy that's been here for a couple years now, David
18 Zubrisky, and I'm guessing he'll probably be acting in
19 the meantime while we are trying to refill that
20 position so that's the first Staff update.

21

22 The second one is we have hired a new
23 Wildlife Resource Specialist, or a WRS, and that person
24 is Lucas Ratch (ph) and he's going to be coming up here
25 from Minnesota and, you know, I'm not sure when his
26 arrival date is to Galena but I'm guessing he's going
27 to be here in the next couple months. So we're excited
28 to add him on to our Staff.

29

30 And another one is the Refuge Law
31 Enforcement Officer. We've picked up a law enforcement
32 officer, he's going to be stationed out of Fairbanks
33 but he is going to be coming out and patrolling on the
34 Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko Refuges and his name is Jared
35 Long. And actually he just came out this last moose
36 season and spent some time at our moose hunter
37 checkstation and kind of got to meet folks there and
38 see how we operate that. So we're kind of in the
39 process of him getting to know the area and hopefully
40 people get a chance to meet him and kind of know what
41 he's up to.

42

43 So then last on the Staff updates is
44 our RIT position, or Refuge Information Technician.
45 Currently we're trying to hire that position, it's been
46 vacant for, I want to say three years now and it's for
47 the Koyukuk and Nowitna Refuges. And this one is kind
48 of a big one, this position, it's a liaison position
49 and, you know, it's working with subsistence users,
50

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1 tribal councils and agency Staff and kind of sharing
2 and gathering information. We value these positions
3 highly. And taking a step back, we did try to hire it
4 last summer and did not get as many applicants as we
5 wanted to see and so our goal right now is to advertise
6 this position as best as we can and, you know, I wanted
7 to bring to the Council in hopes that, you know, we can
8 get this word out and try to get a really good
9 applicant that would represent the people of this area
10 really well. So I will give our Refuge Office phone
11 number for folks in case you know of somebody that
12 might be interested and they can give us a call and try
13 to get that word out. And our office phone number is
14 (907) 656-1231.

15
16 Next on my list is we did complete our
17 moose surveys, they're annual moose surveys that we do
18 every November and, again, like I mentioned earlier we
19 did send the report out to all the villages that are
20 either adjacent or within the Refuges we manage and to
21 some of the Regional Advisory Council members. You
22 know with that being said we encourage people to get a
23 hold of tribal offices but also give us a call if you
24 have any questions on that moose data. And in a
25 nutshell what we're kind of seeing on the areas that
26 we're flying surveys -- and taking a step back, we fly
27 surveys every year on the Nowitna, the Koyukuk, the
28 northern unit of the Innoko and the Innoko and what
29 we're seeing on the Nowitna and on the northern portion
30 of the Koyukuk Refuge is a little bit concerning.
31 We've seen declines in moose numbers, you know, for the
32 last three or four years now. And so we're starting to
33 get a little bit concerned and we're keeping an eye on
34 that. When you move further south down around Galena,
35 for instance, the mouth of the Koyukuk River, Pilot
36 Mountain Slough, those moose numbers are doing pretty
37 good and actually growing so we're pretty happy with
38 what's going on there. But, again, all that detailed
39 information is in our report. If anybody wants me to
40 send that to them I'd be happy to, you can give me an
41 email or give me a phone number and I can call you and
42 we can talk about it.

43
44 Subsistence. So the first thing on my
45 list is the moose hunt decisions that we make. Our
46 Refuge Manager has delegation of authority to hold
47 moose hunts on Federal land in Game Management Units
48 21D, 21B and 24D. And this year we -- you know, right
49 now we're in the process of tribal consultation,
50

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1 talking with, you know, members of the Regional
2 Advisory Council, also the State of Alaska and right
3 now with what we're seeing, especially on the northern
4 part of the Koyukuk and over on the Nowitna we are
5 wanting to remain conservative and we are, you know,
6 kind of leaning towards not having any additional moose
7 hunts at this time based on the biological status that
8 we're seeing. And, you know, one thing I did forget to
9 mention is we also fly snow marker surveys once a month
10 and, you know, especially up in that northeast corner
11 of the Koyukuk Refuge. I think one of our markers is
12 at 48 inches so we're kind of keeping an eye on that
13 snow too in hopes that we don't get too severe of a
14 winter. But the 21D announcement, we are also not
15 recommending a Federal hunt and the reason on that one,
16 like I said earlier we've got what we feel is a good
17 amount of moose in that area is because the State of
18 Alaska is going to be announcing a March 1 through 15
19 winter registration moose hunt. So because they're
20 holding that we're not going to have the Federal hunts
21 and hope that that will be enough opportunity for folks
22 in this area to get out and get some additional protein
23 to put in the freezer for the winter.

24
25 Aside from that Nowitna checkstation,
26 we did hold it in September this last year. It was a
27 good turnout, you know, two years ago we didn't get to
28 hold it because Covid, but this last year we made some
29 adjustments and we were able to safely hold that
30 checkstation and the numbers we had from this last year
31 were 95 hunters checked in and 29 moose were harvested.
32 And following up the State season there on the
33 checkstation, we have a Federal season that goes until
34 October 1st for residents of Galena, Ruby and Tanana
35 and issued out 15 permits for that hunt and four moose
36 were harvested and all those moose were taken by
37 residents of Tanana. So it was a good hunting season.

38
39 And then down in GMU21E is the other
40 winter hunt that's taking place. And, you know, that
41 Federal hunt has been on the books since, I want to say
42 since 2010, but this is going to be the second
43 regulatory year where there's been a matching State
44 registration hunt. It takes place the exact same time
45 in Game Management Unit 21E. And I'm anticipating
46 similar results as last year but we didn't get any
47 requests for Federal permits last year and we were
48 recommending people to get that State registration
49 permit for various reasons. But that hunt's taking
50

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1 place right now and it'll go to March 15th.

2

3 But aside from that, that's my
4 presentation and I'll open it for questions or
5 comments.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Do Council
8 members have questions for Jeremy on
9 Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko Refuge report.

10

11 MR. VENT: Yeah, this is Darrell.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

14

15 MR. VENT: Yeah, good report, Jeremy.
16 I'm just kind of wondering about when you guys are
17 doing your flying over, are you seeing more predation
18 or more tracks or anything that might be concerning to
19 us up here around the Dalbi River area and also up
20 around the Huslia River area. I know you do around the
21 Treat Island area. I'm just wondering about these two
22 areas, you know.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 MR. HAVENER: Through the Chair, Mr.
27 Vent. Yeah, I wish I could give you some more
28 information on what our pilots and observers are seeing
29 but I'm not the one out flying the surveys. They
30 haven't noted anything to me kind of, you know,
31 indicating that they're seeing a lot more but, you
32 know, I'd be willing to talk to them and if you want we
33 could maybe set up a phone call and I'd be happy to
34 give you a call and discuss some of that stuff.

35

36 MR. VENT: Yeah, that would be great.
37 And then also, you know, to note on the caribou herd
38 that's between Galena and Huslia, I'm just wondering
39 how they're doing.

40

41 MR. HAVENER: I think -- through the
42 Chair. I think we were just up and counting them and I
43 think they're doing okay. I don't think there's been
44 really any changes in the numbers and off the top of my
45 head I'm not sure what that exact count is. Again,
46 Brad Scotton's our Supervisor Wildlife Biologist and I
47 think he was just up there doing that and they're
48 starting to compile all the reports and should have
49 that information soon.

50

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1 MR. VENT: Okay, thank you, that's all
2 I had.

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

5
6 MR. DEMOSKI: Mr. Chair, this is
7 Arnold.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Arnold, go ahead.

10
11 MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah, hey, Jeremy, thank
12 you for the report, or thank you for your presentation.
13 I reviewed the data that Bob sent me and, yeah, I
14 reviewed the data and I gave it to the Council so
15 they're really happy to see that the moose population
16 is increasing. I guess the question I was going to ask
17 you, you kind of already answered that because Darrell
18 asked what I was going to ask. The hunters around
19 here, they noted that they're knocking the wolves down
20 in our area, in the Kaiyuh Flats, they're knocking the
21 wolves down and they're doing pretty good but they did
22 note that they're seeing an increase in grizzly bears
23 and that's all I was going to ask you, if you noted
24 that too. If you noticed an increase in grizzly bears.
25 But these hunters are very avid hunters in our area,
26 they're our predator hunters, they take wolves, they
27 take bears so they're all about increasing moose
28 population so they're doing a really good job. But,
29 yeah, I was just going to see if what you guys are
30 seeing of what they noticed.

31
32 Thank you for your presentation. I
33 think you answered that question when Darrell asked.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

36
37 MR. HAVENER: Yeah, through the Chair.
38 I appreciate those comments Arnold. And I, you know,
39 as far as my knowledge, it's just talking to people
40 around here, going to Advisory Committee meetings, and
41 I've heard the same thing on the grizzly bears. And I
42 do know some of the tribal councils around here do have
43 bounties on wolves, I think Galena has one currently
44 going.

45
46 Taking my hat off from Fish and
47 Wildlife Service, I do -- I'm an appointed sealer as
48 well so I get to talk to a lot of folks that are
49 getting wolves and different things and people are
50

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1 definitely out and about trying to harvest them right
2 now and like I said there's some -- in Galena, at
3 least, and I think I've heard of a few others so I
4 appreciate those comments.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Other Council
7 member comments or questions.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have any Don.

12

13 MR. VENT: Just one more little note,
14 this is Darrell.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

17

18 MR. VENT: Yeah, I appreciate, you
19 know, that the hunters are going out there and doing
20 this all on their own. We have a program that allows
21 the hunters to come in but, you know, when it comes
22 down to doing predation, it's basically taken up by the
23 villagers and, you know, something I mentioned before
24 to consider is that there should be a way to maybe help
25 these local people, with, whether it be some kind of
26 incentive for them.

27

28 Thanks.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Darrell.
31 Any other Council member comments.

32

33 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah, Mr. Chair.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.
36 Yeah, I've been looking for you.

37

38 MR. HONEA: Yeah, I didn't have any
39 questions. I think pretty much Darrell and Arnold
40 asked some of the more questions about the populations
41 and stuff and I've had pretty good -- pretty good talks
42 with Jeremy and David at the Galena office there and so
43 I don't have any at this time. I am concerned about
44 our moose, I guess the snow depth as most of you are
45 already -- but pretty much we've been kind of
46 monitoring locally here -- between here and the Novi on
47 the moose and I'm just hoping that the snow depth
48 doesn't create too much problems with our population.

49

50

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1 Thank you.

2

3

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Don. I
4 wanted to make a comment regarding your snow depth in
5 the Koyukuk River. We got a lot of snow this year.
6 Wiseman had nearly 100 inches of snow, 99-something
7 now.....

8

9 (Teleconference interference -
10 participants not muted)

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CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Somebody's got to
mute your mic there because you're backfeeding with me.
So I'm concerned about that Upper Koyukuk 21D
population because we got four feet of snow, the moose
are pushing to the river and the wolves are on top and
that's kind of a problem. So then you'll get really
bump in (indiscernible - echo cuts out) after these
deep snow years. So hopefully hunters can get up above
north of Huslia and start working on those predators up
there.

So that's an issue.

So thanks so much for your report
there, Jeremy.

Any other final questions for Jeremy.

MR. DEMOSKI: Mr. Chair, this is
Arnold.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

MR. DEMOSKI: I just have a final
comment.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Arnold.

MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah, with all that snow
and when it rained, when, a month and a half ago, month
ago, there was a lot of concern for the moose
population at that time. So a lot of concern around
here, around Nulato. It was a huge concern. I just
wanted to put that comment out there, though.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much for
that information Arnold. So I think we covered -- I
don't see Kanuti here, is Joanna Fox, Chris Harwood or

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1 any Staff from Kanuti going to give a report.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Apparently not. So
6 we usually get Kanuti reports, and I'm not sure why we
7 don't have one and why it's not on our agenda.

8

9 (Teleconference interference -
10 participants not muted)

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're getting a big
13 echo.

14

15 REPORTER: Yeah, if everybody could take
16 a second here and check your phone. When there's lots
17 of conversations we kind of sometimes forget to go back
18 on mute so that's star, six or the mute button on your
19 phone. Thanks.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I don't see
22 Kanuti so we're going to go to Gates of the Arctic
23 National Park report. Are you there Marcy and Matt.

24

25 MS. OKADA: Hi, thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 Thank you, Council members. This is Marcy Okada with
27 Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. I'd
28 like to refer you to our written update behind Tab 10
29 of your meeting packet.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

32

33 MS. OKADA: And I'll be providing just
34 a quick update on our most recent Subsistence Resource
35 Commission meeting that was held in November via
36 teleconference. For the new members that are on the
37 Western Interior RAC, both Jack Reakoff and Pollock
38 Simon, Sr., are members on our Gates of the Arctic
39 National Park Subsistence Resource Commission.

40

41 So at the November meeting the SRC
42 received updates on the Ambler Mining District Road
43 Project and our SRC continues to hear updates on Park
44 management and wildlife management. The SRC plans on
45 submitting a letter to Secretary Haaland requesting
46 that the SRC charter be revised similar to how the RAC
47 charter has been revised and that was shared with you
48 yesterday. Also the SRC has submitted a comment letter
49 to the Board of Game. The Board of Game will be

50

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1 meeting here in Fairbanks starting on March 4th and the
2 SRC submitted comments on proposals related to the
3 Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area. The next SRC
4 meeting is scheduled for either April or early May,
5 most likely by teleconference.

6
7 Do folks have any questions before I
8 hand it off to Matt Cameron for our caribou and moose
9 update.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any questions
12 from the Council about the Gates of the Arctic
13 Subsistence Resource Commission, which I'm on that so
14 I'm very aware of their agenda and so forth. There'll
15 be an SRC Chairs meeting on the 22nd of February and I
16 will participate with the Chairmen -- Chair Person
17 Taqulik Hepa at that meeting, discuss various common
18 issues.

19
20 So go ahead Matt, give us your
21 presentation about the biological parameters for
22 Western Arctic Herd. Go ahead.

23
24 MR. CAMERON: Yeah, good afternoon, Mr.
25 Chair and Council members. Can you hear me okay.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can you hear me
28 okay.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can hear you great.

31
32 MR. CAMERON: Great. Yeah, my name's
33 Matt Cameron, I'm a Wildlife Biologist with National
34 Park Service and I'll be providing an update for
35 caribou and moose.

36
37 So for the Western Arctic Herd, Alaska
38 Department of Fish and Game conducted a photo census
39 last summer and found the herd has declined to 188,000
40 caribou. We are planning to deploy GPS collars in
41 early April from a helicopter based out of Dall Creek.

42
43 We have a few research updates to
44 share.

45
46 The first is the National Park Service
47 and Alaska Fish and Game biologists collaborated to
48 analyze seasonal range use across 10 years of the
49 Western Arctic Herd. Highlights from this include
50

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1 consistent use of the calving ground and the area for
2 insect harassment while winter areas changed from year
3 to year. There are many more interesting aspects of
4 how the herd uses its range and you can find them at
5 the website listed under the second bullet point in our
6 update sheet.

7
8 NPS biologists collaborated on two
9 studies to develop new tools to better understand how
10 potential development may impact the herd. They first
11 looked at how proposed roads may impact caribou
12 migrations and the second measured how much different
13 proposed EIS alternatives might impact a range of
14 species in the Alaska Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

15
16 For more information on both of these
17 studies are at the link on the third bullet point.

18
19 National Park Service and ADF&G
20 biologists wrote a summary article on how methods to
21 detect calving in Western Arctic Herd caribou were
22 found worked for other herds as well and more
23 information can be found at the fourth bullet point.

24
25 And National Park Service biologists
26 are collaborating on the global initiative on ungulate
27 migration which will work to document the movements of
28 migratory ungulates in the global atlas. More
29 information can be found at the link at the bottom of
30 the first page.

31
32 And, lastly, I want to draw your
33 attention to the supplemental packet, No. 5, this is
34 the fall migration and fact sheet we put together.
35 This summarizes a recent research project we completed
36 to understand why Western Arctic Caribou Herd migrate
37 in the fall when they do. And we found that fall
38 migration is related to colder temperatures and the
39 first snowfall events of the winter specific to where
40 the caribou are. And we found that the decision to
41 migrate was revisited throughout migration such that if
42 conditions that the caribou experience changed, their
43 migration could change as well, such as slowing down
44 when warm temperatures are encountered. And so the
45 overall climatic trend has been for warmer falls and
46 this work suggests with climate change we can expect
47 continued delayed fall migrations in the future. And
48 the link to the full finished article is in the bottom
49 right corner of that flier.

50

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1 Shifting to moose. We are planning to
2 conduct a moose survey in and around the Gates of the
3 Arctic National Park and Preserve in late March of 2022
4 -- this year. So the last survey was conducted in
5 2015. And we'll be based out of Bettles and we expect
6 it to take less than a week and we'll report back our
7 findings at the next meeting.

8
9 And so that's everything I have for
10 caribou and moose and I can take questions before
11 turning things over to Will Deacy to report on sheep.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any questions
14 regarding caribou and moose at Gates of the Arctic
15 National Park.

16
17 (No comments)

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I feel the Park
20 Service.....

21
22 MR. SIMON: Jack.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Pollock.

25
26 MR. SIMON: Yeah, I'm not going to ask
27 questions but I have comments. The caribou population
28 is really declining down, most of it's really --
29 there's too much wolves that are killing those caribou,
30 the predators and the State and the Feds could help
31 putting down some wolves and taking some wolves out.

32
33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, thanks,
36 Pollock.

37
38 MR. VENT: Jack, this is Darrell.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

41
42 MR. VENT: Yeah, I just wanted to
43 comment on some of the things that are going to affect
44 our area with this caribou migration. I don't know how
45 this new road that they're going to be putting in, the
46 Ambler Road, is going to affect our caribou. If it
47 does it would be as the same as when the Pipeline was
48 put in about back in '72. We noticed a real decline in
49 the migration pattern of the caribou herd, which was
50

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1 the Central Herd at the time. And they did not come
2 back into our area after that. So that's just
3 something I want to comment on.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My comment would be
6 that caribou are pretty afraid of roads. It's graphic
7 with GPS collars on caribou at the Red Dog Road. It's
8 graphic on the Dalton Highway when the Porcupine Herd
9 was unfamiliar with this road and came straight
10 perpendicular to it. They kept moving back for four
11 years. Finally they started to cross the road. Those
12 roads really impede caribou migrations and so that's
13 been proven with several -- with GPS collars it's
14 pretty graphic as to how the caribou shy from the road.
15 And so they -- if there's -- you know, lead cows are
16 protected, caribou are protected during migration, they
17 will be more inclined to cross the road. But if
18 they're subjected to hunting at all, somebody shoots at
19 the lead caribou they will never want to trust that
20 road again.

21
22 So that happened with Central Arctic
23 Herd up north. They opened the season on July 1 for
24 cow caribou after never having caribou -- cow caribou
25 harvest before, October 1, and they let the hunters
26 kill all the lead cows, they became very afraid of the
27 road and there's still concern about that road even
28 yet. If they cross it they run across it. They kind
29 of wait for traffic and then run as fast as they can to
30 get across it.

31
32 So any other questions on this Park
33 Service presentation. I'm glad to see that this moose
34 survey is going to be done because we lost a lot of
35 moose in '18/19, '19/20, we did lose moose. So we have
36 low recruitments.

37
38 So any other questions.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Hearing none, we
43 have Will Deacy going to give the dall sheep
44 presentation, go ahead, Will.

45
46 MR. DEACY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
47 is Will Deacy. i'm a Biologist with the National Park
48 Service based in Fairbanks. I'm going to provide an
49 update on dall sheep for Gates of the Arctic Park and
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1 Preserve.

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This past summer we flew distance sampling surveys for dall sheep from July 8th to the 14th in Gates of the Arctic Park and also in partnership with the BLM we flew on BLM and State managed lands surrounding the Dalton Highway. I'm just going to focus on results for the Park and Itkillik Preserve, and later Jenn McMillan with the BLM is going to talk about data from BLM study areas.

There is a written report in Tab 10 but I'm going to present some more updated results. It still would likely be helpful for you to take a look at the map at the end of our written report in Tab 10.

So first starting in the north, the Itkillik survey area is pink on the map in Tab 10. This area has been surveyed every year since 2009 with the exception of 2020 because of Covid. The overall story for this survey area is that numbers were high and stable from 2009 to 2012 and then it crashed due to the poor weather in 2013 and 2014 and it's been stable at a much lower level since 2015. So in that earlier time when the population was relatively high, before the crash, the population of adults was 1,335. The average since the crash in 2013 and 2014 has been 512 adults. As for reproduction on average there's been 29 lambs for 100 ewe-like sheep since 2009 and this past year we estimated there were 31 lambs per 100 ewe-like sheep.

So just at or just above average reproduction. To the west on the map you can see the yellow study area, that's the Anaktuvuk Pass study area. And there we saw a similar pattern where the population used to be higher, it crashed in 2013 and 2014. The one bri -- and then it's been relatively stable since then. The one bright spot that we saw in this last year's survey is we estimated a slight increase in the number of adults in this study area in 2021 and that's mostly due to an increase in the number of both younger and full curl rams. And then just like in the Itkillik we estimated there were an average number of lambs in this area. We estimated 29 per 100 ewe-like sheep.

Now, moving further south, the blue study area is what we call the Southeast Gates area.

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1 And when I presented these results in the fall I only
2 had two years of results for this study area. The 2015
3 estimate for adult sheep was 1,969 while the 2021
4 estimate was 925, which means -- which means we
5 estimated the population declined 53 percent since
6 2015. And I know, though, that there were some
7 questions about using 2015 as a baseline since we saw
8 such severe declines up north in the 2013 and 2014
9 season, so I went back and calculated an estimate for
10 Southeast Gates when all of Gates was surveyed in 2010
11 and I was surprised that the estimated number of adults
12 in 2010 was only 1,070, which is only slightly above
13 the 2021 estimate. So although numbers are certainly
14 down in 2021 in this Southeast Gates, how much they're
15 down depends on what we consider normal for this
16 population, you know, which year we're using as a
17 baseline. If the baseline is 2015, which is the
18 highest value we have the population is down about 50
19 percent and it's down across all demographic groups but
20 by far most dramatically among older rams. And then
21 finally for reproduction, lamb production was lower
22 than normal for 2021 with 27 lambs per 100 ewe-like
23 sheep.

24
25 The Park Service continues to be really
26 concerned about sheep populations in the Park and so
27 for this summer our plan is to survey all of Gates
28 Park, which includes everything I covered today and
29 everything further west including into Unit 23.

30
31 I don't want to take up any more of
32 your time but please don't hesitate to ask if you want
33 more details about any of these study areas or any
34 specific demographic groups.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So my question is do
39 you take ram composition at three-quarter, seven-
40 eighths, full-curl, do you comp those ram groups which
41 tells you what your ewe component is, which tell you
42 what your demographics are. Are you taking that or
43 it's just like the State's doing, full-curl and
44 everything else?

45
46 MR. DEACY: Yeah, we're doing it like
47 the State does it, full-curl and everything else and we
48 understand that's not, you know, ideal but in the past
49 we've determined that doing it from the air that
50

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1 there's a risk that we'll just mis-comp them and so
2 it's more reliable just to do full-curl and less than
3 full-curl.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But that's a big
6 giant flaw in your data gathering. You can use field
7 glasses, you slow down, and I can spot quarter -- or
8 correction -- half, three-quarter and full-curl rams
9 out of -- they're not huge groups, they're not big
10 groups. You should be able to comp those. And the
11 reality is we don't have demographic data showing this
12 precipitous of we have no older rams, we have no
13 younger rams to a large degree. We have, basically, at
14 the most, some three-quarters, some seven-eighths and
15 some small full-curl because we lost all those sheep in
16 '12, '13 and '14, yearlings, the -- the lambs of the
17 year and '14 was abysmal at two lambs per 100 ewes. So
18 the reality is we have really huge blanks in this
19 population. And so I would like to see, and we'll be
20 talking about this at the Gates of the Arctic Park
21 Resource Commission meeting, you need to start getting
22 those demographics of these rams groups because that
23 tells you what your population demographics are and
24 it's bleak.

25

26 We have three cohorts that are alive
27 right now with adult and so it's a bleak situation.
28 There's very low reproduction since these catastrophic
29 events in 2018/19 and '19/20.

30

31 So that'll be a discussion issue. I
32 wanted the Council to be aware that I'm unsatisfied
33 with that kind of data collection because it doesn't --
34 especially in the hunted areas where it's full-curl
35 only. It's a giant glaring flaw and non-science and so
36 that has to change whether you land on a bar, put a
37 spotting scope on them, you've got to start getting
38 some demographic of this population.

39

40 So I'm stating that for the record.

41

42 So any questions or comments about
43 Will's presentation.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Hearing none, is
48 that everything for Gates of the Arctic, Marcy.

49

50

0282

1 MS. OKADA: Yes, Mr. Chair, that's our
2 report for Gates of the Arctic.

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

5
6 MS. OKADA: Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. So we
9 have Bureau of Land Management Central Yukon Field
10 Office report, and who's giving that. Is that Tim or
11 Jenn or who's doing that?

12
13 MR. LAMARR: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.
14 Tim LaMarr here, Field Manager for the Central Yukon
15 Field Office. And I'll start with just a couple of
16 brief highlights. I think we want to get to talking
17 about our dall sheep data here pretty quick and we'll
18 have Jenn McMillan come on here in a moment to do that.
19 But our report, it looks like it's in Tab 11B in the
20 packet there.

21
22 The only couple things I'll mention
23 from that today is that the Central Yukon Resource
24 Management Plan is still on hold, we're still awaiting
25 direction from the Administration on how to
26 specifically address that, going from draft to final on
27 that plan. The other thing I'll mention is we do have
28 a pretty heavy work load with the Ambler Road project
29 right now and that is mostly focused on the National
30 Historic Preservation Act, Section .106 process. So as
31 you heard yesterday from folks from AIEDA, they're out
32 doing on the ground surveys for cultural resources and
33 generating reports and submitting them to the agencies
34 for review. So we're pretty heavily engaged in that
35 stuff right now with them, and that's a continuum.

36
37 And those were the two things I wanted
38 to mention from our summary report. And I did want to
39 pass it off here to Jenn McMillan, she has an
40 additional handout in the packet on the dall sheep
41 survey population information on BLM -- on the BLM
42 portion of that survey. So without further adieu I'll
43 pass it off to Jenn to kind of talk about that. Jenn,
44 are you there?

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Jenn.

47
48 MS. MCMILLAN: Good afternoon, Mr.
49 Chair and the Council. Thanks for your time today.

50

0283

1 Yes, like Tim said, I intend to just briefly present
2 what's provided in your meeting materials, in the BLM
3 CYFO 2021 dall sheep summary, 11C.

4

5 So this document basically summarizes
6 the results of this year's sheep surveys as they were
7 conducted on BLM land as Will described earlier, and we
8 also touch on previous years results in the document.
9 So if you could please reference that document I think
10 it will be helpful.

11

12 As Will said, we worked collaboratively
13 with the NPS this past year. The surveys were largely
14 effected in GMU24 and 25A, although a small portion was
15 conducted in GMU26. In 2021 the entirety of the survey
16 took 42 hours of flight time. So as you can see
17 there's population estimates summarized in the text
18 here as well as in the graph and the table below. So
19 to start with if you look at Map 1 and you can see two
20 survey units are delineated so what is referred to as
21 the full survey area includes most of the BLM-managed
22 lands around the Dalton Highway that we surveyed this
23 year. This was only the second year when we were able
24 to survey this full survey area, 2015 was the previous
25 year when this full survey area was surveyed. So we
26 used 2015 as a baseline for comparison to '21 data for
27 both the full survey area and Unit 1B. As you can see
28 in the bar graph we've more consistently been able to
29 survey what is referred to as 1A and 1B in the map.

30

31 Overarching results of note are that
32 for Units 1A and 1B there was a significant decline in
33 2021 compared to 2015. The decline was approximately
34 75 percent. Similarly the decline in the number of
35 sheep in the full survey area between 2015 and 2021 was
36 approximately 62 percent. The lamb to ewe-like ratio
37 in our area which gives us a sense of recruitment was
38 not extremely low but it was below average. Our
39 estimate indicates very low numbers of legally
40 harvestable rams.

41

42 And then in closing we intend to
43 continue our collaboration with the National Park
44 Service and survey in 2022 with again fully survey that
45 -- all BLM lands, or the vast majority of them and we
46 are currently investigating what is feasible in regard
47 to modeling the factors that are contributing to this
48 decline.

49

50

0284

1 That's all.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So thanks, Jenn. So
4 my question to you, do you comp the rams when you're
5 flying or are you just only doing full-curl and other?

6

7 MS. MCMILLAN: This year Will and I
8 talked about trying to get better resolution on that.
9 I think there was some effort made to ensure that we
10 got ram size -- or horn size class but actually it's
11 something Will and I should probably talk about, what
12 the success of that was. But I do intend to continue
13 discussing this with Will and hoping that we can get
14 better horn size classes in the future.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's imperative.
17 When we have weather events that we've had in the last
18 10 years that's pushed these populations down. I'm
19 looking at on the map sheet and it shows 2015 1A and 1B
20 at 1,274 sheep and then 2021 is 993, that's basically
21 an almost 80 percent decline. You have very few rams
22 left and you have to know what they are.

23

24 I'm very concerned about this
25 situation. And so I'm going to be talking further
26 about a special action request for dall sheep and so --
27 but at this time we are going to go to the Anchorage
28 Field Office report, and who's doing that, is that you
29 Bob or.....

30

31 MR. SPARKS: Yeah, this is Tom Sparks
32 for BLM.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tom, okay, go ahead.

35

36 MR. SPARKS: I'm stationed up here in
37 Nome. I'm glad I could attend the meeting here. I've
38 been listening in the last couple days and I know it's
39 been long. We have a report that we included in your
40 packet that OSM was glad enough to do that for us.

41

42 And I think the only thing that really
43 is on that report that is of interest to your
44 particular RAC, Mr. Chair, is funds that we provided
45 for the Togiak Wildlife Refuge for the Mulchatna
46 Caribou Herd, and I know that came up in discussions
47 earlier today about the numbers. And so I think that's
48 about all the things I could point out for you.

49

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1 I'd be happy to answer any questions
2 that yourself or any member may have.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And so you
5 provided funds for doing summer surveys with Togiak,
6 are you a participant in that?

7

8 MR. SPARKS: Provided funding, sir.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Only funding, okay.
11 And so any questions for Bureau of Land Management on
12 either presentation for Central Yukon or the Anchorage
13 Field Office, which is basically the lower end of our
14 region. There's quite a bit of different BLM lands
15 down there.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any comments from
20 the Council.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. So I'm going to
25 move forward with something that hits a little closer
26 to home here. And so a little background for new
27 Council members.

28

29 I've lived in the Brooks Range since I
30 was three. We moved to Bettles when I was three years
31 old. I've lived in the Brooks Range for decades
32 because I'm old now, 64. And I've lived in the Brooks
33 Range continually since 1970 when we lived at Chandalar
34 Lake and I have a lot of experience in the Central
35 Brooks Range and the North Slope of the Brooks Range
36 and have hunted sheep my entire life since I was 8
37 years old, I hunted in the Dietrich River with my dad.
38 So that's where I'm coming from on this sheep issue.
39 And bear with me because it's a crises situation unlike
40 the rosy picture of no demographics of the population,
41 the population is declined but we don't know really too
42 much about it.

43

44 But at the Koyukuk River Advisory
45 Committee meeting we had on the 3rd of February, we had
46 expressed -- we had quite a long discussion with the
47 area biologist, Mr. Stout. And after discussion the
48 Committee decided that there needed to be some kind of
49 a resolution or something written to the Board of Game.

50

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1 So I will read this Board of Game comment that I wrote
2 for the Board, I was designated to write this and
3 submit this to the Board of Game for their
4 consideration. So this is a Koyukuk River Advisory
5 Committee letter and I'll read this into the record of
6 concern to the Alaska Board of Game.

7

8 Record Copy for the statewide meeting
9 March 4 to 11 in Fairbanks, 2022.

10

11 The Committee expressed concerns to
12 Region 3 ADF&G Staff in February 3, 2022 telephonic
13 meeting regarding the vast decline of dall sheep
14 population and ram composition. The Committee spent at
15 least 30 minutes with Mr. Stout and Beth Lenart without
16 the least acknowledgement of a management issue. The
17 Department is willing to take risk with the dall sheep
18 population in GMU24A and 26B without analyzing or
19 modeling the data blindly following the flawed,
20 unbending full-curl management strategy developed using
21 steady recruitments and the Wayne Heimer and Sara
22 Watson study of 1986. The full-curl management data
23 collected was during a steady recruitment timeframe
24 from the early '70s through the mid-80s. Two
25 catastrophic deep snows with rain in GMU24A and 24B
26 with losses of three cohorts, six cohorts in the last
27 10 years is unprecedented and are not analyzed in the
28 full-curl management model.

29

30 The Committee expressed concern with
31 the Region 3 ADF&G apathy. The Committee discussed a
32 letter to be written to the Board regarding this issue.

33

34 This left the Committee at a juncture
35 to move to the Board of Game level to inform the Board.
36 The Committee discussed the letter to be written and
37 the Chairman -- Vincent Simon, made the motion to have
38 the Chairman Jack Reakoff write the letter outlining
39 the issue as a Record Copy. Darrell Vent is on the
40 Committee and he seconded. The vote was unanimous to
41 support writing and transmitting it, the letter, to the
42 Board of Game as a Record Copy to describe the primary
43 issues with the current GMU24 management.

44

45 Bullet Point 1.

46

47 Sheep population is around 25 percent
48 for the typical surveys since 2002 in the Central
49 Brooks Range survey unit 1A and 1B. Most or all of 2B

50

0287

1 is in the Game Management Unit 25, which is in snow
2 shadow, so that's mixing apples and oranges. The snow
3 shadow of GMU25A, Subunit 1B has typically higher sheep
4 population than the Koyukuk and GMU24A, which is 1A
5 survey unit.

6

7

Bullet Point 2.

8

9

10 The Alaska ADF&G data collects does not
11 have vital age composition for half, three-quarter,
12 seven-eighths curl rams and full. These composition
13 data show the nearing elimination of the remaining
14 breeding ram. This data would also show what the age
15 composition of the ewes. Legal ram data only does not,
16 and cannot support a harvestable surplus analysis. The
17 Department does not have data. Is unwilling to collect
18 composition data to analyze flawed full-curl management
19 during severe extreme weather events on the dall sheep
20 population.

20

21

Vital factors. Bullet Point 1.

22

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Bullet Point -- second bullet point.

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Surveys flown in 2018 showed a 50
percent decline from the 2016, so they had that data
and, yet, they still lied to the Board. The Koyukuk
River Advisory Committee, had commented extensively for
two years prior to the 2020 meeting regarding the deep

0288

1 snow and icing events. The Koyukuk River AC opposed
2 the proposal to lengthen the dall sheep season in the
3 Dalton Highway Corridor by additional 15 days. As
4 Chairman of the AC, I complained to the Commissioner's
5 office after the proposal passed, stating that the
6 Department should not make statements to the Board with
7 false information.

8
9 There is documented take of 10 percent
10 of the sealed rams -- or sublegal in the sealing
11 records, those were actually seized. There is also an
12 un-calculated incidental harvest mortality, wound loss,
13 and discarded illegal sublegal rams. Known detrimental
14 biological ramifications of three year old and younger
15 rams breeding adult ewes, once most breeding age rams
16 are eliminated. Found in the Heimer, Watson study
17 published in 1986. The full-curl management strategy
18 was to maintain breeding six and eight year old rams in
19 the population. Current management will exacerbate the
20 recovery of the much diminished dall sheep population
21 in GMU 24A once all the remaining rams are lost to
22 hunting and predation in the next two years.

23
24 Bullet Point -- so the Department
25 current false statements to the public that the vastly
26 diminished National Park sheep will emigrate to bolster
27 the areas hunted under full-curl management. It is a
28 known fact that, collared sheep have very small home
29 ranges that they know. When the sheep populations are
30 very diminished they are less inclined to move. It is
31 completely ludicrous for ADF&G Staff to attend meetings
32 stating outright false information to be used by
33 decisionmakers on the Board of Game. Very few sheep
34 will emigrate outside the NPS units.

35
36 These are red highlighted. These are
37 things that the Board should address.

38
39 The Koyukuk River Advisory Committee
40 requests that the Board of Game RC -- for the Alaska
41 Board of Game to direct the Department to issue an
42 emergency order to drastically reduce or eliminate
43 harvest of rams in GMU24A for two regulatory years.

44
45 Direct the Department to collect sheep
46 survey data to include ram composition data, for half,
47 three-quarter, seven-eighth curl and full-curl. Large
48 age composition data is to track full-curl recruitment
49 for sustained yield. There is a large and vital data
50

0289

1 set lacking currently, for vitally important sustained
2 yield management.

3
4 Direct the Department to review the
5 full-curl strategy to track ram composition to maintain
6 sustained yield during consecutive multi-cohort losses
7 that have become more common in all mountain ranges of
8 Alaska.

9
10 Direct the Department to review
11 telemetry data to realistically assess emigration from
12 National Park Service lands and make valid assessments.

13
14 The State's survey in 2021 and the BLM
15 survey in our packet here show basically the State flew
16 intensive, where they had 1,700 sheep in 2012 before
17 the crash, they now have 469 and they flew as hard as
18 they could to find that 469. I know the guys that fly
19 that survey. The flight times were shorter. That
20 means they were finding there were so few there that
21 they didn't have to fly that long. The reality is that
22 this sheep population is imminent if they kill the last
23 adult rams that we have. We have -- current rams left
24 are vital for the gene flow, these are the very few
25 surviving rams, the strongest phenotypes that have made
26 it through the brutal winters. The elimination during
27 the recovery of the very low population will do
28 irreparable damage to the whole population long-term
29 survival. Sustained yield will be compromised long-
30 term. They don't have comp data, they don't have the
31 composition -- I do, I spot these sheep, I count their
32 age rings, I know exactly how old they are. There are
33 very few, if any, two, three, four, or five year old
34 rams behind the six and seven year old rams remaining.
35 All large horn fastest and strongest rams lost to human
36 harvest in the next two years is an extremely important
37 issue. The Heimer, Watson work using data from the
38 late '60s through the mid-80s compared full extirpation
39 of all three-quarter curl rams and older to full-curl
40 older ram harvest in another area. This work drove the
41 regulatory process to full-curl but the work did not
42 have the extreme weather event seen in the Brooks Range
43 and West Central and West Slopes as well as the Alaska
44 and Talkeetna Mountains six cohorts were lost in 10
45 years. This work showed graphically that younger rams
46 than four years old have high mortality if all adult
47 rams are removed. They're lowered sustain harvest and
48 young rams are 30 to 40 percent lighter weight. Young
49 rams rely on older experienced rams to evade predators,
50

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1 older rams break trails for younger rams as well as
2 ewes that are near them when deep snow events happen.
3 Young rams four years old and younger also cause
4 disrupted breeding success, missed estrusses, longer
5 lactation causing alternate years of lamb production.
6 And I'm quoting from there saying, consequently we
7 suggest that low ram abundance affects not only a
8 compromised survival among rams, which remain, but also
9 lowers lamb production as well.

10

11 State management does not have adequate
12 data for composition. I'm done reading.

13

14 I feel that this is such an important
15 issue that the State is going to do irreparable damage
16 to the sheep that I live near and the associated Dalton
17 Highway Corridor area that if two more years of hunting
18 occurs for full-curl the few remaining six and seven
19 year old rams are going to be gone and then there will
20 be irreparable damage to the remaining population.

21

22 So I've had OSM Staff develop a
23 wildlife special action request and I will read the
24 special action request into the record.

25

26 The Western Interior Alaska Subsistence
27 Regional Advisory Council requests that dall sheep
28 hunting on Federal public lands in Units 24A and 26B
29 west of the Sagavanirktok be closed to all users for
30 the 2022 through 2024 regulatory cycle.

31

32 Unit 24's existing regulations. Unit
33 24 currently has one ram limit, August 20 to September
34 30.

35

36 Current regulation in 26B is that that
37 portion within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management
38 Area, one ram with seven-eighths horns or larger by
39 Federal regulation permit August 1 to September 20.
40 Unit 26A remainder and 26B remainder is 1 ram with
41 seven-eighth curl or larger August 10 to September 20.

42

43 Proposed regulation.

44

45 Unit 24A except that portion within the
46 Gates of the Arctic Park, no open season, Federal lands
47 are closed to the taking of sheep for the 2022 through
48 2024 regulatory cycle, and I've inserted closure is to
49 non-Federally-qualified users as well as C&T qualified
50

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1 subsistence users. "I'm willing to take subsistence
2 off the table also to protect this sheep population.
3 Unit 26B west of the Sagavanirktok, that portion within
4 the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area, no open
5 season, Federal public lands are closed to the taking
6 of sheep for the 2022/2024 regulatory cycle, closure is
7 to non-Federally-qualified users as well as C&T
8 qualified subsistence users.

9
10 Unit 26B east of the Sagavanirktok
11 remains open including the Gates of the Arctic National
12 Park. 26B remainder including the Gates of the Arctic
13 National Park, no open season. Federal public land
14 closure to the taking of sheep for the 2022/2024
15 regulatory cycle. Closure is to non-Federally-
16 qualified users as well as C&T qualified users.

17
18 And I would like -- I read that into
19 the record, I would like a motion to submit that
20 wildlife special action request to the Federal
21 Subsistence Board for consideration.

22
23 MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair, this is
24 Lisa.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Lisa.

27
28 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin for the
29 record. And I just wanted to notify the Council
30 members that I just emailed that proposed special
31 action request to you all so it might behoove you to
32 check your email and look at that draft request that
33 Jack just read into the record.

34
35 Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I read it into the
38 record except I inserted -- I clarified that this is a
39 closure to non-subsistence and qualified subsistence
40 users, that was not in what you had.

41
42 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Jack, that is --
43 it is -- that's just the way the regulations are
44 written so what I submitted to you as a draft was the
45 same. You just added more language that made it more
46 abundantly, explicitly clear but the way we write
47 regulations when it just says Federal public lands are
48 closed to the taking of sheep, that means for everyone.
49 So, again, that's just kind of how the regulations are
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0292

1 written>

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CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I want the public, the other non-subsistence users to understand what this is stating. This has to be clear for the deliberation process of this special action request. It has to be clear, this is closure to non-subsistence and subsistence users. This can't -- the public does not know mumbo-jumbo regulatory language when it's written like this. The public has to know what this is actually saying and I want this proposal to be graphic as to what it's saying. Is that understood?

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yes. Yes, Mr. Chair, the Council -- yes, the Council's certainly welcome to submit whatever they would like so thank you.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So what I read into the record is what should be submitted as a wildlife special action request.

Do I have a motion to submit this wildlife special action request for the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council.

MR. GERVAIS: So moved, this is Tim.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved by Tim.

MR. VENT: Second, Darrell.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell seconds. Council discussion. I read a lot of stuff into the record regarding this special action request. Any comments from the Council. The more comments built to the record.

MR. VENT: Yeah, this is Darrell, I just had one comment.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

MR. VENT: Yes, you know, when they do their surveys, do they combine them into one survey and it seems like, for instance, how many different areas in the Alaska Range and if they combine them -- because, you know, I notice that when they do that with our moose surveys they combine them and they state that, you know, there's a big population here whereas there

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1 might be a smaller population in a different area. Do
2 you see something like that in your area?

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The sheep east of
5 the Sagavanirktok on the North Slope, they weren't
6 affected by the rain, they weren't affected by the deep
7 snow. They got huge mountains that block that. The
8 sheep in the Central Brook Range, including Unit 25A, I
9 know for a fact that hunting guides are having a real
10 hard time finding adult rams. They had loss in 2013.
11 The Central Arctic Caribou Herd fell by 66 percent from
12 that late spring. There was decimation of caribou and
13 dall sheep in 2012/13 winter. So there are areas where
14 there is larger populations but there are vast areas
15 now with much reduced and poor demographics of the
16 current population. The Park Service does not seem to
17 understand they have a huge blank of two, three, four,
18 and five year old sheep. You have three years of adult
19 sheep right now and we have had really poor
20 recruitment. Just because we have baby lambs surveyed,
21 does not mean they're making it. Because we got a lot
22 of wolves here and there's a very small number of
23 sheep.

24

25 So does that answer your question,
26 Darrell.

27

28 MR. VENT: Yes, because I think when
29 they base their counts it includes all areas and it
30 kind of hits hard in one area but, you know, it's not
31 noted or, you know, because they give you a moose count
32 population and say, okay, this is -- you know, maybe
33 it's based on the higher number or an average or
34 something, it's -- I don't know it's just some of the
35 things that I notice that used to happen in our area.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Yeah. Well,
38 the moose population where you're at is much lower
39 than, declining than down there in the Kaiyuh. They
40 got lots of moose down there, that population's near
41 double. So any other Council comments.

42

43 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
44 Kevin.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

47

48 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, we've got
49 something real similar going on in Unit 19C east of
50

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1 McGrath where our sheep are not doing well and the
2 McGrath AC recommended to close that sheep season.
3 This is very similar. Your situation in 24 is very
4 similar to ours. I'm in support of this special action.

5
6 That's all, thanks.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks. Yeah, 19C.
9 I saw pictures that Brett Gibbons had of flooded rivers
10 and flooded lakes in the Kuskokwim Valley. There was
11 pouring rains and frozen ground in the Alaska Range,
12 I'm real concerned about that. They thought those
13 sheep were declining last year, there might not be
14 hardly any left.

15
16 The Department is derelict in not going
17 out right this minute and starting to look at what has
18 happened in the Alaska Range and in those mountain
19 ranges that had those rain events. We, fortunately,
20 have not had the rain event here but we do have deep
21 snow. So I'm really concerned about the Alaska Range
22 because the Alaska Range is within our region and I'm
23 real concerned about that. I appreciate your support.

24
25 Other Council members.

26
27 (No comments)

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do we have a
30 question on the motion.

31
32 MR. DEMOSKI: This is Arnold, question.

33
34 MR. SIMON: Question.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question by Arnold.
37 Those in favor of submitting wildlife special action
38 request as read into the record regarding dall sheep in
39 Unit 24A and 26B east of the Sagavanirktok signify by
40 saying aye.

41
42 IN UNISON: Aye.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

45
46 (No opposing votes)

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're moving down
49 our agenda here to Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

50

0295

1 Is there anybody on here from the Department.

2

3 MR. STOUT: Yeah, Jack, this is Glenn
4 Stout with Fish and Game.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Glenn, go
7 ahead.

8

9 MR. STOUT: Yeah, I've got just a real
10 brief update on some information.

11

12 First of all we conducted a geospatial
13 population estimation survey on the Kanuti Refuge this
14 year with the support of the Kanuti Refuge. They
15 provided all the fuel and housing for us while we
16 conducted that survey. The last time we did the survey
17 on the Kanuti was in 2017, which was the last year of
18 the predator control program there. Our numbers were
19 lower, the density there, this count, this year,
20 compared to the 2017 survey, of note, is the low
21 yearling bull/cow ratio which was three yearling bulls
22 per 100 cows and the low calf/cow ratios of 21 per 100
23 in this year's count. So they're much what everybody's
24 expected because of the severity of the winters the
25 previous two years.

26

27 We completed a trend count area on
28 Threeday Slough down in 21D on the Lower Koyukuk and
29 we've also looked at the data that Koyukuk/Nowitna
30 Refuge collected for the other trend count areas in
31 that area. This was the first time in 10 years in the
32 Koyukuk Controlled Use Area that we got back up to our
33 management objective. Our objective is 30 bulls per
34 100 cows and this year the Koyukuk Controlled Use area,
35 what I call the core five trend count areas had 31
36 bulls per 100 cows. This has largely been achieved
37 because of the reduction in the number of drawing
38 permits. As Jeremy stated in his briefing, what we're
39 seeing in the trend count area information is in the
40 24D count areas we're seeing a slow insidious decline
41 from basically Dalbi River down to the Koyukuk Mouth,
42 what we call the western Galena subunit, it's
43 relatively stable although there is some
44 redistribution. And then finally in the lower portion
45 of 21D, what we call the Kaiyuh Flats sub area, that
46 area had been increasing through 2018 but the last
47 three years it looks like it has stabilized in that
48 area.

49

50

0296

1 Kind of on that note we determined that
2 there is an adequate harvestable surplus in that Kaiyuh
3 Flats area, so just like Jeremy announced, the
4 announcement for that winter hunt, which will occur
5 March 1st through the 15th was announced yesterday and
6 so those permits will be available online beginning on
7 the 23rd, and then we're sending the paper permits to
8 our vendors in Nulato and Kaltag.

9
10 Finally, there's also an addition to
11 that winter hunt there on the Kaiyuh, I wanted people
12 to be aware that we do also have the ongoing winter
13 hunt in 24C and D, so that area from Allakaket down to
14 Hughes, that has a winter season that's open right now.
15 It's open until March 15th.

16
17 And that's all I have for my update.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much,
20 Glenn. And what is the quota for the Kaiyuh hunt?

21
22 MR. STOUT: Yeah, I have to correct
23 with the Middle Yukon AC meeting, I misspoke at that
24 meeting, the quota count for the 21D is 20 total moose
25 with no more than 15 cows to be included in that.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. All right,
28 appreciate that. And thanks for doing a great job
29 getting that bull/cow ratio up on the Koyukuk, that's
30 commendable. Council questions for Glenn's
31 presentation.

32
33 MR. VENT: Yeah, this is Darrell.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrell, go ahead.

36
37 MR. VENT: Yeah, I was just curious on
38 Huslia River, do you notice a calf declining in that
39 area. I know -- traveling up and down the river and
40 haven't noticed too many calves in that area.

41
42 MR. STOUT: Yeah, through the Chair.
43 Darrell, it is curious in that area what's causing the
44 decline. We certainly see a decline in the cows in
45 that area. Cows, you know, are not illegally harvested
46 so we assume that the decline is because of poor
47 recruitment in that area, and then possibly, of course,
48 the predation. However, when we go out and do our
49 twinning counts out there, it typically averages
50

0297

1 between 30 and 40 percent twinning rates, which are
2 really pretty high twinning rates so that suggests to
3 us there's not a habitat concern in that area, we don't
4 have what we call density dependent concern, such as
5 too many moose for the available habitat but we are
6 seeing a decline in the population which leads us to
7 believe that maybe they're producing a lot of calves
8 which the twinning rates tells us, but they're just not
9 surviving. So I think the discussion everybody talks
10 about, of course, is grizzly bear numbers. I know you
11 asked earlier on the phone call about whether or not
12 we're doing bear counts, like when we're out doing
13 flights. It's really hard to make -- draw many
14 conclusions on the number of bears we see.
15 Particularly, of course we don't see really hardly
16 anything in the November counts, but we do see some
17 bears during the twinning surveys but it's hard to draw
18 much of a conclusion from that. We certainly see
19 grizzly bears but, you know, the numbers are maybe one
20 or two or three a day and it's hard to really compare
21 that small number to what we may have seen maybe even
22 10, 15 years ago.

23
24 My sense is, this is just my gut
25 feeling, I have no data to support it, is that, I feel
26 like I do see a few more grizzly bears than I used to.
27 But I can't say I can support that with any data that
28 we have.

29
30 MR. VENT: Okay. Just reiterate on
31 that. I know that I've been noticing that because I've
32 been traveling up and down that Huslia River. That one
33 year was real bad because I noticed there was a lot of
34 cows on the bar but they had a lot of wounds on them,
35 like they were fighting for their calves or something
36 and some of them were really limping so I know they
37 were probably taken after they left, you know. So the
38 grizzlies are doing a pretty good, effective job of
39 working on those calves in that area because that whole
40 upper end there, there was a lot of cows on the bar but
41 some of them were wounded so I know they've been
42 fighting for their calves.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any other Council
45 member comments or questions for Glenn.

46
47 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.
50

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1 MR. HONEA: Yeah, hey, Glenn, how you
2 doing, this is Don Honea in Ruby. You know looking
3 back over the years here we've had like suggestions
4 for, you know, controlled burns either on the Melozi or
5 from like Ruby Slough up to the Deep Creek area, are
6 those on the back burner or did the fires in the past
7 pretty much take care of -- I was just wondering, you
8 know, we had this in year's past. I believe the fire
9 that came on the Novi and made some of the game more
10 accessible like during the hunt a couple years back, so
11 are those just on the back burner or are they just out
12 of the question and took care of themselves.

13
14 Thank you.

15
16 MR. STOUT: Yeah, hi, Don, good to hear
17 from you. As far as prescribed burns, we don't have
18 any that I know of but that really probably falls into
19 the hands of like the Refuge people, the land managers
20 on any fire plans that they happen to have. I know one
21 thing that we do talk about is -- our concerns about
22 fire suppression because the best thing for moose
23 forage production is fire and to rejuvenate some of
24 these vegetation communities, particularly spruce and
25 overgrown birch to put those back to some of the
26 younger seral stages of vegetation which is better
27 moose food. So we like to see less fire suppression, I
28 think that's probably the cheapest way to go rather
29 than to go to the expense of trying to do prescribed
30 fires, particularly at the land scape scale that we're
31 trying to talk about.

32
33 More specifically, you asked about the
34 fire that occurred like on the Nowitna there, it was a
35 substantial fire back in 2015. I had a chance to fly
36 that moose survey last year, well a year and a half ago
37 now I guess. I guess I kind of lost my enthusiasm, you
38 know, a lot of these wild fires are very dependent on
39 the conditions and the response in terms of the
40 vegetation and as I flew it I did not see that low
41 growing vegetation coming back in there as compared to
42 an area like over on the Kaiyuh Flats when the fires
43 back in 2005 burned through there, they were very hot
44 fires and we seen much more response in the way of
45 willows. So I'm not too hopeful about that burn there
46 but I guess my favorite solution is less fire
47 suppression to get better moose forage.

48
49 MR. HONEA: All right, thank you. No
50

0299

1 further questions, Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Any other
4 Council questions for Glenn.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Hearing none, thanks
9 so much Glenn for giving us all that information,
10 appreciate that.

11

12 MR. STOUT: All right, thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any other State,
15 Alaska Department of Fish and Game people on the call.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, I guess we
20 don't have Josh down in McGrath on. Okay, so we're
21 moving forward to Office of Subsistence Management,
22 Robbin LaVine's going to give us the rundown with OSM,
23 and that's on -- oh, there's no tab -- are you there
24 Robbin.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is someone prepared
29 to take over for her, if she -- if you can hear me
30 Robbin, I can't hear you.

31

32 MS. LAVINE: Hello, Mr. Chair, can you
33 hear me now?

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can hear you now.

36

37 MS. LAVINE: I had double-muted myself.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Well, we're
40 getting an echo off of you but go ahead.

41

42 MS. LAVINE: All right. Again, for the
43 record, Mr. Chair and members of the Council, my name
44 is Robbin LaVine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator for
45 OSM.

46

47 On behalf of OSM, I want to thank all
48 Council members for your exceptional work for your
49 communities and user groups during these trying times.

50

0300

1 We value your experience and the contribution of your
2 knowledge and experiences to the regulatory process.

3

4 It has been very difficult for all of
5 us dealing with the Covid-19 environment.

6

7 Teleconferences.

8

9 We are holding all 10 winter 2022
10 Regional Advisory Council meetings via teleconference.
11 The DOI guidelines advises that people avoid travel and
12 refrain from meeting in person to minimize risk and
13 help prevent the spread of Covid-19. OSM received
14 direction from the Department of Interior that no
15 Federal Advisory Committee, or FACA meetings would be
16 held in person in the fiscal year 2022, and all
17 Regional Advisory Councils are FACA Committees. So
18 again our fiscal year will end September 30th, 2022.
19 The Federal Subsistence Management Program recognizes
20 that in-person meetings are preferable, however, until
21 we can ensure the safety of all participants, we will
22 follow current guidelines and hold all meetings via
23 teleconference. We thank you again for being willing
24 to participate in the lengthy teleconference and
25 appreciate your patience as we deal with the various
26 technical issues that arise from the poor telephonic
27 connections, the vast distances involved, and differing
28 communication systems throughout the state of Alaska.

29

30 Staff changes.

31

32 We are very pleased to announce the
33 following OSM Staffing changes that have occurred since
34 your last Council meeting in fall 2021.

35

36 Scott Ayers was hired as the OSM
37 Fisheries Division Supervisor in January. Scott worked
38 for three years as a Fisheries Biologist for OSM
39 several years ago before he took a job with the U.S.
40 Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and SportFish
41 Restoration Program. We welcome Scott back to OSM.

42

43 Jarred Stone and Cory Graham have both
44 been promoted with the Fisheries Division, while two
45 additional Fisheries Biologists, Kevin Foley and Justin
46 Koller have just been hired and will be starting later
47 in February.

48

49 In January, Sherri Gould-Fehrs, OSM's

50

0301

1 Administrative Support Assistant was temporarily
2 promoted to the ARD Secretary position.

3
4 Likewise, Kayla McKinney stepped up to
5 temporarily serve as Subsistence Outreach Coordinator.

6
7 In December and January, Liz Williams
8 and Jason Roberts were hired as OSM Anthropologists.
9 Liz worked for OSM about 12 years ago and is returning,
10 so welcome back Liz.

11
12 OSM is pleased to welcome three newly
13 hired Subsistence Council Coordinators, and they are
14 Nissa Bate Pilcher, Leigh Honig, and Brooke McDavid,
15 all with a wealth of knowledge and experience in
16 working with rural users and communities as well as
17 Alaska subsistence issues.

18
19 We also had departures at OSM through
20 retirement and new opportunities.

21
22 We bid a fond farewell to
23 Administrative Staff Catherine Avery and Ricky Cabugao.

24
25 And as just only recently heard this
26 week, Council Coordinator, Karen Deatherage.

27
28 The OSM Team continues to work on
29 rebuilding our capacity and hope to advertise positions
30 in our regulatory and administrative support functions
31 soon.

32
33 DOI and USDA conduct listening sessions
34 on Federal Subsistence Policy. Some of you may already
35 be aware of this. The U.S. Departments of Interior and
36 Agriculture conducted virtual listening sessions and
37 Tribal consultations on January 10th, 20th, 21st and
38 28th, 2022 on Federal Subsistence Policy. The
39 Secretaries requested input from Tribes, Tribal
40 consortia, and Alaska Native Organizations and
41 Corporations. The DOI Senior Advisor for Alaska
42 Affairs and Strategic Priorities met with Federal
43 Subsistence Board members prior to the consultations to
44 introduce Board members and Department of Interior
45 leadership and to provide Board members with an update
46 on DOI activities related to subsistence management.

47
48 RealID for travel to Council meetings.

49
50

0302

1 Over the past two plus years we have
2 been reminding Council members about the change in
3 requirements for IDS at airports. Beginning May 3rd of
4 2023, so next year, every air traveler will need to
5 present a RealID-complaint driver's license, or other
6 acceptable form of identification, like a passport, to
7 fly within the United States. This is applicable even
8 when you fly on small Bush carriers. Please note that
9 all Council members will need to make sure that they
10 have the required RealID fall 2023 Council meetings.

11
12 Lawsuit from the State of Alaska.

13
14 As you've been previously briefed, on
15 August 10th, 2020 the State of Alaska filed a lawsuit
16 against the Federal Subsistence Board after it adopted
17 Emergency Special Action WSA19-14. This special action
18 allowed the Village of Kake to engage in a community
19 harvest of up to four bull moose and 10 male Sitka
20 black-tailed deer. Also included in the lawsuit was
21 temporary special action WSA20-3 which closed Federal
22 public lands in Units 13A and 13B to moose and caribou
23 hunting by non-Federally-qualified users for the 2020-
24 2022 regulatory cycles. As part of the lawsuit the
25 State asked the court to issue two preliminary
26 injunctions. One to prevent the Unit 13 closure from
27 taking effect and another vacating the Kake hunt and
28 prohibiting the Board from allowing any additional
29 emergency hunts related to the impacts of Covid19.

30
31 On December 3rd, 2021, the U.S.
32 District Court denied the State's request for a
33 declaratory and permanent injunctive relief finding in
34 favor of the Federal Subsistence Board on both matters.

35
36 The court found that, first, it lacks
37 jurisdiction over the issues associated with the Kake
38 hunt because that portion of the State's claims are
39 moot. And, two, the Federal Subsistence Board's
40 decision to close Unit 13 and 13B to non-subsistence
41 was both legally permissible and supported by the
42 information on record. The State recently filed an
43 appeal of the District Court's decision but the Ninth
44 Circuit has not yet set a schedule for briefing.

45
46 I would be happy to answer any
47 questions, thank you, Mr. Chair and Council members.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Council questions on
50

0303

1 the presentation Robbin's given, the OSM overview of
2 various things. Any questions from the Council.

3

4 (No comments)

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You did a great job
7 there Robbin. I'm actually astounded at how many
8 people you poached from the State.

9

10 (Laughter)

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I recognize several
13 of these.

14

15 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: SO I guess it's
18 those 10,000 signing bonuses or whatever you're doing
19 there but doing a good job. We need -- I was very
20 concerned about the amount of Staff at OSM, especially
21 in the last few years, I'm really happy to see the
22 quality of people that you had join the Staff there at
23 OSM.

24

25 And so I.....

26

27 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I was informed that
30 Kanuti Staff wildlife got a hold of OSM and said they
31 had nothing to present and so that would have been --
32 Karen would have told me that, but I just know that.
33 So I put them -- it was not on my agenda, I put Kanuti
34 there because Kanuti's always given us project reports
35 and so forth but they have nothing to present so that's
36 fine.

37

38 We're down to confirm the fall meeting
39 2022, which is under Tab 12. So Council discretion on
40 -- I prefer the first two weeks in October, are
41 preferable. Our moose season goes to the 1st of
42 October and so we've had the hunt up to the end of --
43 if we get a warm fall we have to hunt right up to the
44 end of the season sometimes. And so any Council
45 members have preference for.....

46

47 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, this is Katya.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Katya.

50

0304

1 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, right now you have
2 October 19th and 20th selected. That doesn't prevent,
3 you know, the Council from moving the meeting except
4 that only one constraint here we can only handle two
5 Council meetings per week. So the first week of
6 October we already have Seward Peninsula and Eastern
7 Interior Council meeting that week.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh. Our
10 calendar doesn't show that, fall of 2022, it doesn't
11 show that.

12
13 MS. WESSELS: I know, somehow you got
14 the wrong calendar inserted in your meeting material
15 and that's our apologies.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, no problem.

18
19 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
20 Kevin.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Kevin.

23
24 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, I remember that
25 discussion in wanting to push it a little later into
26 October because that first week of October and the
27 second week of October, there are people who like to
28 fish all the way up to freeze-up, myself included for
29 other fish.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's a valid
32 reason. So I'm good with October 19 and 20 as meeting
33 dates. Other Council members want to weigh in on those
34 dates for preference.

35
36 MR. GERVAIS: This is Tim, I like that
37 19th and 20th.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, great.

40
41 MR. SIMON: It's good for me.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Pollock's good.

44
45 MR. SIMON: Yes.

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What do you think
48 Arnold.

49
50

0305

1 MR. DEMOSKI: I was just looking at the
2 dates, it's good for me. I don't have anything at that
3 time, I don't think, it's kind of far out but it's
4 good.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And, Don.

7
8 (No comments)

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Still there Don, go
11 ahead.

12
13 MR. HONEA: Yeah, I actually keep going
14 off and on with my mute here but, yeah, I'm pretty
15 flexible anything is open, that's good.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So it looks
18 like we'll retain those dates of October 19 and 20.

19
20 MS. WESSELS: Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And then location.

23
24 MS. WESSELS: Right now at least
25 Fairbanks if it's in person.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would prefer
28 Fairbanks, how does the Council feel about that.

29
30 MR. VENT: Fairbanks is good.

31
32 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, Fairbanks would
33 be fine with me.

34
35 MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah, Fairbanks would be
36 fine.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So then we
39 have to select our winter meeting, or what we refer to
40 as our spring meeting, which is under Tab 13.

41
42 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Katya.

45
46 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, so as you can see
47 from your calendars the meeting window is open from
48 February 21st to April 7th. The only week that is
49 currently taken and you won't have it on your calendar
50

0306

1 because that happened after the meeting materials were
2 sent to you, the only week that is completely taken is
3 March 13th through 17th, Bristol Bay and Southcentral
4 are meeting that week. All other weeks are open.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. What's
7 preferable to the Council. Is there any conflict.

8

9 MR. DEMOSKI: Mr. Chair, this is
10 Arnold.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Arnold.

13

14 MR. DEMOSKI: I would prefer early
15 August or early October, that's right during our
16 hunting season, the 21st -- August 22nd to the 31st and
17 then September.....

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Wait, wait, wait,
20 we're under Tab 13, it's the spring meeting.

21

22 MR. DEMOSKI: Oh, sorry about that.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the fall meeting
25 was selected as October 19 and 20.

26

27 MR. DEMOSKI: Sorry about that, I was
28 on the wrong place.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any dates
31 conflict with something that's happening for Council
32 members where we can get the most Council members to
33 attend a two day meeting in late February through early
34 April.

35

36 MR. GERVAIS: The first three weeks of
37 March for me are not good. Of available, that the 21st
38 through the 23rd or the week of March 27th through the
39 31st.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You don't want the
42 first week in April.

43

44 MR. GERVAIS: No, the first week in
45 April is fine.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can leave my house
48 better, if I have to travel. I burn wood and so I can
49 travel easier, I can leave my house without leaving

50

0307

1 somebody keeping my fire going, so I would actually
2 prefer the.....

3
4 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, the first week of
5 April works fine.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: 4 and 5, what's the
8 Council think about 4 and 5 of April.

9
10 MR. DEMOSKI: 4 and 5 works for me.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

13
14 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
15 Kevin.

16
17 MR. SIMON: Jack, This is Pollock.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Pollock.

20
21 MR. SIMON: Yeah, the first week of
22 April there's a dog race in end of March into April
23 every weekend there's a dog race so there'd be a dog
24 race in the first week of April. It's okay with me,
25 but I wouldn't be able to attend because I'll be going
26 to that race. Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right. Which --
29 so you have dog races the end of March and in early
30 April, both weeks.

31
32 MR. SIMON: Yes.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So what's the
35 Council -- Tim, were you good with the third week of --
36 the week of the 20th?

37
38 MR. VENT: Mr. Chair, this is Darrell.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

41
42 MR. VENT: Yeah, if we're doing these
43 on a Wednesday, Thursday or something, I think it would
44 be good because the dog races don't start to -- they
45 usually start, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Friday,
46 Saturday, Sunday.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, okay. So
49 what.....

50

0308

1 MR. GERVAIS: So you're asking.....

2

3 MR. SIMON: Jack.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, go ahead,
6 Pollock.

7

8 MR. SIMON: Yes, like Darrell said, if
9 you have Monday, Tuesday, the race is during the
10 weekend so that's fine.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So 4 and 5 is
13 okay, which is Tuesday and Wednesday.

14

15 MR. SIMON: Okay.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So travel on Monday,
18 if we're traveling which is the 3rd.

19

20 MR. SIMON: Okay.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So 4 and 5 still
23 okay, and Tim.....

24

25 MR. VENT: Yep, yep.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Arnold was good
28 with that one.

29

30 MR. DEMOSKI: Yes, that's good.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

33

34 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
35 Kevin.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And then, Don.

38

39 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, can you hear
40 me.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, go ahead. Go
43 ahead.

44

45 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, we just lost our
46 power here in McGrath, it's back on now but anyhow I
47 missed that fall meeting schedule, did we decide on 19
48 and 20?

49

50

0309

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, okay, yeah, we
2 decided on 19/20.

3
4 MR. WHITWORTH: Okay, that sounds good.
5 And April 4 and 5 for the spring meeting sounds good to
6 me too.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And what
9 about you, Don.

10
11 (No comments)

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don has a hard time
14 unmuting. Well, maybe he dropped off, I don't know.
15 So the majority of the Council is good with 4 and 5 of
16 April, so meeting place. And we may be able to travel
17 so if we meet in the fall in Fairbanks we may be able
18 to travel Galena or sometimes to McGrath. We used to
19 go down to Aniak.

20
21 MR. VENT: Yeah, possibly Aniak or
22 McGrath.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Aniak never had a
25 meeting place for us. They had that gymnasium and it's
26 like an echo chamber in there. It was a nightmare.

27
28 REPORTER: Nightmare.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And our court
31 reporter, it just drives her nuts trying to listen to
32 that meeting. And nobody can even hear you -- even at
33 20 feet in front of you people can't hear what the
34 Council is saying because it echo's off the walls in
35 there. So Aniak hasn't had a place to meet. Karen was
36 going to explore some other places but that's not
37 actually happened. Do you know of any place to meet in
38 Aniak, Kevin.

39
40 MR. WHITWORTH: I don't but I could
41 contact people there and get back with you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right. We
44 haven't had a meeting on the Kuskokwim in a long time.
45 Aniak would be a good place to meet if we could get a
46 meeting place. So we met in McGrath at one of our last
47 meetings in the fall of 2019, it was in McGrath, and we
48 haven't been to Galena for awhile. And with the
49 fisheries issues on the Yukon, Galena might be a real
50

0310

1 prime meeting spot.

2

3 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, this is Katya.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Katya.

6

7 MS. WESSELS: Though the meeting in the
8 winter 2023, that will be already the beginning of the
9 new wildlife cycle. The fisheries cycle, when you will
10 discuss proposals that were submitted will be the fall
11 of this year, that's when you're meeting in Fairbanks.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

14

15 MS. WESSELS: In the winter of 2023,
16 that's when you will be developing wildlife proposals.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

19

20 MS. WESSELS: You can, you know, think
21 about it and explore possibilities, like where you can
22 meet, which facilities are available and we can just
23 put to be determined at this point.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, a priority for
26 me would be going to Aniak to talk to the Kuskokwim
27 people because we used to get quite a bit of
28 participation there at Aniak. And we haven't been down
29 on the Kuskokwim for a long time other than McGrath, in
30 the headwaters but I would like to have a meeting in
31 Aniak if we could get a different meeting place than
32 the gym.

33

34 MS. WESSELS: We can put Aniak and we
35 can research that and, you know, work with you guys
36 before the next meeting and then we can report if we
37 could find a different place there.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Is that
40 acceptable to the Council.

41

42 MR. SIMON: Jack, it's good for me.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

45

46 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, that's fine.

47

48 MR. VENT: It's fine with me too.

49

50

0311

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so pretty much
2 agreeable, anybody opposed to Aniak as a meeting place.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. We'll pencil in
7 Aniak if we can find an acoustically acceptable place.
8 Is that fine with you, Salena?

9
10 REPORTER: It is. And I also have a
11 contact in Aniak, I'll check with her.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

14
15 REPORTER: She does hearings down there
16 so I'll ask her.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, all right,
19 that'd be great. Okay, we've got our meeting location.
20 Closing comments from the Council. I should go down
21 the list here, Pollock is our elder, go ahead, Pollock,
22 give us your final closing comments.

23
24 MR. SIMON: Okay. I'm glad that I made
25 it, the land line phones, hold it up all day and my arm
26 is kind of tired. But yeah I've been on this Board for
27 awhile so -- I'm older now and I'll be on there a
28 couple more years maybe, I hope anyway. But, it's good
29 discussion about fish and we don't have no king salmon,
30 no chum salmon runs here no more. We don't see any
31 caribou and moose population is down. So up here in
32 the Koyukuk sometimes life is kind of tough and it's
33 been cold all of January and up to now it's stayed
34 cloudy a little bit here in Allakaket so -- so I like
35 to fish in winter also because got a dozen dogs and I
36 see to them every day, cook for them every day and then
37 pack wood in and that's it. But maybe it'll get warm
38 now. No caribou again this year so -- 1974 they start
39 Haul Road -- Pipeline Haul Road up north and prior to
40 that we had caribou just around Allakaket and after
41 they put in the Haul Road there's traffic on the road,
42 day and night and they don't like the lights on the
43 trucks sometimes, there's hunting pressure up on the
44 road so the caribous are coming down more to the west
45 and they don't come into our area anymore so that road
46 does affect, you know, the caribou migration. And it'd
47 be a shame with Ambler Road, they could detour those
48 caribou, they're kind of scared of the road. I talk
49 with some people who work in Red Dog, they said that
50

0312

1 caribou come to the road and stop and turn around and
2 make a big circle, then just dash across, so road
3 development will affect the caribou migrations out and
4 I don't like the road but that's progress, can't fight
5 progress all the time so, anyway, caribou used to come
6 across the Koyukuk River down to the Ray*Mountains
7 where there's a lot of quick caribou feed in December
8 and come March and February, they come out and they're
9 pretty fat. We used to less hunting those in those
10 days but we don't see them anymore.

11

12 Thank you, Jack, for Chairing our
13 meeting, I appreciate that and Jenny -- I heard Jenny's
14 brother was sick so she didn't get on this time, and
15 I'm sorry about that. I guess that's it now, thank
16 you, Jack.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much
19 Pollock. The Council should be aware that Pollock was
20 actually appointed in 1993 also. He was on the Council
21 for awhile, then he was off, then he came back on
22 several years ago. So Pollock has been on here for a
23 long time and has been involved with the Koyukuk River
24 Advisory for years and years, so appreciate Pollock's
25 service to this Council and to the land and to the
26 people. Thanks so much Pollock.

27

28 MR. SIMON: Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to go
31 down to Kevin, you want to give a closing comment.

32

33 MR. WHITWORTH: Yes, thank you, Mr.
34 Chair, can you hear me?

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, we hear
37 you fine.

38

39 MR. WHITWORTH: Okay. Good. Yeah,
40 thank you to OSM Staff for all your help and effort
41 here in this meeting, it's a lot to put together.
42 Still lots to do, I guess, but thank you very much for
43 all that support. Thanks for everybody volunteering on
44 this Council, new members, Darrell, glad you're back
45 on. And look forward to the next meeting.

46

47 That's all, thank you.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Kevin.

50

0313

1 So, Tim.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you there Tim.

6

7 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, thank you, Jack.

8 Yeah, I would like to offer up condolences to Jenny's
9 family, I hope things go okay there with the situation
10 of her brother. I was -- I think this is the first
11 time I've worked with Arnold and Kevin in a meeting, I
12 was impressed with both their input and insight on the
13 topics so it's a big bolster to our meeting. I would
14 like to hear more from Rebecca, and welcome her.

15

16 I will continue to monitor what the
17 activities are with the State of Alaska bycatch task
18 force even though the composition was not that good
19 regarding subsistence I do know a couple of the fellows
20 that are on there that have other commercial seats so
21 they are -- should be able to get some good input and
22 feedback from those folks. And then in the initial
23 comment, those people representing the state of Alaska
24 said they were open to hear from different
25 organizations so hopefully the Federal Subsistence
26 Board will be able to get some point of views
27 established in there.

28

29 One thing I forgot to mention when we
30 were talking about the bycatch is I just wanted other
31 -- the Council members to know that I have seen in
32 recent years two Federal fishery closures that came
33 down from NOAA where they just shut the commercial
34 fishing off right away, or delayed it for a certain
35 amount of months. The first one I'm thinking of is up
36 in Maine with the lobster fishermen and they had to
37 keep their gear out of water while the whales were
38 migrating across their coast, and then the second one
39 is California dungeness crab fishermen, they also had
40 to delay their season, one delayed season and one early
41 closure of the season because NOAA wanted the crab pots
42 out of the water to avoid -- or to reduce the potential
43 for the whales to get hung up in the buoy lines of the
44 crab gear. So anyways, those are two incidences in the
45 very near -- closer present that NOAA stepped in quite
46 dramatically and shut down Federal fisheries because
47 they had concerns with -- conservation concerns for
48 whale. So maybe at some point they'll be more
49 receptive to conservation concerns for the salmon.

50

0314

1 And just like to thank the members and
2 OSM Staff and all the other people from the other
3 agencies that contributed to our meeting, thanks for
4 your input and giving us the information that we need.
5 We're certainly not professionals in what we do and
6 we're happy to have your expertise and guidance on the
7 issues that affect our Council. Thank you, very much.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Tim.
10 Always appreciate all your comments and being on the
11 phone this time, it's really good to have you back on
12 there.

13
14 Arnold. Closing comment Arnold.

15
16 MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah, I just want to
17 thank the Staff and everybody that put the meeting
18 together. It was a really good meeting, a lot of
19 information. What else, oh, I just wanted to thank
20 Darrell, Tim and Kevin for volunteering their time for
21 the bycatch issue, I'm glad all three of them are on
22 there. So, no, it was a really good meeting and I look
23 forward to the next meeting. So that's all I had.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for those
26 comments. I think you did a great job, Arnold.

27
28 Darrell. Got a closing comment,
29 Darrell.

30
31 MR. VENT: I was waiting until after
32 Don was done.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don can go first,
35 but you're there, it takes him about a few minutes to
36 unmute that phone.

37
38 MR. VENT: Okay.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don -- if
41 you want Don to go first, Don, do you want to do it.

42
43 (No comments)

44
45 MR. VENT: I guess Don is not there so
46 I guess I'll have to chime in.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, go ahead. Go
49 ahead, Darrell.

50

0315

1 MR. VENT: All right. Yeah, you know,
2 it's always a pleasure to be with you, you know, all
3 this knowledge involved in here. And I remember back
4 when I was first starting there, Ray, he was -- he did
5 a good job in there, Ray, Jack and Pollock, you've been
6 on here for many years and that really, really helps us
7 understand this ANILCA and ANCSA and all this
8 management that we have to deliberate on with State,
9 tribe and the Federal government, you know, it's always
10 a pretty complex situation. And the amount of
11 knowledge you guys all bring to this is really, really
12 exceptional. I learn a lot. You know I'm willing to
13 step up and try to help out in any way. I think that
14 we all are and it's good -- it's a good, you know,
15 Federal Subsistence Board has probably recognized that
16 we are probably a pretty well organized group of people
17 here and I commend you guys for that.

18
19 You know I had a bum situation there a
20 couple years back when I was released from the Board
21 and I am very pleased to be back on. It's hard to be
22 away from something that you.....

23
24 (Teleconference interference -
25 participants not muted - on hold)

26
27 MR. VENT:put your whole heart
28 into, is to try to protect our lands from -- with the
29 management and learning how to work with management to
30 sustain our cultural ways.

31
32 It's harder when you're in two
33 different systems, you know, like say for instance if
34 you live in the Fairbanks area but you're from a
35 culture that's out in the village, I understand that
36 part too because I had to go to school in order to
37 learn more about, you know, what it takes to live out
38 there in the city, it's not the same as living in the
39 village. The village, you rely really heavily on your
40 cultural and traditional uses, or subsistence they call
41 it, but for me it's cultural and traditional. It's
42 relied heavily upon in the villages because the people
43 don't have the jobs to maintain their lifestyle. They
44 have to live on the subsistence foods that are listed
45 for uses and it's becoming increasingly hard to live
46 that type of lifestyle. That is why we are here on
47 these WIRACs, Koyukuk River Advisory, TCC Task Force,
48 you know, these all help us understand the system, the
49 management style and sometimes it may look bleak for us
50

0316

1 but we always have hope in the way we try to organize.
2 And I like what Charlie Wright did there for the Yukon
3 River and also other areas, it's good to have these
4 people there.

5

6 And, you know, there's some other Board
7 members that in the past who were pretty influential or
8 knew more about than what I was, you know, I -- I
9 learned from Robert Walker, you know, and Jack, Ray,
10 and it's been really helpful in order to understand how
11 we proceed with the proposals, you know, amendments,
12 revisions. I enjoy this kind of work. It's always
13 good to dig into subjects and express your feelings.
14 I'm always going to be in that sort of situation where
15 I will question what goes in front of us.

16

17 So I thank everybody for being in this
18 meeting. I'm just glad to be back in and helping you
19 guys out as much as I could.

20

21 Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much
24 Darrell, appreciate those comments. Don, did you get
25 back on here.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So maybe Don's phone
30 died, I wanted to get a final comment from him.

31

32 So my comments would be I really
33 appreciate the new members Kevin, Arnold and good to
34 have Darrell back on here, they're real strong members.
35 And I'm a little concerned that Rebecca's not
36 participating, last meeting or this meeting, to a large
37 degree so I'm a little concerned about that. That area
38 down there needs representation and -- but maybe she's
39 still digging snow off her roof, or no telling what
40 she's got going on.

41

42 But these are important meetings.
43 They're extremely important meetings. I put a lot of
44 energy into a some of this stuff. I really want to
45 commend Katya for stepping up to the plate, Karen
46 retired the day before, she basically didn't know where
47 some of the stuff was but she did an exemplary job of
48 pulling this meeting together for us. She's like a
49 cat, she landed on her feet. I appreciate the OSM

50

0317

1 Staff participation and working throughout the year
2 with us on various issues. I've been working with Lisa
3 on this wildlife special action thing. I appreciate
4 the State being here, Glenn gives us a lot of really
5 important information from the State's perspective.
6 And I really appreciated Charlie Wright being on this
7 call in helping present his special fisheries action.

8

9 So I think we deliberated all the
10 issues thoroughly. We've still got -- it's 4:00
11 o'clock, we did real well. I'm looking forward to our
12 next meeting and I hope you have good spring and
13 summer.

14

15 So that'd be my closing comments. So
16 any further comments from the Council.

17

18 MR. VENT: Yeah, this is Darrell.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

21

22 MR. VENT: Yeah, I think my buddy Don
23 must be having his afternoon nap there.

24

25 (Laughter)

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think his phone
28 died, I have a strong feeling about. So the Chair will
29 entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting. And I want
30 to give you my.....

31

32 MR. DEMOSKI: Motion to adjourn, this
33 is Arnold.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Wait, wait, wait. I
36 want to give you my phone number, I don't know if you
37 have my home phone number, (907) 678-2007. If you have
38 any issue about anything, you can call me up, (907)
39 678-2007. So you're welcome to call me up, if you got
40 my email or just message me, whatever it takes, I'm
41 always available to deal with various issues that are
42 not occurring during our meetings. So further comments
43 or whatever you want to talk about, so my door is open.

44

45 So a motion to adjourn. Is that you
46 Darrell a motion.

47

48 MR. VENT: Yeah, this is Darrell, okay.

49

50

0318

1 MR. WHITWORTH: Second.

2

3 MR. VENT: Did Don come on, I thought I
4 heard Don.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you there, Don.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Nope. A second to
11 adjourn.

12

13 MR. VENT: Second.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I thought you
16 motioned.

17

18 MR. VENT: Oh, yeah, I motioned, I
19 thought that was Arnold motioned.

20

21 MR. WHITWORTH: Second.

22

23 MR. VENT: Was that you Arnold that
24 motion.

25

26 MR. WHITWORTH: Second.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Was that you
29 seconding, Arnold.

30

31 MR. WHITWORTH: This is Kevin, I'll
32 second.

33

34 REPORTER: I have Darrell and Kevin,
35 we're going with that.

36

37 MR. VENT: Okay, I motion.

38

39 MR. DEMOSKI: Okay, I motion.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, it bleeds over
42 the top and I can't quite hear it but thanks so much
43 Salena.

44

45 So any further comments.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question called on

50

0319

1 the motion. Anybody question.

2

3 MR. VENT: Question.

4

5 MR. DEMOSKI: Question.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those in favor of
8 adjourning, please signify by saying aye.

9

10 IN UNISON: Aye.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

13

14 (No opposing votes)

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Meeting is
17 adjourned. It's five after 4:00 on my clock, have a
18 great spring and summer, we'll see you in the fall.

19

20 (Off record)

21

22 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

23

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0320

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

4) ss.

5 STATE OF ALASKA)

6

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

10

11 THAT the foregoing pages numbered ____ through
12 ____ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the
13 WESTERN INTERIOR SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
14 MEETING, VOLUME II taken electronically on the 17th day
15 February 2022;

16

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

22

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

25

26 DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 10th
27 day of March 2022.

28

29

30

31 _____
32 Salena A. Hile
33 Notary Public, State of Alaska
34 My Commission Expires: 09/16/22

35

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