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NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

TELECONFERENCE
February 18, 2021
9:00 a.m

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Thomas Baker, Chairman
 - Elmer Armstrong
 - Wilbur Howath
 - Michael Kramer
 - Calvin Moto, II
 - Robert Schaeffer
 - Enoch Shiedt
- Regional Council Coordinator, Zach Stevenson

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Teleconference - 2/18/2021)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Then let me open the meeting. I'll call the meeting to order at 9:00.

MR. STEVENSON: That's okay, we will call the meeting to order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay. Give me a roll call for the record please.

MR. STEVENSON: I don't know if Thomas heard me, like to know where we are in the agenda, for those who cannot find one, it was also provided to the people at Kotzebue.

CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Could you call the roll call, Zach, that way we could be recorded?

MR. STEVENSON: Sure. For those on the phone please state your name and where you're located. This is the coordinator, my name is Zachary Stevenson. I had a stroke and right now I'm in New Jersey where I'm recovering.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Enoch Shiedt, Chair.

MR. BAKER: Thomas Baker, Kotzebue, RAC member.

MR. HOWATH: Wilbur Howath, Noorvik.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer Armstrong, Jr., Noorvik.

MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Elmer.

MR. KRAMER: Michael Kramer, Vice Chair, Kotzebue.

MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Mr. Kramer. Who else is on the line?

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1 MR. SPARKS: Tom Sparks, BLM, Nome.

2

3 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Tom.

4

5 MR. SPARKS: Good morning.

6

7 MR. FYIE: Carlos Fyie, Park Service,
8 Kotzebue.

9

10 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning.

11

12 MS. MIKOW: Beth Mikow, ADF&G, Division
13 of Subsistence in Fairbanks.

14

15 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Beth.

16

17 MS. DAGGETT: This is Carmen Daggett,
18 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Barrow.

19

20 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Carmen.

21

22 (Teleconference interference -
23 participants not muted - television playing in
24 background)

25

26 MR. BURCH: This is Mark Burch with the
27 Department of Fish and Game in the Palmer office.

28

29 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Mark.

30

31 MR. HANSON: This is Alex Hanson,
32 Alaska Department of Fish and Game here in Kotzebue.

33

34 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Alex.

35

36 MR. HANSON: Morning.

37

38 MR. SCHAEFFER: Good morning. This is
39 Damon Schaeffer with NANA Regional Corporation in
40 Anchorage.

41

42 MR. STEVENSON: Hey, good morning,
43 Damon.

44

45 MS. CRAVALHO: Good morning. This is
46 Liz Cravalho with NANA Lands in Kotzebue. Good to hear
47 you.

48

49 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Liz.

50

0004

1 MR. RICHARDS: This is Mark Richards
2 with Resident Hunters of Alaska calling in from
3 Fairbanks.

4
5 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Mark.
6

7 MS. SWEENEY: Good morning everybody.
8 This is Brittany Sweeney with Selawik Wildlife Refuge
9 in Kotzebue.

10
11 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Brittany.
12

13 MS. ATKINSON: Hi. This is Hannah
14 Atkinson with the Western Arctic National Park Lands in
15 Kotzebue.

16
17 MR. STEVENSON: Hello, Hannah.
18

19 MR. REAM: Good morning everyone. This
20 is Joshua Ream with the National Park Service,
21 Anchorage Regional Office.

22
23 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Dr. Ream.
24

25 MS. FLOREY: Hi. This is Victoria
26 Florey, National Park Service, Regional Office.

27
28 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Victoria.
29 I think that's everybody.

30
31 MS. PETRIVELLI: Oh, wait.....
32

33 MR. STEVENSON: Do we miss anyone?
34

35 MS. PETRIVELLI: I didn't jump in, this
36 is Pat Petrivelli, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage.
37

38 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Pat.
39

40 MS. OKADA: Hi. Good morning. This is
41 Marcy Okada, Gates of the Arctic National Park based
42 out of Fairbanks.

43
44 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Marcy.
45

46 MS. LAVINE: Good morning. This is
47 Robbin LaVine, Anthropologist with the Office of
48 Subsistence Management.

49
50

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1 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Robbin.

2

3 MS. VOORHEES: Good morning. This is
4 Hannah Voorhees, Anthropologist at OSM.

5

6 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning. I didn't
7 hear your name.

8

9 MS. VOORHEES: Sorry, Zach. This is
10 Hannah Voorhees.

11

12 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Hannah.

13

14 MR. VICKERS: Good morning. This is
15 Brent Vickers, I'm also a Cultural Anthropologist with
16 the Office of Subsistence Management. Nice to.....

17

18 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Brent.

19

20 MR. VICKERS:meet you all. Good
21 morning.

22

23 MS. HYER: Good morning, Council
24 members. This is Karen Hyer, Biologist with the Office
25 of Subsistence Management.

26

27 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, Karen.

28

29 MS. FRONSTIN: Good morning. This is
30 Martha Fronstin for Western Arctic National Park Lands
31 here in Kotzebue.

32

33 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning.

34

35 MR. FADDEN: Good morning. This is
36 Steve Fadden, Acting Division Chief for Wildlife,
37 Office of Subsistence Management, Anchorage.

38

39 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Steve. Good
40 morning.

41

42 MR. PAPPAS: Good morning, Council.
43 This is George Pappas, Office of Subsistence
44 Management. I am the State Subsistence Liaison and
45 currently acting as the Fisheries Division Lead for
46 OSM, and I'll be.....

47

48 MR. STEVENSON: Good morning, George.

49

50

0006

1 MR. PAPPAS:the Leadership Team
2 member for this meeting. Thank you. Good morning.
3 Morning, Zach.

4
5 MR. STEVENSON: Anybody else. Mr.
6 Chair, the floor is yours.

7
8 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Thank.....

9
10 MR. STEVENSON: We have some -- my
11 understanding is that the -- one is the election of
12 officers, we're required the law to do the election of
13 officers once a year even though we did the election of
14 officers in November, we have to do that for 2021 so
15 we'll do the election of officers after we approve the
16 agenda.

17
18 Okay.

19
20 Yeah, there is an item, the approval of
21 the charter. The charter is the rules and regulations
22 for this group.

23
24 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay. I.....

25
26 MR. STEVENSON: This group.....

27
28 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay, thank you,
29 Zach. Let me ask first of the members. Elmer, you
30 have the -- Elmer and Wilbur -- Wilbur say he have the
31 agenda, Elmer, do you have one?

32
33 MR. HOWATH: Yes, I do. I got mine in
34 the mail.

35
36 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay, lucky, you
37 guys. Okay, and Mike did you get your agenda yet?

38
39 MR. KRAMER: No, I haven't. They said
40 that.....

41
42 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

43
44 MR. KRAMER:it'll be on the way.

45
46 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Yeah, she's on the
47 way, she dropped mine off. I got it now. She should
48 be there in a few minutes. Before we open -- okay,
49 thanks for the introductions and we're on No. 5,
50

0007

1 adopting the agenda, but it's hard for me to adopt the
2 agenda when Michael don't have it yet. We'll wait a
3 few minutes until he gets it.

4

5 (Pause)

6

7 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair. I was just
8 provided by our communications officer something to --
9 when the Council is ready, I will address that, the
10 request came in just now.

11

12 (Pause)

13

14 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Sorry, I had it on
15 mute. We will wait until Michael gets the agenda,
16 people, before we review and adopt the agenda and we'll
17 have elections right after.

18

19 (Pause)

20

21 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Hello, Mike, you get
22 your agenda yet?

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Mike Kramer.

27

28 (No comments)

29

30 (Pause)

31

32 MR. KRAMER: Okay, I got mine.

33

34 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay, you got your
35 agenda now?

36

37 MR. KRAMER: Yeah.

38

39 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay, we're down to
40 No. 5, review and adopt the agenda. If anybody got any
41 changes to the agenda please say so. The floor is now
42 open to make changes if needed.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: If there is no
47 changes I would like someone to adopt the agenda as
48 written.

49

50

0008

1 MR. BAKER: Mr. Chair, this is Thomas.
2 I move to adopt the agenda as presented.

3
4 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Do I have a second.

5
6 MR. HOWATH: Second.

7
8 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay, thank you all.
9 Now, okay, we're ready for elections, No. 6. We need a
10 Chair. I'm having so much problems this year it's hard
11 for me to run again it looks like, it's due to Corona.

12
13 Thomas, are you available if I nominate
14 you?

15
16 MR. BAKER: Yes.

17
18 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Do I have a second
19 from anyone.

20
21 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

22
23 MR. KRAMER: This is Mike, I'll second
24 it.

25
26 MR. STEVENSON: Zachary Stevenson for
27 the record. Do we have any nominations for the Chair.

28
29 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: I just went through
30 the nominations of -- election of officers, and I said
31 election of Chair.

32
33 MR. KRAMER: And Mike seconded it.
34 This is Mike I second it.

35
36 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay, thank you.
37 We're talking on top of each other because it's hard --
38 sorry guys. I just want to make sure it's recorded
39 somehow.

40
41 REPORTER: It is.

42
43 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Thank you.

44
45 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

46
47 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Anybody else going to
48 nominate anyone for the Chair.

49
50

0009

1 MR. HOWATH: No.

2

3 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: No, I guess -- Zach,
4 how you go about it when there's only one and so far
5 it's Thomas Baker.

6

7 MR. STEVENSON: That's okay.

8

9 CHAIRMAN SHIEDT: Okay, Thomas you have
10 the floor now.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
13 Moving on, do we have any nominations for Vice Chair.

14

15 MR. HOWATH: This is Wilbur Howath, I
16 nominate Mike Kramer.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur for
19 nominating Mike, do we have a second.

20

21 MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer, I second
22 that.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. Any
25 other nominations for Vice Chair.

26

27 MR. SHIEDT: I would like to close the
28 nominations.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
31 Well, congratulations, Mike, you are the Vice Chair
32 again. Thank you for all your service with the RAC.
33 Moving on, Secretary, do we have any nominations for
34 Secretary.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Would anyone like to
39 nominate a Secretary for this meeting?

40

41 MR. SHIEDT: I would like to nominate
42 Elmer Armstrong.

43

44 MR. KRAMER: Second.

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right. I heard
47 Attamuk nominate Elmer, Mike did you say something?

48

49 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I second it.

50

0010

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you.
2 Any other nominations besides Elmer for Secretary.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none,
7 congratulations Elmer, you are our new Secretary for
8 the RAC.

9
10 Moving down the agenda to Item No. 7,
11 review and approve previous meeting minutes. Does
12 anybody have any additions, any comments, edits to the
13 minutes.

14
15
16 (No comments)

17
18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, would
19 anyone like to move to approve our meeting minutes from
20 November last year.

21
22 (Teleconference interference -
23 participants not muted)

24
25 MR. KRAMER: This is Mike. I make a
26 motion to approve.....

27
28 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, I'll move to approve
29 the minutes -- the last meeting minutes.

30
31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike for
32 moving. Attamuk, was that a second.

33
34 MR. SHIEDT: Yes.

35
36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, all those
37 in favor please say aye for approving the minutes of
38 last November's meeting.

39
40 IN UNISON: Aye.

41
42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, everyone.
43 Meeting minutes for last November are now approved.

44
45 Going down to reports. Wilbur, would
46 you like to give us a report as a Council member.

47
48 MR. HOWATH: I just got my package not
49 too long ago and I don't really have any right now.

50

0011

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
2 Elmer, do you have anything to report.

3
4 MR. MOTO: No report.

5
6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.
7 Attamuk, would you like to go next.

8
9 MR. SHIEDT: I'll try to make it short.
10 Yes, I would like to report. Right from freeze up --
11 our salmon was late this summer, so was our trout also.
12 Our caribou came in late and hardly anybody get any
13 caribou until late. Noatak was the only ones that was
14 lucky but they had to go way up -- way up there. And I
15 -- the way I hear it from the villages as past Chair,
16 that the number -- caribou numbers were down. And
17 there's a lot of wolves being seen all over. I know
18 there's not much we could do about the wolves but let's
19 just say happy hunters you young boys out there. I
20 wish you luck getting some wolves because they're
21 really -- whatever we have here. And I got a call from
22 Buckland area saying that the caribou, between Selawik
23 and Buckland are running all day and they might be
24 getting skinny because wolves are chasing them all
25 over. All I could say they're really -- and they saw a
26 nice bunch between Selawik and Noorvik and a nice bunch
27 between Noatak and here. So their numbers must be high
28 and I know they're trying to get caribou and that's --
29 and our sheefish came in late -- I mean came down late.
30 We are now finally getting them at Pike's Spit(ph).

31
32 There's more to say but due to time I'm
33 going to -- that's about all I have to say.

34
35 Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for your
38 member report, Attamuk.

39
40 Mike, do you have anything to report.

41
42 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, this last fall, as
43 we all know that, you know, caribou hunting in our area
44 was pretty poor. I also got reports from Ambler, you
45 know, Shungnak area, they didn't get any until very
46 late and they didn't get very many at all.

47
48 The caribou herd that came through here
49 was pretty quick. I only got one, you know, with me
50

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1 working out at the airport and stuff, you know, pretty
2 busy because, you know, with this whole Covid thing
3 going on we're not able to get that much freight and so
4 been pretty busy at work. I only went out several
5 times, I got an RM880, I didn't fill the ticket. I
6 didn't run into anything.

7

8 You know the salmon run, as you heard,
9 is pretty poor, considered this somewhat a parent run
10 because five years ago they had a big die-off, you
11 know, with these going up river hopefully their numbers
12 will be somewhat stable four or five years from now but
13 it's unknown.

14

15 But the sheefish, you know, like
16 Attamuk said, that they're coming down here near
17 Kotzebue.

18

19 You know, one of the largest problems
20 we had last fall throughout the hunting season and I
21 tried to close, you know, non-resident and non-local
22 resident hunting into our region because of Covid19, to
23 which, was ignored, you know, that was when they chose
24 human life over money. And, you know, a lot of people,
25 even people that were waiting out at the airport, you
26 know, had racial slurs said to them from these hunters
27 and, you know, a lot of them about employees out that
28 way, out at the airport and, you know, it's getting
29 pretty ridiculous, you know, why they even allowed
30 people to come up here and hunt during the pandemic.
31 You know, back then we didn't have very many -- we
32 didn't even have one and then all of a sudden we got
33 one and it just flew wide open, next time we know, we
34 got how many of them, people positive. Me working out
35 at the airport, I've been -- I was working on pins and
36 needles because, you know, I have a preexisting lung
37 condition and I didn't know if I was going to get it or
38 not, but I know if I did get it I probably wouldn't
39 make it through it. But that's one of the things that
40 disgusted me the most this fall.

41

42 A lot of -- you know, I've heard a lot
43 of people in the area harvesting wolves in the Kotzebue
44 area, Noatak, you know, I wished that they'd go out
45 there and get more. I haven't been able to go up to
46 Ambler country because of the ice conditions and snow
47 conditions up there, but Ambler -- as much as I'd sure
48 like to get up there to camp but I was told that there
49 was a lot of poor, very poor areas even though it's
50

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1 been cold this winter. So I might have to just stick
2 around in the area.

3
4 Other than that, that's just about all
5 I got. Thank you.

6
7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you, Mike
8 for your report. Moving down, unless we had any other
9 Council members join us -- or had anybody join us while
10 we've been talking.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, I'll
15 move down to the Chair's report. Kind of echoing what
16 Mike and Attamuk have said. We had a pretty scarce
17 year, fall, winter here in Kotzebue. I can probably
18 count on both hands the number of people that were
19 lucky enough to go out and get caribou, at least get
20 more than one caribou. We had some cross the ice from
21 the Sisolik side over to Kotzebue in late
22 October/November, and they've slowly been milling
23 around.

24
25 The sheefish, as Attamuk noted, as
26 people have successful in jigging for sheefish, some
27 just right out of town, some by Pike's Spit, other than
28 that not too much to report.

29
30 Some people were fortunate and filled
31 their RM880s. I was not able to do that this year.

32
33 I'd say that's all that I have for the
34 Chair's report.

35
36 Moving on to Item No. 9, Service
37 awards. Zach, who should we have cover that one?

38
39 MR. SHIEDT: Hey, Mike [sic], could I
40 add something.

41
42 MR. STEVENSON: We try to give, Mr.
43 Chair, the awards out at the meetings where we have
44 people who have major milestones, have been around for
45 like 10 or 20 years, we do not have any this meeting.

46
47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,
48 Zach. Attamuk, did you have something?

49
50

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1 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, Mr. Chairman. Could
2 I add something about the caribou.

3
4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

5
6 MR. SHIEDT: I'm pretty sure the
7 numbers are down and that's what I'm hearing even from
8 North Slope, even when I went to Anchorage to the
9 Hospital, and in Huslia and Galena said not like
10 before, caribou never go up that way. Our caribou
11 always go towards Huslia too. And for your
12 information, they never see any yet. That's for your
13 information. And if the numbers are down, I think we
14 need to have an emergency meeting for -- like Mike
15 said, the pandemic, if it goes on.....

16
17 MR. STEVENSON: Do you want to.....

18
19 MR. SHIEDT:until next fall.

20
21 MR. STEVENSON:have a -- I want
22 to -- Mr. Chair, Thomas, I want to remind you that
23 before the group -- about five years ago, that allows
24 for this group to meet by teleconference or in person
25 if it wants to do so to discuss caribou, along with the
26 Western Interior Council, and they -- they -- so is the
27 North Slope -- so this group could do that if it wants
28 to discuss management of caribou across the range.

29
30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
31 Thank you, Zach.

32
33 MR. STEVENSON: And George just sent me
34 -- you're welcome.

35
36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So with that, would
37 anyone like to discuss that further during this
38 meeting, or would we like to circle back around to that
39 after this is closed and get a better idea of what
40 information we need regarding the caribou situation in
41 the region.

42
43 MR. KRAMER: This is Mike.

44
45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, Mike.

46
47 MR. KRAMER: You know, for our Council
48 members in Noorvik, Armstrong and Howath, you know, the
49 Council member report, you're giving your reports as
50

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1 to, you know, your views of what was harvested this
2 fall, whether caribou hunting was good, whether
3 whitefish fishing was good, that's the whole reason for
4 that, is for -- you know, were the berries -- were a
5 lot of the berries ripe, you guys have a lot of bear
6 problems; that's pretty much what that Council reports
7 are, Councilman Armstrong and Howath.

8
9 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, okay, this is
10 Wilbur. This fall I didn't even see caribou until this
11 winter. So I saw some after freeze up crossing down at
12 Kotzebue area and above Onion Portage. My son brought
13 me a caribou but he had to go way up there.

14
15 But, anyway, yeah, and the moose -- I
16 know this is declining too. There's a lot of females,
17 which is good and calves, but as soon as the season
18 opened they just disappeared, they're practically as
19 smart as us.

20
21 So anyways, fishing, I noticed the
22 salmon are really going up river on the other side, not
23 the Kobuk, what's the river across there going up --
24 Melvin, yes, we get a lot of humpies through here and
25 they came in thick, I had to pull my net. I -- there
26 was just too much humpies. But the salmon, the chum
27 was crossing at the Melvin -- or going up the Melvin,
28 mostly.

29
30 Berries were hard to find this year.
31 It was tough on us -- the cranberries are good though,
32 we're lucky to get cranberries.

33
34 And our folks that patrol these rivers
35 from here to Kiana and downward need to keep an eye on
36 those Life Below Zero hunters and boaters, the filming
37 crew or something. I was pretty upset when I heard that
38 they shot about, what, 10 to 12 female and calves. I
39 think that was two years ago. I tried to get somebody
40 to report that all right, they shouldn't have done
41 that. And I guess they're making parkies or mukluks or
42 something with the calves but -- and still they're
43 always flying around and coming here to Noorvik to pick
44 up those Life Below Zero folks and taking off and
45 filming. So we need to keep an eye on those folks.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.

50

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1 And thank you, Mike, for that clarification.

2

3 Elmer, would you like to add anything.

4

5 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, caribou hunting
6 was pretty tough this year. I know a lot of boaters
7 went up to hopefully get caribou. There was a couple
8 boats that got stuck, they got -- it started to freeze
9 up really quick and the Coast Guard had to get them and
10 bring them to safety. I know some hunters been going
11 out for -- on the Peninsula towards Buckland getting
12 some caribou. I think caribou are migrating further
13 towards their calving -- their winter grounds.

14

15 Salmon, I had to pull my net because I
16 was just getting a few chums and mostly pinks. I think
17 I got one trout. I didn't do any fishing for whitefish
18 because of the ice thickness.

19

20 The berries, we went around a few
21 spots, cranberries and there was some spots for
22 blueberries and aukpiks.

23

24 But, yeah, the caribou hunting season
25 was pretty tough.

26

27 I get my RM880 too but I went out once
28 and I didn't get any. So it was pretty tough on trying
29 to get a moose.

30

31 And I noticed, too, through social
32 media, there was a big pack between Noorvik and
33 Selawik, so it was seen through one of the pilots
34 flying from Selawik so we know the wolves are having an
35 impact on the caribou and moose.

36

37 Yeah, that's all I got, thank you.

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank.....

40

41 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you for.....

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER:you for that
44 Elmer.

45

46 MR. STEVENSON:that great update.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, we don't have
49 any service awards this time around so moving on to

50

0017

1 Item No. 10, public and tribal comment on nonagenda
2 items. Do we have anybody that would like to speak on
3 any of those or have anything they'd like to bring up
4 at this time.

5

6 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair. We have one
7 guest on the phone right now who's -- then think about
8 the caribou closure as well as the moose closure talk
9 to the Council, that's it.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,
12 Zach. Well, if you'd like to introduce yourself the
13 floor is yours.

14

15 MR. STEVENSON: Mark, now is your time.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 MR. STEVENSON: Now is the time for the
20 public to comment.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So, again, at this
25 time we'll take public comment, tribal comments, if
26 anybody would like to talk about anything not on the
27 agenda, please introduce yourself and the floor is
28 yours.

29

30 MR. STEVENSON: When we meet in
31 Kotzebue the meeting is on the radio so we have people
32 who call in. We're doing the best that we can under
33 the circumstances.

34

35 (Pause)

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So, Zach, you're
38 breaking up a little bit. Did we have anyone that
39 notified.....

40

41 MR. STEVENSON: I don't think.....

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER:you that they
44 were going to be joining us.

45

46 MR. STEVENSON:so -- I don't
47 think so, Mr. Chair. No, I don't think so.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,

50

0018

1 Zach. Well, if we don't have anyone with a public or
2 tribal comment on nonagenda items I'd like to move on
3 down to old business and we'll start with the review
4 Draft Wildlife Temporary Special Action, and it looks
5 like Hannah Voorhees will be working with us on that.

6

7

MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8

9

10 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair, before Dr.
11 Voorhees steps in -- Hannah, would you mind standing
12 down for a second here. Mr. Chair, this is George
13 Pappas, OSM. We have a technical problem. We have 10
14 individuals on our Regional Advisory Council but we
15 only have five on the line right now as far as I'm
16 aware. And because of that we can't take action items,
17 so we're going to have to go back -- when another
18 person shows up and we do receive a quorum of six
19 individuals, which I understand someone's on their way,
20 we can bring up the action items again that we've taken
21 so far. We can, no problem, progress through the
22 meeting as we are right now, as we're doing, but when
23 we get to say Item 11, you know, there's a couple of --
24 if you look at your agenda there's a couple of items
25 with asterisks behind them and the asterisks indicate
26 it's an action item.

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So just to give you a head's up, I
guess we're waiting for one person to get six people
for a quorum. We made a mistake earlier and we
apologize but we can keep going forward and with that
not I can turn it over to Dr. Voorhees.

33

34

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35

36

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George.

37

38

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40

MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, George.
Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Hannah Voorhees,
Anthropologist with Office of Subsistence Management.

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I'm here to review your draft Wildlife
Special Action Request for moose and caribou in Unit 23
and 26A for August and September 2021. This special
action would close hunting for moose and caribou on
Federal public lands to non-Federally-qualified users.
If you remember, the Council voted to submit this
special action request at your last meeting in November
2020 and then Lisa Maas, biologist at OSM, developed
some language for it, and hopefully you've had a chance

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1 to look over the draft request, or have it in front of
2 you now. I believe it was sent to the Chair and the
3 Vice Chair, but, if not, never fear, I'll summarize it
4 for you here as well. And this is not an action item.
5 We are just hoping to have a conversation on the record
6 with the Council and clarify some points that we needed
7 to finalize this request.

8

9 So I'll give you a little summary and
10 then I'll have a couple questions for the Council
11 members.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hannah, if I can
14 interrupt you for just a.....

15

16 MS. VOORHEES: So first I want to -- of
17 course.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah.
20 Just, if anybody's following along, we're on Page 15 in
21 the meeting materials packet. The page starts off with
22 to submit a special action request so if you'd like to
23 read along and have a better idea that's where we're
24 at.

25

26 Thank you, Hannah.

27

28 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, very much.
29 So first I want to give you a reminder of the rationale
30 behind this closure according to the Council's words
31 which we consulted at your meeting. So I'll start with
32 caribou.

33

34 The draft request, as written, states
35 that the closure for caribou is needed because of their
36 late migration in recent years. During your November
37 meeting, Council members stated that only Noatak had
38 harvested caribou so far and that they were just
39 starting -- caribou were just starting to come through
40 Kiana and Ambler, and this was a source of great stress
41 because even though winter harvest might be possible,
42 it was uncertain and it sounds like from some of the
43 Council member updates that there was not a robust
44 winter harvest. So the stated rationale for this
45 request is that the Council believes that transporters
46 and non-local hunters may be delaying caribou
47 migration. The draft request notes that the Council
48 hopes this action will also reduce aircraft traffic
49 creating an easier path for migrating caribou. And the

50

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1 closure is needed for continuation of subsistence
2 purposes when we're discussing caribou, moose is a
3 different situation and I'll get into that later.

4

5 So my first question for the Council is
6 does this sound accurate, does -- if you've had a
7 chance to look at the draft request as written by Lisa,
8 does it reflect your wishes and is there anything that
9 needs to be changed, updated or added to the portion
10 pertaining to caribou specifically?

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any Council members
13 have any feedback on this special action request.

14

15 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, this is Mike, Mr.
16 Chairman.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

19

20 MR. KRAMER: I kind of don't want to
21 make a decision on this one until we find out what is
22 our actual herd count because I know that they should
23 have that ready because it is our winter meeting. They
24 should have that herd count available soon, hopefully
25 at this meeting. And that's one of the reasons why we
26 based this special action request on, is the actual
27 herd count, and whether we -- whether or not we need to
28 put -- also along with the special action but an
29 emergency closure to all caribou hunting other than all
30 subsistence users within Game Management Unit 23 who
31 reside within our unit that can harvest caribou.

32

33 You know, I know that people who live
34 down in Anchorage, it's pretty difficult, but, you
35 know, with the migration that's been happening the last
36 couple of years, you know, I haven't seen one caribou
37 last fall -- one caribou, I haven't seen one, so.....

38

39 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

40

41 MR. KRAMER:you know, and I've
42 gone out several times. So I'd like to kind of hold on
43 to this one because I'd like to see what our caribou
44 herd count is before we make any further decisions on
45 this special action.

46

47 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

48

49 (No comments)

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1 MR. STEVENSON: Excuse me, Mr. Chair.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, Zach. I got
8 knocked off the call, I just got back in.

9

10 MR. STEVENSON: That's okay. That's
11 all right. I provided the Council with additional
12 information to read by Brittany Sweeney with the
13 Selawik Refuge addressing the status of the Western
14 Arctic Caribou Herd, did you already receive that
15 message?

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: No, I did not.

18

19 MR. STEVENSON: All right. The status
20 of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, I'm wondering if
21 Brittany Sweeney is available to address that issue.

22

23 MR. HANSON: Through the Chair, this is
24 Alex Hanson.....

25

26 MS. SWEENEY: Mr. Chair.

27

28 MR. HANSON:with Alaska
29 Department of Fish and Game, caribou biologist here in
30 Kotzebue. At any point I'm happy to provide a
31 biological update for the Western Arctic Herd. I
32 noticed there's.....

33

34 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

35

36 MR. HANSON:a space during agency
37 comments but if anybody would like that moved up I'm
38 happy to accommodate.

39

40 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you.

41

42 MS. SWEENEY: Good morning, Mr.
43 Chairman and Council members.

44

45 MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair.

46

47 MS. SWEENEY: This is Brittany Sweeney.
48 I would defer to Alex, he's the expert, I just put
49 together a summary newsletter. Thank you.

50

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1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany.
2 Thank you, Alex. Was someone else trying to say
3 something?

4
5 MS. VOORHEES: Yes, through the Chair.
6 This is Hannah Voorhees again with OSM. And I just
7 wanted to clarify that I believe there already was a
8 vote to submit this special action request at your
9 November 2020 meeting so I just wanted to remind you
10 that -- this is more -- it was an issue of, you know,
11 communication with the Council.....

12
13 (Teleconference interference -
14 participants not muted)

15
16 MS. VOORHEES:and just needing
17 the whole Council to weigh in on the draft before it's
18 finalized. So I believe if you, you know, maybe it
19 would become an action item if you decided to not
20 submit it. I just wanted to let you know that, you
21 know, this is not an action item and I understand that
22 you're looking for more information and that, you know,
23 I just, yeah, wanted to weigh in on the procedural
24 aspect of that. And also to ask if you'd like me to
25 continue presenting on the moose portion of this
26 special action request.

27
28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Hannah.
29 And, again, thank you for the clarification that this
30 is not an action item. I do appreciate you bringing it
31 up for review, that the Council can give you feedback
32 if there is any. If there is no feedback at this
33 point, I would appreciate hearing the moose portion
34 that you just mentioned.

35
36 MR. SHIEDT: Mr. Chair.

37
38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

39
40 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, Attamuk here. On
41 that -- the one she said, that, about the Western
42 Arctic Caribou Herd, from the local hunters all the way
43 to Huslia and that village next to Huslia and all the
44 way down to Unalakleet, that's the migration of the
45 caribou and so I think it's important, maybe, if rest
46 of like Nome could tell us what's going on with their --
47 what they're hearing about our caribou because I'm
48 pretty sure the numbers are down. That's what I'm
49 hearing. And we need to have this -- when this
50

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1 pandemic is over with, we need -- maybe we could just
2 meet in person and work on this here. Because if the
3 numbers are low we got to think of them kind of changes
4 to our caribou management plan.

5

6 Taikuu.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
9 Was there anything else from any of the Council
10 members.

11

12 MR. HOWATH: I have a question or a
13 comment, this is Wilbur.

14

15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

16

17 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, when we were waiting
18 for the caribou and I talked to a pilot, we've noticed
19 that they stayed way up north almost where the calving
20 grounds are. Most of the main herd stayed up there
21 into the real late fall. I don't know if they really
22 moved this winter or -- I was wondering where that nice
23 big part of the caribou disappeared to.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur. It
28 sounds like this would be a good time, Alex, to bump up
29 your -- any information you might have regarding what
30 we're talking about with the herd right now.

31

32 MR. HANSON: Yeah, through the Chair,
33 I'm happy to give that report. First off, since it's
34 fresh on my mind let me speak to Wilbur's comment about
35 caribou staying -- remaining high.

36

37 I think you're absolutely correct,
38 Wilbur, what we've seen this last winter and fall, is a
39 lot of the Western Arctic Herd and also some of the
40 Teshekpuk Herd are in the Central Brooks Range so a lot
41 of caribou kind of around upper Noatak and up in around
42 Anaktuvuk Pass, lots and lots of caribou up there. So
43 basically what we saw was a small portion of animals
44 which folks were aware of, came down through and
45 crossed the Kobuk, you know, closer to Kotzebue and
46 Noorvik, and there's, of course, caribou in the head of
47 the Buckland River and they didn't extend on to the
48 Seward Peninsula this year. So most of the caribou are
49 still on the North Slope or in the mountains, there's

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1 quite a few up by Wainwright as well.

2

3 So definitely strange, you know, kind
4 of similar to what we've seen the past couple years.
5 But it seems to be kind of more the normal pattern for
6 whatever reason. We're trying to understand that.

7

8 Let me jump into my overview here.

9

10 And speaking, also, to Member Kramer's
11 comments, just a quick update. We did not do a census
12 last summer. We did one in 2019 and so that's the
13 latest census we have and that was 244,000 caribou. So
14 we -- just as a kind of a historical reminder, the
15 population topped out around 495,000 or somewhat in
16 2003 and then we went through a long period of decline
17 and that bottomed out in 2016 at 201,000. So we saw a
18 turn around 2017 that came up to 259,000 and we feel
19 like the population is fairly stable right now. We're
20 planning to conduct a census coming up this summer and
21 excited to see what that number is.

22

23 So a couple of the other things that we
24 really looked at closely when we are unable to get a
25 census are some other important metrics. And one of
26 the most important metrics that we look at is adult
27 female mortality. And our adult female mortality in the
28 past few years has been a little bit higher than
29 average. Our long-term average is about 18 percent.
30 So the '19/20, this last winter was about 25 percent
31 which is a little bit higher. Previously we've had
32 some higher mortality in the past few years, the
33 highest being the winter of 2018 but that seems to be
34 stabilizing a little bit. Another thing we look at is
35 recruitment so that is the individuals coming in with
36 calves and so we're out doing a survey in spring, April
37 and May, looking at the number of calves that have come
38 into the population and how that compares to the
39 adults. And so that has been relatively average, about
40 17 calves to 100 adults, so no major concerns there,
41 they seem to be recruiting quite well. We also look at
42 calving each spring or summer in June on the calving
43 grounds, and over the past few years our parturition or
44 calving rates have been around 80 percent, a little bit
45 higher than 80, this past year was a little bit lower,
46 about 67 percent, but still no major concerns. That's
47 pretty average over the long-term.

48

49 So all in all we feel like the Western

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1 Arctic Herd is doing fairly well. We're watching very
2 closely for any indications that, you know, we might
3 see a continued decline, but as of right now we feel
4 like we're in a fairly safe spot. Our IM objective, so
5 this would be the number that was set forth in State
6 statute to make, you know, serious cut backs, for
7 instance, is 200,000, so we're above that and we feel
8 like we're in a fairly comfortable position. Our
9 harvest is still quite liberal.

10

11 As you know last winter at the Board of
12 Game meeting the bull season was opened to year-round
13 if the harvest is available.

14

15 We also, you know, do our best to track
16 harvest and with our RC907 permits we're getting people
17 -- more and more people are picking those up and we're
18 getting those reports and it's very helpful that, you
19 know, people are willing to participate in that program
20 and pick up their reports and return them to us. It
21 helps us track harvest over time, you know, within a
22 community or, you know, across the range of the herd or
23 specific areas. It also helps us understand harvest,
24 you know, between bulls and cows and how that might
25 change over time.

26

27 We recognize that certainly with the
28 lack of access that people have had, unfortunately, our
29 harvest has probably gone down but we're not able to
30 detect that very well yet because we need more
31 participation in the registration permits.

32

33 I would say, just touch briefly on our
34 -- we're wrapping up our calving ground study. Calving
35 grounds seems to be fairly healthy and it seems to be a
36 pretty good refuge from predation. In the first year
37 it was 2017 that we did our study, we had fairly high
38 mortality from brown bears but in the following two
39 years, brown bear mortality went way down and I think
40 it was a largely a function of those caribou calving a
41 little bit further to the north, outside of the home
42 range of those brown bears. And survival was quite
43 high on the calves. So I think the annual -- let's see
44 the annual survival for the Western Arctic Herd,
45 overall, was 37 percent, which is fairly good for the
46 Arctic Herd and higher than what the Teshekpuk saw in
47 years past. No major concerns for calving, things seem
48 to be fairly good there.

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1 And that's kind of, in summary, what I
2 have. I would say that we're in a fairly comfortable
3 position right now. I would certainly encourage folks
4 to, you know, report their harvest so that we can
5 understand that a little bit better, especially right
6 now when we're, you know, very concerned about harvest
7 and the inability to access animals, it helps us
8 understand what's going on.

9
10 And, you know, I will certainly report
11 back when we get our census number this summer,
12 hopefully that works out well, and hopefully the timing
13 and the weather and everything cooperates so that we
14 can get a good count and we're looking forward to that
15 and reporting back, you know, with those numbers at the
16 next upcoming meeting.

17
18 And I'm happy to address any questions
19 if you have any at this time.

20
21 MR. SHIEDT: I have one, Attamuk here.

22
23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex.

24
25 MR. HANSON: Yeah, Attamuk.

26
27 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, through the Chair,
28 thanks. On your -- you said the caribou numbers were
29 pretty stable.

30
31 MR. HANSON: Correct.

32
33 MR. SHIEDT: When you added -- when you
34 put the numbers together, did you use the Teshekpuk
35 Herd caribou because they are a completely different
36 herd than the Western Arctic Herd. And the other one I
37 would like to comment to everybody to hear is the
38 weather affects all our resources, not only caribou, we
39 have fish, our birds on their migration. The weather
40 has a lot to do with it. Like last spring and March,
41 sure it got warmer earlier, but they came in late
42 because it was cold south. I'm just using that for an
43 example. And the migration for the caribou are not
44 coming because it's too warm. They're not going to
45 come -- that's the beginning of the caribou is up
46 north. The north calving grounds is very important,
47 not only for calving but for our migration too up this
48 way.

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1 Thank you.

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MR. HANSON: Thank you, Attamuk. You know very good observations. I think it's important to understand and recognize that so many things influence what the caribou do and what their movements are, and I think weather is certainly a very large component in that. And I guess I would just share one experience.

In 2019, of course, we've been struggling to get collars out in the caribou -- in 2019 the caribou were still up high and then at the end there, first part of October we were kind of giving up on putting collars out, there was a big snowstorm that kind of pushed them through and we were able to get some Onion Portage. So I think, you know, there's certainly a good possibility that those caribou are just comfortable where they are in the mountains and the weather doesn't push them around, you know, maybe like it did in the past. And that's certainly something to consider.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex. Any other Council comments on Alex's report.

MR. SHIEDT: I did not hear his response. Attamuk here. I didn't even hear his response because I got disconnected, on the Teshekpuk Herd count, included -- included in the Western Arctic Herd.

MR. HANSON: My apology, Attamuk, I missed that point. But, yeah, when we do the counts we make sure that they're in very distinct herds. So we're looking at all the collars. So we know we have 100 collars on the Western Arctic Herd and 100 collars on the Teshekpuk Herd, and we know they're distinct and separate groups at that point in time. Because they come together off the calving grounds, you know, they're basically delineated as herds on the calving grounds and that's how we call them Western Arctic or Teshekpuk or whatever. But when they come off the calving grounds, the Western Arctic typically goes over to the Lisburne Peninsula and out in that country and so that's where we catch them to photograph, either there or coming back into the mountains. So at that point in time they're very distinct herds.

The last count on the Teshekpuk was 2017 and that was 56,000, which is very high for the

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1 Teshekpuk and at the same time we counted the Western
2 Arctic Herd in 2017 at 259; so we definitely just count
3 the Western Arctic Herd separately and the Teshekpuk
4 separately and, you know, we're not counting both herds
5 together and calling them one.

6

7 Certainly a good question and I'm glad
8 you brought it up so we could clarify.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex.
11 Anybody else with anything for Alex, or any questions,
12 comments on his report.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If there's nothing
17 else, my take on it, like both Attamuk and Alex pointed
18 out there are a lot of different factors that play into
19 the migration of the caribou. Obviously we can't
20 control the weather, that's something beyond the
21 capabilities of us to change and make an impact on when
22 the caribou start moving based on weather. Based on my
23 observations, from Kotzebue and seeing, as Mike brought
24 up, just the flood of outside hunters who are not
25 Native to this region, who came in this fall and were
26 brought out by charter services and outside outfitters
27 that came up just for the hunting season, we -- I
28 believe that a lot of those planes went just further
29 north closer and closer to the calving grounds and
30 started harvesting caribou from the herd that were
31 starting to come down but due to that pushing them
32 further and further north, that affected where they
33 start and when they start migrating down the Peninsula
34 and down towards the mountains.

35

36 So kind of circling back to our draft
37 wildlife temporary special action that Hannah
38 originally started talking with under old business
39 here, that was one of my main points that was brought
40 up in November's meeting, we had some similar opinions
41 brought up and that was kind of what brought us to that
42 so just coming again back to Hannah and this item under
43 old business, does anybody have any other feedback for
44 Hannah on the special action, it's not -- at this time
45 it's not an action item because -- well, for one thing
46 we can't take any action items, as George reminded us,
47 but for another thing it's just a review at this time.

48

49 Does anybody have anything to add.

50

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1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If there's not,
4 Hannah, did you have any more for us?

5

6 MS. VOORHEES: Yes, thank you. That
7 discussion was very helpful to have on the record and
8 we can finalize the caribou portion of that request as
9 needed.

10

11 Now, I also wanted to get into the
12 request for closure to non-Federally-qualified
13 subsistence users for moose.....

14

15 (Teleconference interference -
16 participants not muted)

17

18 MS. VOORHEES:in Unit.....

19

20 (Teleconference interference -
21 participants not muted)

22

23 MS. VOORHEES: I'm sorry, I thought
24 maybe someone was speaking but -- so the closure -- the
25 special action request to close for moose was
26 originally -- the vote was to do that for both Unit 23
27 and 26A. And there was a little bit less discussion on
28 the record of the reason that that closure for moose
29 was needed. I believe the main point made was just
30 that moose are declining in the area. So I have a
31 couple questions.

32

33 First, did the Council intend for the
34 closure to apply to both those areas, to Unit 23 as
35 well as 26A? And, if so, if you could provide some
36 rationale that would be helpful in fleshing out the
37 text of the request.

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Does anybody have any
40 feedback.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44

45 MS. VOORHEES: I guess I would add it
46 wasn't clear -- sorry, I don't mean to speak out of
47 turn -- through the Chair.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

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1 MS. VOORHEES: I would add that it
2 wasn't clear whether that closure was meant to, you
3 know, protect against a lot of activity surrounding,
4 that might affect caribou in turn, you know, moose
5 hunting activities that might affect caribou or if it
6 was specific to concerns about moose and totally
7 separate. So forgive me if that's a naive question but
8 I just wanted to make sure that that's clear.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: No, great question,
13 thank you, Hannah. And my opinion, I feel like what
14 our intent was last time we came together was that
15 because numbers appear to be declining in both caribou
16 and moose that we're hoping to just -- I mean if we're
17 going to put a closure or do a temporary special action
18 for one species, rather than turning people towards,
19 oh, well, let's go moose hunting if we can't go caribou
20 hunting, just getting both of them at the same time in
21 order to try to keep things consistent with what's
22 going on in the region.

23

24 If I'm incorrect, if anybody on the
25 Council remembers otherwise, please correct me.

26

27 MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer, through
28 the Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Elmer.

31

32 MR. ARMSTRONG: Do you have the moose
33 count on the lower Kobuk drainage.

34

35

36 MR. HANSON: Through the Chair, this is
37 Alex Hanson. I'll be filling in for moose data as well
38 but I'm not as well versed in that. So I could
39 certainly pull that information up and provide any
40 moose information that I can. So if you can give me a
41 moment I'll look to see what the latest moose count
42 data was.

43

44 (Pause)

45

46 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

49

50

0031

1 MR. HOWATH: It's Wilbur.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

4

5 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, I had a moose count,
6 the latest one sent to me through the IRA, which our
7 administrator put in my packet. I guess it was looking
8 good. We had a lot of twins being born in the past
9 couple of years, I think, in a row, in fact. I'm happy
10 about the moose count compared to, I think it was 2017,
11 was kind of low, or they couldn't understand why we
12 weren't -- they weren't having twins or something but
13 now I think the count will be probably coming up.

14

15 Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
18 That's some pretty good information to have. I think,
19 just because we started this discussion we'll wait for
20 Alex to bring up whatever information he has and we can
21 hear from him and then move forward with the
22 discussion.

23

24 MR. HANSON: Yeah, this is Alex, again,
25 through the Chair.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Alex.

28

29 MR. HANSON: So I guess kind of the
30 general -- thank you. The general sentiment on moose
31 is, you know, we've experienced a shallow decline, the
32 moose have been declining for a number of years here in
33 the region. We're still well within our acceptable
34 range for the current harvest.

35

36 A couple of the things that have been
37 done in the recent past, again, I think in 2017 was the
38 elimination of non-resident hunters, so non-resident
39 moose hunters can enter or hunt in Unit 23. Also the
40 closure of the cow seasons, and that was both on State
41 and Federal regulation. So, you know, closing the cow
42 season is really one of the best things that we can do
43 to preserve moose if that's what we want to see is more
44 moose. And as was mentioned, there, I believe from
45 Elmer, I apologize if I got that wrong, twinning rates
46 have been good. Also did brow surveys in 2017 and the
47 brows looks good, the habitat looks good. We are
48 wrapping up a study on neonate survival in the lower
49 Kobuk, specific to that area around Kiana and Noorvik,

50

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1 and seeing quite high brown bear predation on moose
2 calves but otherwise if they survive through that first
3 year, seem to be surviving quite well. So that seems
4 to be one of the bigger challenges right now is the
5 brown bear mortality.

6
7 But currently, as it stands, our
8 harvest is below what is available and is certainly
9 viable at the current time. And I can struggle
10 through.....

11
12 MS. DAGGETT: Mr. Chair, it' Carmen.

13
14 MR. HANSON:any questions you
15 might have but I'll do my best.

16
17 MS. DAGGETT: Mr. Chair, this is Carmen
18 Daggett with Alaska Department of Fish and Game in
19 Barrow.

20
21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Carmen.

22
23 MS. DAGGETT: So I just -- since you're
24 talking about 26A moose, too, I wanted to provide a
25 little bit of information about that population. So
26 the last minimum count survey that we did in 2017, we
27 counted about 339 moose and just so that you're aware
28 about regulations up in that area, that whole area is
29 not open to resident hunters, currently, and all of 26A
30 has a controlled use area for moose that is currently
31 existing. And so it can't be used for aircraft for
32 hunting moose already from July 1st through September
33 30th and from January 1st through March 31st. So just
34 so that you're kind of aware of, you know, the moose
35 situation up in 26A, it's a little bit different than
36 it is in Unit 23.

37
38 Also the harvest, the last four years,
39 the average harvest has been about five a year and so
40 the population is quite low and as far as reported
41 harvest goes there's about five moose that are
42 harvested on average each year out of that population.

43
44 And I can answer any questions about
45 26A moose that people are interested in knowing about,
46 too.

47
48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you,
49 Carmen. Does anybody have any questions regarding
50

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1 moose in Unit 23 for Alex or Unit 26 for Carmen.

2

3 MR. KRAMER: Hey, Mr. Chairman, this is
4 Michael.

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

7

8 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. For Alex, I'd like
9 to, you know, find out what was our highest count. If
10 I remember right at one time we were at 7,500 moose and
11 that our herd, moose herd within Game Management Unit
12 23 dropped by half, I can't -- I'm trying to recall
13 someof that information. And I know that the highest --
14 the highest moose count was the lower Kobuk Valley --
15 lower Kobuk Valley had the most moose per square mile
16 if I remember right when you guys did your count up
17 there a few years ago. You know that's what I wanted
18 to find out was, you know, what was the total count as
19 of now compared to when we were at 7,500 animals.

20

21 MR. HANSON: Through the Chair to
22 Mike's question. I'll have to dig into that Mike, I'm
23 working on that right now. I guess I would say that,
24 you know, over the past decade we've seen between five
25 and 12 percent decline so it's been fairly steady, not
26 nothing precipitous but steady decline in the moose
27 population. And let me dig into that data and see if I
28 can find it, I apologize for not having that at my
29 fingertips.

30

31 MS. SWEENEY: Hello, this is Brittany
32 Sweeney, Mr. Chairman.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Brittany.

35

36 MS. SWEENEY: I happen to have the
37 numbers in front of me from an email. So Mr. Kramer's
38 question about the overall population of moose, just
39 that moose surveys are done in zones so there isn't one
40 total number for the whole region but, yes, Mr. Kramer,
41 you remember correctly that some of the highest moose
42 densities in our region is in the lower Kobuk, which --
43 and includes the Squirrel drainage. So the most recent
44 count there was in 2017 and they counted 1,346 moose.
45 The previous count before that was in 2012 and they got
46 around 2,546 moose. And if you go back one more time
47 to 2006, that area had around 30 -- so, yeah, as Alex
48 stated it's about a 12 percent decline. And that same
49 decline rate was seen in the Selawik zone. They were
50

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1 lower overall but they just declined about 12 percent.
2 And then this spring the Selawik zone is the next zone
3 due to be surveyed.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany.
8 Mike, did that cover your question.

9

10 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, that did. But it'd
11 be good information, you know, I mean the other thing
12 I'd like to hear any time soon is if they did a sheep
13 count, I'd like to see if the sheep, you know, how are
14 they doing, both in our region and in the Gates of the
15 Arctic. I'd like to find out what their population is
16 like when it comes time for the agency reports.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Yeah,
19 we'll look towards -- we'll look for that information
20 as we come down to agency reports. But from what I'm
21 hearing we're pretty set on our view of the special
22 action with Hannah unless there's any more information
23 anybody would like to present regarding that, just that
24 we're sticking with the agenda.

25

26 Hannah did you -- Hannah, did that
27 answer what you were looking for -- Hannah Voorhees, or
28 would you like some more discussion on that?

29

30 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
31 That's all good information. If anyone has -- anyone
32 on the Council has any more testimony to provide about,
33 you know, their own experience with, you know, trying
34 to get moose and whether that's been difficult
35 recently, that would be good to have on the record, and
36 if not I can work with what we have. And also, just to
37 clarify, that we are keeping the closure request to
38 pertain to both 23 and 26A, is that correct?

39

40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I believe so unless
41 there's any opposition from the Council, which I
42 haven't heard.

43

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Would anyone like to
48 weigh in from the Council, would like to give any
49 testimony towards any difficulties we've had in

50

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1 harvesting moose recently.

2

3 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair. Wilbur.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, sir, go ahead,
6 Wilbur.

7

8 MR. HOWATH: I go to Noatak almost
9 every fall and -- because that's where all my relatives
10 are, plus Kotzebue. Anyways, talking with most of the
11 hunters because when you're getting low that's all you
12 do when you go visit somebody is talk about hunting.
13 There's been lots of bear between Kotzebue and Noatak,
14 almost every bend now they've been seeing brown bears
15 or grizzlies. And I won't say names but one guy took a
16 nice bull moose away from a grizzly but he keeps saying
17 there's so much bears, one of the hunters. And, yeah,
18 they -- one year I seen maybe three right after break
19 up-- around about three moose down the river just torn
20 up or floating. But, yeah, what could we do with all
21 that bear population, is it high, anybody know?
22 Because I know they're always chasing moose.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
27 Alex, would you or -- we're coming back to you a lot
28 this morning, but would you have any information on the
29 predators, the wolves and bears, or would somebody else
30 have a better resource for that?

31

32 MR. HANSON: Yeah, this is Alex.
33 Through the Chair. We don't have any, you know,
34 surveys or studies that look at wolf populations,
35 directly, we certainly have some anecdotal information
36 that we collect from the users, folks like you out in
37 the villages and in the country, and there seems to be
38 a bit of an increase in wolf activity but we don't have
39 any hard data on that.

40

41 Bear surveys, there's definitely been
42 an increase over the past 15, 20 years. I would --
43 again, I would have to dig into that data to see what
44 the hard numbers are but, yeah, certainly an increase.
45 And in response to that, you know, one of the things
46 that was done was, you know, expanding opportunity. We
47 have a two bear harvest limit within Unit 23 so really,
48 you know, I guess one potential solution, if folks felt
49 like there were too many bears is, you know, the
50

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1 opportunity to harvest and so there's that. Really, we
2 don't have any other, you know, methods to deal with
3 that. So harvest is certainly an option. People can
4 get out and hunt bears. And I know, you know, maybe
5 it's not as common as it used to be so I think that may
6 have something to do with it there.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex. And,
9 Wilbur, does that cover your question?

10

11 MR. HOWATH: Yep, it sure did. Thank
12 you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yep, thank you,
15 Wilbur. Anybody else with any testimony from the
16 Council on moose harvesting in the last year.

17

18 MR. STEVENSON: A question for the
19 Chair, this is Zachary.

20

21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Zach.

22

23 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair. If it's an
24 -- we can add this topic to the fall agenda with the
25 Council's approval of (indiscernible) as per policy at
26 OSM, if that would be helpful for our new members to be
27 aware of, don't have to be but this is -- but for the
28 fall, we could do that if the Council would like.

29

30 So, thank you.

31

32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Zach.
33 Yeah, I was asking for that specifically just kind of
34 to answer Hannah's sort of request there for any
35 feedback from the Council. I'd like to just wrap that
36 up if we're about done with it.

37

38 Personally, I've seen and heard of a
39 lot of predator activity. My family, we spend most of
40 our hunting and subsistence time in the mountains
41 around the upper -- the northfork of the Squirrel River
42 and we've seen -- just flying back and forth we've seen
43 a lot of bear, some moose but not as much as we
44 normally would just because of the higher number of
45 bear in the Squirrel River drainage area.

46

47 Hannah, was there anything else that
48 you needed from the Council at this time?

49

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1 MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 That is very helpful to have this information. And I
3 would just say that at your last meeting there was a
4 desire on the part of the Council for there to be input
5 from the North Slope Regional Advisory Council on this
6 request as well, given the 26A overlap, and because we,
7 you know, have been working to get these
8 clarifications, the North Slope RAC has not weighed in
9 on this yet, however, I will be taking the results of
10 this discussion and the finalized special action
11 request to the North Slope RAC next week for their
12 input and then will get back to you -- to the Council.

13
14 That's all I have, thank you.

15
16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you very
17 much, Hannah.

18
19 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair, George Pappas.

20
21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, George.

22
23 MR. PAPPAS: Hey, sorry, to interrupt.
24 I was in attendance at the last Regional Advisory
25 Council meeting and a lot of discussion here about why
26 would we want a special action in the area, and if I
27 remember correctly it was all distilled down to
28 continuance of subsistence uses. You know there was
29 discussions about how is the population doing, is it up
30 or down, there was discussion about predators, you
31 know, keeping some of the populations down, but the
32 bottom line for the Federal subsistence arena and
33 Board, it comes down to continuance of subsistence
34 uses. If Federally-qualified subsistence users are not
35 getting their subsistence uses, their needs met because
36 of lack of animals, is that, you've already discussed
37 the possibility of -- and Hannah probably recorded it
38 as well, it's in part of the record, about the
39 possibility of the migration being altered, we've also
40 touched on the environmental conditions that that had
41 impacts. We've touched on the predators. So what we
42 do have in the arena here for potential regulation is
43 participation in the hunt, you know, and that's what
44 the Regional Advisory Council included, was, one way to
45 ensure continuance of subsistence uses, would be to put
46 limitations for a couple months here in the fall on
47 non-Federally-qualified.

48
49 If anybody else has any information
50

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1 that can be shared on record here about not being able
2 to meet the needs, or family not being able to meet
3 their needs in these areas, that's what we're looking
4 for to really beef it up. It sounds like you covered
5 most of the topics but if anybody else has more, I'm
6 just trying to help to focus a little bit.

7

8 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George.
11 Does anyone have anything to follow up on what George
12 just brought up.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, if we don't have
17 anything else then I would like to move on down to an
18 update on National Park Service individual C&T
19 determinations. Who do we have speaking on that this
20 morning?

21

22 MR. REAM: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
23 This is Joshua Ream. I'm prepared to present.

24

25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Joshua. If
26 you will, the floor is yours.

27

28 MR. REAM: Thank you so much. Good
29 morning, Mr. Chair and members of the Council.

30

31 (Teleconference interference -
32 participants not muted)

33

34 MR. REAM: For the record my name is
35 Joshua Ream and I am the Regional Subsistence Program
36 Manager for the National Park Service. I am also the
37 Park Service's representative to the InterAgency Staff
38 Committee. Today I'm here to report on recent
39 decisions made by the Federal Subsistence Board on the
40 process used to make customary and traditional use
41 determinations for individuals.

42

43 Before I start talking about these
44 recent decisions, I just wanted to remind everyone of a
45 few things regarding individual customary and
46 traditional use determinations. First, they're not a
47 new thing but you might not be very familiar with them
48 because they're so rare. Less than 10 people have
49 applied for them in the last 40 years. Individual
50

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1 customary and traditional use determinations and the
2 recent Board decision will not, in any way impact your
3 ability to harvest wild resources, and these changes to
4 the individual C&T make the whole process easier and
5 faster for the applicant. It became more streamlined.
6 We didn't want Federally-qualified subsistence users
7 waiting for years to become eligible to hunt and fish
8 on Park Land, and that's why the Board modified these
9 steps.

10

11 So we're simply now reporting to you
12 what actions the Federal Subsistence Board took, and
13 this is not an action item for your Council.

14

15 The Federal Subsistence Board adopted a
16 revised version of the individual C&T process at their
17 January 2021 meeting, so last month. I will explain the
18 adopted process to you here following a short
19 introduction to individual C&T.

20

21 Again, no action on your end is
22 required, however we would appreciate any feedback you
23 have on the process that was adopted by the Board.

24

25 Last fall we asked all 10 of the
26 Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils and the seven
27 Park Subsistence Resource Commissions for feedback. We
28 incorporated this feedback into our proposed process
29 and this is what was adopted by the Board last month.

30

31 The revised process includes two
32 critical recommendations made by the RACs and the
33 Subsistence Resource Commissions.

34

35 First, that there is no delegation of
36 authority to the Park Service. The Federal Subsistence
37 Board will retain the final decisionmaking authority
38 for individual customary and traditional use
39 determinations.

40

41 Second, the process now includes a
42 formal recommendation from both the affected Regional
43 Advisory Councils and the affected Resource Commission.

44

45 Perhaps the biggest change is that the
46 process is no longer tied to the lengthy biennial
47 regulatory proposal cycle, instead the application
48 window is open continuously and once the RACs and the
49 Subsistence Resource Commissions have weighed in the

50

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1 Board will take action on the request at their next
2 public meeting. This accomplishes an important goal of
3 being able to process the applications in a timely
4 manner.

5

6 While the Board did already take these
7 actions to improve the process, it still welcomes any
8 feedback that you might have for further improvement,
9 either now or at any point in the future. Ultimately,
10 the National Park Service and the Federal Subsistence
11 Board want this process to be as streamlined and
12 responsive the applicants as possible.

13

14 Thank you for your time. I'm happy to
15 answer any questions that you have. And if you have
16 feedback for the Board I'm happy to deliver that as
17 well.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Joshua.
22 Does anybody from the Council have any feedback for
23 Joshua at this time.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, again,
28 thank you Joshua for the update and for reminding us
29 that no action at this time is needed from us but that
30 was a good update and pretty solid information that I
31 think is helpful just to have in the back of our minds.
32 We'll be sure to reach out if anybody does come up with
33 any feedback for you.

34

35 MR. REAM: Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moving on to -- you're
38 welcome. Moving on to new business, would anyone like
39 to move to table the action items that have asterisks,
40 the call for Federal wildlife proposals and the Council
41 charter review -- would anybody like to move to table
42 those as a block until we have a full quorum where we
43 can act on those items.

44

45 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair,
46 this is Zach. I have a quick point to point out.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Zach.

49

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1 MR. STEVENSON: I just wanted to
2 mention that the Council wildlife proposals has not
3 been published yet. The Federal Register -- this is
4 the second time we've seen this over -- the recent
5 election, both the Republicans and Democrats have
6 delayed the call for wildlife proposals recently so
7 this is not on our -- but we have not seen it posted
8 yet, so the Council will be notified by our office when
9 that call is made public.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that,
14 Zach. What is the wish of the Council at this time.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is anyone opposed to
19 skipping over those at this time and moving down to the
20 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program information
21 update from OSM.

22

23 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, this is Mike, Mr.
24 Chairman. I think we should move on.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike.
27 George, or who, from OSM would like to cover the
28 Fisheries Resources update?

29

30 MR. STEVENSON: I believe it's Karen
31 Hyer.

32

33 MS. HYER: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, council
34 Members. This is Karen Hyer with (coughing) -- excuse
35 me -- a frog in my throat. I'm going to present just
36 an update on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
37 and where we are in the process, to you, today.

38

39 I am a fisheries biologist with the
40 Office of Subsistence Management and what I'm going to
41 present is not an action item, it's just informational.

42

43 But I just wanted to remind the Council
44 that the Fisheries Resource Monitoring process is a two
45 -- it's a bi-yearly process, so it takes two years. So
46 it's a very long process.

47

48 We met in the fall and we discussed the
49 priority information needs that were of interest to

50

0042

1 this Council, and those information needs will guide
2 researchers in proposals for funding for the 2022 field
3 season. So these projects won't hit the water for
4 quite awhile. But currently, the Office of Subsistence
5 Management took those priority information needs
6 developed by the Council in their fall meeting and they
7 included them in an announcement that went out from our
8 office and this announcement is seeking research and
9 monitoring proposals to collect information that will
10 help with Federal subsistence management. And the NOFO
11 -- the announcement went out in a form called a notice
12 of funding opportunity, or you'll hear our office often
13 refer to it as the NOFO, but that is currently open and
14 investigators can submit proposals to our office to
15 compete for the funding. And we are estimating about
16 \$2.25 million available for these projects and that's
17 throughout all of Alaska. And the window closes March
18 15th for our office. And then once that window closes
19 the proposals will come to our office and they'll be
20 reviewed by the Technical Review Committee and once
21 those proposals are reviewed, you will get an update on
22 what proposals were submitted and the reviews of the
23 TRC will be presented to you at our next meeting cycle.

24

25 So currently, again, the notices -- or
26 the investigators can submit proposals. So if you know
27 anybody that's interested in competing for funding
28 please have them contact me or Hannah or someone in our
29 office.

30

31 And that is all I have for a
32 presentation, are there any questions.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do any Council members
35 have questions regarding the Fisheries Resource update.

36

37 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, this is Wilbur.

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

40

41 MR. HOWATH: Just a comment on our
42 fisheries. When was the last survey done on our --
43 it's pretty hard on the whitefish but I know we did,
44 maybe in 2017 or '16 on the sheefish, and the 17 year
45 old ones were -- there was many, I mean lots of 17 year
46 olds, or the -- I think it was 17 but the sheefish was
47 healthy and there was lots. Has there been any other
48 survey -- I mean not survey, but count on or latest on
49 the whitefish. We seem to miss when they are going up

50

0043

1 river from there, that's the one we call (In Native),
2 it's the blunt nose of something. But it's either
3 icing, too thin for set net or we missed them while
4 they're going up river before freeze-up.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 MR. SHIEDT: Through the Chair, Attamuk
9 here.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Attamuk.

12

13 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, Wilbur, they never
14 did do a real study on the count for whitefish. Susan
15 and I did a few works, but we never did really, up by
16 the spawning area, because it's really hard because
17 they spawn in so many different lakes at Noorvik and at
18 Selawik and upper Kobuk, and Noatak. So it's hard to
19 answer your question. It would be nice to do a count
20 but it'll be really hard because it's going to be a
21 hard study, I'll tell you that right now. And we had
22 -- Mother Nature will take care of itself. When we
23 harvest -- or planning to harvest a lot of whitefish,
24 somehow Mother Nature will build up the stock and
25 somehow they'll know, and when we don't get as much as
26 like we did when I was a child so the numbers might be
27 down.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.

32

33 MR. HOWATH: Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

36

37 MR. HOWATH: This is Wilbur.

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

40

41 MR. HOWATH: He hit the nail right on
42 the head because I've seen a lot of different types of
43 fish that maybe came from the Selawik River, way up
44 that showed up here all of a sudden in our Kobuk River
45 so, yeah, they are spawning and -- or moving either
46 maybe looking for cooler water or something. Species
47 are turning up different looking and surprising, we see
48 some kind of trout or something that came from Baker
49 Lake or something from way up north, so, yeah, thank
50

0044

1 you, Attamuk.

2

3 MR. CARTER: This is Bill Carter. I'm
4 the fish biologist at Selawik Refuge.

5

6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Bill.

7

8 MR. HOWATH: Yeah.

9

10 MR. CARTER: So the last time we had
11 any numbers on the sheefish in the Selawik, we finished
12 a study that ran from 2011 to 2018 and that report is
13 on the fisheries website, I don't have it right in
14 front of me right now, and the last time we looked at
15 whitefish, the humpbacks and the broadfish in the lower
16 Selawik lakes area was, I believe, 2014, and we've only
17 done studies looking at where they go to spawn. We
18 haven't had any population studies on them because like
19 Attamuk said they're really difficult to get numbers on
20 because they spawn in the upper Selawik, in the Fish
21 River, in Singarik and all over the place and then they
22 come together in those lower lake areas to feed during
23 the summer. And also the -- like you said, the ice is
24 thin when they're spawning so you can't get out there
25 and look at them with, you know, with gillnets, and
26 it's treacherous to be out in a boat at that time.

27

28 MR. HOWATH: Thank you, Bill.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Does anybody else have
31 anything on whitefish counts.

32

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other feedback or
37 questions from the Council regarding the OSM update on
38 the Fisheries Resources.

39

40 MR. MOTO: Yeah, this is Calvin Moto, I
41 just joined the meeting. I just got off of work at the
42 airport. I just wanted to let you guys know that I'm
43 here and thanks for the opportunity to be a part of
44 this Council.

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, Calvin. This is
47 Chair Thomas Baker. Just for your information we are
48 under new business at the Item Fisheries Resources
49 Monitoring Program information update. We've been

50

0045

1 discussing Wilbur Howath, Noorvik had a question
2 regarding the whitefish counts in the region.

3

4 And for the record, Mr. Moto has joined
5 us, it's 10:55 a.m., so we do now have a full quorum
6 for the Council.

7

8 Karen, at OSM, did you have anything
9 else?

10

11 MS. HYER: No, Mr. Chairman and Council
12 members. That is all I had for an update.

13

14 MR. ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, this is
15 Elmer.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Elmer.

18

19 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I had a question
20 about water temperatures when the salmon start.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, the floor is
23 yours.

24

25 MR. ARMSTRONG: I had a question about
26 the temperatures, does it have an affect on when the
27 salmon start spawnings, or moving, is there a
28 difference in timelines when they come in.

29

30 MR. SHIEDT: Through the Chair.

31

32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

33

34 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, Armstrong, yes.
35 There's a big affect on the water temp -- on the salmon
36 that's coming in. It's like the trout and the Tomcod
37 here in Kotzebue when -- the year they're washing in,
38 trying to learn the country -- it makes a big affect on
39 the water temperature. It's like weather they come in
40 at certain times. When I was about nine years old, one
41 old man, I know he lived to be over 100, he said,
42 Attamuk, it's all about the temperature of the water
43 and the air, affects our resources big time. So it did
44 affect -- that's why our salmon was late last summer,
45 water was plenty warm, then the salmon came in late.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.

50

0046

1 Did anybody else have any information regarding water
2 temperatures and the salmon for Mr. Armstrong's
3 question.

4

5 MR. CARTER: This is Bill Carter again,
6 fish biologist.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Bill.

9

10 MR. CARTER: Yeah, so salmon do have a
11 preferred water temperature and like Attamuk said, it
12 does affect when they come in. We have tried to put
13 out a network of temperature loggers. We have some in
14 the Selawik but they're not realtime, you know, we're
15 not getting recordings on a daily basis, we just pick
16 them up once a year and track that. So there is a
17 small effort to get water temperatures that -- getting
18 water temperatures in a more timely manner to be able
19 to affect, you know, any kind of management issues just
20 because the places that the salmon are spawning are so
21 remote.

22

23 So if you have any other questions I'll
24 be happy to help.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Elmer, did
27 that answer your question.

28

29 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you.

30

31 MR. KRAMER: Through the Chair, this is
32 Michael.

33

34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

35

36 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, I know the last
37 fishing -- commercial fishing season was pretty poor
38 and they called it a parent run because about four
39 years ago they had some -- a lot of salmon die-off
40 before they were even able to spawn. I know that last
41 fall, or this last commercial fishing time, people were
42 subsistence fishing the salmon sharks were visibly seen
43 in our area and in our waters. I know that there was
44 one photo that was captured in the Kobuk River -- or
45 Kobuk Lake, on the lake, it looked like what appeared
46 to be a salmon shark fin that protruded from the water.
47 I know that up in either Point Hope or Kivalina area
48 that they had a net set and as they were pulling it in
49 a salmon shark tried to come up and snatch a salmon
50

0047

1 right out of the net.

2

3 You know I also heard that, you know --
4 I also wanted to find out what was the status on that
5 slump up in the Selawik Valley, if that has calmed
6 down, you know, because I know that it was going to
7 probably have future effects on our sheefish, if I
8 remember right, you know, our sheefish start to spawn
9 at the age of 11 years old, the females. The females
10 are the larger of sheefish. But that's one of my
11 concerns.

12

13 And I know that last fall that they
14 mentioned that some sheefish didn't spawn where they
15 were supposed to in the Kobuk, they spawned in the Hunt
16 River, and, you know, I just wanted to try and see if
17 we could make sure we continue that study on sheefish
18 for at least another 10 more years to find out if, you
19 know, those did have a major impact on our sheefish or
20 other spawning fish that we depend on for our
21 subsistence resources.

22

23 I haven't really heard of very many
24 people going down the coast or up the coast, you know,
25 making -- try to set up the fish traps, or setting nets
26 in the sloughs and stuff like that off the coast, I
27 haven't heard of very many people doing that this year.

28

29 That's about all I have for now.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike.

34

35 MR. CARTER: This is Bill Carter again.
36 So as far as Mike's question about the slump, the
37 permafrost slump, it had calmed down until about
38 2017/18, and then there was a reactivation and it did
39 expand it's footprint over '19 and '20 but we didn't --
40 from the satellite photos we didn't see any major
41 change in the water. There was some more sediment
42 being put into the upper Selawik but we didn't see it
43 like it was back in 2004 and 2005 when the Selawik
44 looked like the Yukon River. So we are keeping an eye
45 on that. And we do have a proposal in the works to
46 look at the sheefish population again, expanding that
47 study that ran from 2011 to 2018 that's going in for
48 this next funding proposal that Karen was speaking
49 about. So I can talk in more detail to anybody who
50

0048

1 wants to and we can go over that report. But it was a
2 little inconclusive just because there's so much
3 variability in the year to year spawning.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Bill.

6

7 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

10

11 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, this is Wilbur. I
12 was disconnected so I just got back on.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Bill, would
15 you mind reiterating that last statement you just made
16 for Wilbur's information.

17

18 MR. CARTER: Yes, sure. So the slump
19 had stabilized but then in somewhere between 2016 and
20 2018 it reactivated, and we have been seeing some
21 sediment into the upper Selawik so we are monitoring
22 that. And then we are putting in a proposal, actually
23 Ray Hander is the lead investigator on that out of the
24 Fairbanks Fisheries Office of Fish and Wildlife for
25 this next funding cycle that Karen was speaking about.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, again,
28 Bill.

29

30 MR. CARTER: Yep.

31

32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we have any other
33 questions from the Council.

34

35 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, this is Elmer.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Elmer.

38

39 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I just want to
40 add on to Mike's discussion about the salmon sharks. I
41 did see that through social media, I think it was
42 probably Point Hope, and I was just surprised to see
43 salmon sharks up here. I think it's kind of -- I don't
44 know how much it'll affect our subsistence use but I
45 was surprised of that.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. If

50

0049

1 there's nothing else regarding the Fisheries Resource
2 Monitoring Program information update from OSM, I had a
3 quick question for Zach. Zach, could you reiterate
4 what you said about the call for Federal wildlife
5 proposals.

6
7 MR. STEVENSON: Sure, Mr. Chair. Right
8 now the way that we announce the wildlife proposals is
9 we rely on the Federal Register to make announcement
10 across the country that you can submit wildlife
11 proposals -- but the Council can hear them and have
12 them ready when that announcement goes out and it has
13 not gone out yet, we don't know when it will but we'll
14 announce it and make the Council aware. IS that what
15 you wanted, Mr. Chair?

16
17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, I'm just.....

18
19 MR. PAPPAS: I can provide further
20 clarification, sir, this is George.

21
22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, George.

23
24 MR. PAPPAS: So I have a prepared
25 statement that we're reading at all meetings and since
26 we do have a quorum now we can go this direction but
27 after I'm done here I'd like to recommend maybe taking
28 a break and then coming back on record and going over
29 our first -- redoing our first three item actions.

30
31 So on this issue, as Zach indicated,
32 all Federal agencies are in the process of publishing
33 rules, which are regulations that are directed -- were
34 directed to withdraw these documents so they can be
35 reviewed by the new Administration. This happens every
36 time the Administration switches. If there's something
37 in the mix a lot a times they'll put a pause on it and
38 they'll want to review it before they continue on with
39 it, and this is common. Now there was a pause put on
40 all these new published rules, including our call for
41 proposals for wildlife.

42
43 So right now, we don't have the ability
44 to accept proposals to the Federal Subsistence Board
45 because it has not been announced yet. The
46 announcement is in the mix and we should have it -- we
47 don't know when, we should have it soon, but, you know,
48 we're here to help you if you have some wildlife
49 concerns and you want to make up some proposals to be
50

0050

1 submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board, we can
2 start drafting information here and hold it in, you
3 know, hold it closed-vest until that announcement comes
4 out and then we can help submit it.

5
6 So at this time, while we don't have
7 the proposed rule published, the Program cannot accept
8 proposals but as a Council you can still, meet, discuss
9 and draft wildlife proposals. You may also accept
10 proposals from the public. You'll have to hold them
11 until publication of the proposed rule. Once the
12 proposed rule is published you can accept -- we can
13 accept the proposals and either enter them into the
14 system and proceed as if we would in our normal cycles.

15
16 So this is a good chance, if you want
17 to work on this particular item for accepting wildlife
18 proposals we can discuss issues and jot it all down and
19 build the Federal record, and then once the rule gets
20 published, we'll get a hold of you and say do you want
21 to submit this.

22
23 Thank you. Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George. I
26 do appreciate that. And per your recommendation, if
27 the Council's in favor of it, I'd like to suggest that
28 we take a brief recess until 11:30 and then we can
29 reconvene and since we have a quorum we can take care
30 of some action items. Would anybody like to move to
31 take a brief recess.

32
33 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair, excuse me, it's
34 Wilbur.

35
36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

37
38 MR. HOWATH: I had one more comment for
39 Bill. If Karen said there's funding out there, I would
40 like to see the Kobuk River, the lower Kobuk River and
41 the river across from here, that -- what is it -- I
42 would like to see them monitor the water temperature if
43 they could, like they did in the Selawik.

44
45 MR. CARTER: Yeah, that water
46 temperature -- this is Bill Carter again. That water
47 temperature project is funded through the Selawik
48 Refuge itself and so it's not a very expensive project
49 to run. Like I said it's not -- it's not a project

50

0051

1 that gets you real-time data so I'm not sure if it will
2 answer the questions you're interested in. And where,
3 exactly, are you Wilbur?

4

5 MR. HOWATH: I'm in Noorvik. The
6 Kobuk, the lower Kobuk.

7

8 MR. CARTER: Yeah, so that wouldn't be a
9 very difficult one to put in because we pass through
10 Noorvik often on our way to Selawik. So I can look
11 into at least getting some put in in the Kobuk there,
12 but, again, it's only going to get you -- it'll get you
13 data for the entire year but only once a year, at the
14 end of the year when we pull them out and read them.

15

16 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, thank you, Bill,
17 that would be real nice. I would like to.....

18

19 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

20

21 MR. HOWATH:see our.....

22

23 MR. STEVENSON: I'm sorry, Wilbur.

24

25 MR. HOWATH:information. Yeah,
26 go ahead.

27

28 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Zach.

31

32 MR. STEVENSON: This is for Wilbur,
33 this is Zach. I just wanted to point out this is a
34 really unique opportunity for this Council, especially
35 for the new members who haven't been through before,
36 where you can share information that's important to
37 your community about fisheries, particularly
38 subsistence fisheries and we can help you understand
39 the number of fish, where they go, how they are doing,
40 because we have great skills of people like Bill
41 Carter, who spoke just a moment ago, and Karen Hyer
42 with the -- that's traditional knowledge, and involve
43 the community in the work.

44

45 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Zach.

48

49 MR. HOWATH: Thank you, Zach.

50

0052

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Wilbur -- did that
2 cover your request Wilbur?

3
4 MR. HOWATH: Yes, it did, thank you,
5 Mr. Chair.

6
7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, would
8 anyone be opposed to taking a brief recess until 11:30,
9 at which time we can reconvene and go over the action
10 items on the agenda.

11
12 MR. KRAMER: This is Mike, I make a
13 motion to recess.

14
15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Motion made by Mike,
16 do we have a second.

17
18 MR. SHIEDT: Second.

19
20 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Second by Attamuk. All
21 those in favor please say aye.

22
23 IN UNISON: Aye.

24
25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All opposed, same
26 sign.

27
28 (No opposing votes)

29
30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, we will
31 take a brief recess until 11:30.

32
33 Thank you, everybody.

34
35 (Off record)

36
37 (On record)

38
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Can I get a quick roll
40 call of who from the Council is back online.

41
42 MR. HOWATH: Wilbur Howath, Noorvik.

43
44 MR. MOTO: Calvin Moto, Deering.

45
46 MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer Armstrong, Jr.,
47 Noorvik.

48
49 MR. KRAMER: Michael Kramer, Kotzebue.
50

0053

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Attamuk, are you still
2 with us?

3
4 MR. SHIEDT: Yes, Attamuk here.

5
6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, well, we
7 have a quorum and after some review with George during
8 the break it was recommended that we go back over the
9 action items from this morning, Items 5, 6 and 7.

10
11 So No. 5, review and adopt the agenda.
12 This morning there were no additions, or edits being
13 made. At this time would anybody like to add or take
14 anything off of the agenda.

15
16 (No comments)

17
18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If not, do I hear a
19 motion to approve the agenda -- adopt the agenda as
20 presented.

21
22 MR. SHIEDT: So moved, Attamuk.

23
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moved by Attamuk. Do
25 I have a second.

26
27 MR. HOWATH: Second. Wilbur.

28
29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Wilbur.
30 All those in favor please say aye.

31
32 IN UNISON: Aye.

33
34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All those opposed,
35 same sign.

36
37 (No opposing votes)

38
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And we have officially
40 adopted our agenda. Moving on to No. 6. Do we hear
41 any nominations for the position of Chair.

42
43 MR. ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, this is
44 Elmer. I nominate Thomas Baker.

45
46 MR. SHIEDT: I second it.

47
48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer. I
49 was nominated by Elmer, seconded by Attamuk. Do we
50

0054

1 have any other nominations for Chair at this time.

2

3 MR. SHIEDT: I move to close
4 nominations and make it.....

5

6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
9 And so with that we'll close nominations for Chair.
10 And, again, thank you for selecting me as the Chair.

11

12 Moving down to Vice Chair. I would
13 like to nominate Michael Kramer.

14

15 MR. HOWATH: Second. Wilbur.

16

17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Wilbur.
18 Do we have any other nominations.

19

20 MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer, a motion
21 to close.....

22

23 MR. MOTO: I'd like to nominate Elmer
24 Armstrong.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I heard Elmer first
27 but was that Mike or who nominated for Vice Chair?

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Sorry, go ahead,
32 Elmer.

33

34 MR. ARMSTRONG: All right, I'll accept
35 your nomination.

36

37 MR. MOTO: Yeah, I was nominating
38 Elmer, this is Calvin.

39

40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right. Well,
41 Calvin nominated Elmer, do we have a second to
42 nominating Elmer.

43

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we need a second
48 for nominations, Zach or George?

49

50

0055

1 MR. PAPPAS: Procedurally yes.

2

3 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Zach.

6

7 MR. STEVENSON: Hold on one second I'll
8 try to get Thomas -- Thomas -- Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Zach.

11

12 MR. STEVENSON: I believe we need to
13 read you all directions, now that we have a quorum,
14 including the (indiscernible). With the arrival of
15 Calvin Moto, Sr. -- Jr., we have quorum now.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So we have a quorum,
20 but when it comes to nominating someone, do we need a
21 second?

22

23 MR. STEVENSON: Yes, we do.

24

25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay. Do we have any
26 seconds for nominating Elmer Armstrong for Vice Chair.

27

28 MR. SHIEDT: I second it.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Attamuk.
31 Any further nominations at this time.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So currently we have
36 nominees, Mike Kramer and Elmer Armstrong for Vice
37 Chair, I would like to do a roll call vote -- Elmer
38 Armstrong, what is your vote for Vice Chair.

39

40 MR. STEVENSON: Are we back in business
41 right now?

42

43 MR. PAPPAS: And, Mr. Chair, and Zach,
44 yes, we are back in business. They've already gone
45 through Item 5, and right now we are reelecting
46 officers, and right now we have a Chair nominated,
47 we're looking at the Vice Chair now. We have two
48 options for the Vice Chair.

49

50

0056

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair, you can continue.

2

3 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Zach.

6 Thank you, George. So I'm just going to go through who

7 we have since we can't do an aye or a nod.

8

9 So Elmer Armstrong.

10

11 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: For yourself or Mike.

14

15 MR. ARMSTRONG: Oh, I could go for

16 Mike.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Wilbur Howath, who

19 would you like for Vice Chair.

20

21 MR. HOWATH: Mike Kramer.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.

24

25 Calvin Moto, who would you like to Vice

26 Chair.

27

28 MR. MOTO: Elmer Armstrong, please.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you.

31

32 Attamuk, who would you like for Vice

33 Chair.

34

35 MR. SHIEDT: I'll make it Mike Kramer.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And Mike, who would

38 you like for Vice Chair.

39

40 MR. KRAMER: Mike Kramer.

41

42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: With four to one, we

43 have Mike Kramer as the Vice Chair.

44

45 Moving down, would anyone like to

46 nominate a Secretary at this time.

47

48 MR. KRAMER: I nominate Elmer.

49

50

0057

1 MR. SHIEDT: I'd like to -- I know
2 she's not here but I would like to nominate Barbara
3 Atoruk.

4
5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So I heard a
6 nomination for Barbara from Attamuk, and was someone
7 else -- Mike was that you speaking or was that Calvin?

8
9 MR. KRAMER: That was me, I was making
10 for Elmer Armstrong, Jr.

11
12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So Mike nominates
13 Elmer for Secretary. Do we have any other nominations
14 for Secretary at this time.

15
16 MR. SHIEDT: I nominate Barbara Atoruk.

17
18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: We have a nomination
19 for Barbara and we have a nomination for Elmer, anyone
20 else or would we like to close nominations for
21 Secretary.

22
23 MR. HOWATH: This is Wilbur. I would
24 like to close the nominations.

25
26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
27 With that we'll close the nominations. So we have
28 Barbara and Elmer nominated and I'll go back through.

29
30 Wilbur, who would you like for the
31 Secretary, Barbara or Elmer.

32
33 MR. HOWATH: Elmer.

34
35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Elmer, who would you
36 like for Secretary, Barbara or yourself.

37
38 MR. ARMSTRONG: Elmer.

39
40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Calvin, who would you
41 like for Secretary, Barbara or Elmer.

42
43 MR. MOTO: Elmer, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Calvin.

46
47 Mike, who would you like for Secretary.

48
49 MR. KRAMER: Elmer.

50

0058

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Attamuk, who would you
2 like for Secretary.

3
4 MR. SHIEDT: Barbara.

5
6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, everyone.
7 With that we have four to one with Elmer as our
8 Secretary.

9
10 So with that, just to review, myself,
11 Thomas Baker, I'm Chair; Mike Kramer was selected as
12 the Vice Chair; and then Elmer Armstrong was selected
13 as our Secretary.

14
15 Moving down to Item No. 7, review and
16 approve previous meeting minutes. Would anybody like
17 to correct or amend anything from our meeting minutes
18 from November last year, if not, do I hear a motion to
19 approve last November's meeting minutes as presented.

20
21 MR. KRAMER: This is Mike. I make a
22 motion to approve.

23
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moved to approve by
25 Mike, do I hear a second.

26
27 MR. MOTO: Seconded. Calvin.

28
29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Calvin.
30 All those in favor of approving the meeting minutes of
31 November 2020 please say aye.

32
33 IN UNISON: Aye.

34
35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All those opposed,
36 same sign.

37
38 (No opposing votes)

39
40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, we will
41 thereby approve the previous meeting minutes from
42 November 2020. Thanks everyone for letting us hop back
43 in the agenda to cover those with our quorum.

44
45 Thank you, George and Zach for
46 correcting us on that with our miscounts from this
47 morning.

48
49 So we will move down to -- back down to
50

0059

1 new business. Do we have any recommendations for the
2 call for Federal wildlife proposals, or would we like
3 to just continue on to the Council charter review.
4 What is the wish of the Council.

5
6 (No comments)

7
8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And it appeared to me
9 that.....

10
11 MR. MOTO: Proposals.

12
13 CHAIRMAN BAKER:the call for --
14 go ahead.

15
16 MR. MOTO: Sorry, this is Calvin. What
17 particular proposals are we considering, anybody want
18 to fill me in on it.

19
20 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. George Pappas.
21 Right now this is the -- you know, we're discussing the
22 potential interest in the RAC, if the Regional Advisory
23 Council wants to see a proposal to change hunting, the
24 Federal subsistence hunting on Federal public lands in
25 your area, this is your chance. If you're looking to
26 want to change the bag limit somewhere, you want more
27 animals harvested here or less animals harvested there,
28 this is the chance to bring up the ideas and discuss it
29 and build a record. And we can keep all the notes
30 together. Since we can't officially accept a proposal
31 yet, we'll have all the bones to make one when for when
32 the time comes.

33
34 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35
36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George. At
37 this time do we have any proposals. I don't believe we
38 do. The big thing was the -- that I can recall was the
39 special action request that we discussed at the
40 November meeting that we discussed this morning,
41 basically limiting non-local residents to come in and
42 hunt caribou and moose in Units 23 and 26.

43
44 Does any member of the Council have any
45 thoughts on this at this time?

46
47 MR. BURCH: Mr. Chair. This is Mark
48 Burch from the Department of Fish and Game, if I might
49 be allowed to interrupt.

50

0060

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, sir, go ahead,
2 Mark.

3
4 MR. BURCH: Yes. We appreciate that
5 you've accommodated a couple of our wildlife reports to
6 better inform -- or to -- yeah, to inform your
7 deliberations on potential ideas, and we do have one
8 more report related to small game from Rick Merizon,
9 the Small Game Program lead for Fish and Game, if you'd
10 like to hear his report prior to getting into other
11 ideas for proposals.

12
13 Thank you.

14
15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I believe that would
16 be a good idea if we could hear that now, Mark.

17
18 MR. BURCH: Mr. Chair. I believe Rick
19 Merizon is online.

20
21 MR. MERIZON: Hi, Mr. Chair.....

22
23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Rick, are you.....

24
25 MR. MERIZON:and others -- oh,
26 sorry.

27
28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: No, go ahead. I was
29 going to see if you were with us.

30
31 MR. MERIZON: Yep, I'm here. Thank
32 you, Mr. Chair and members of the Council. For the
33 record my name is Rick Merizon, I'm the Statewide Small
34 Game Program Coordinator for the Alaska Department of
35 Fish and Game. And I'll keep this very brief, I know
36 you have a lot of things to cover for the rest of the
37 day.

38
39 I just wanted to bring to your
40 attention the two proposals that we've brought forward
41 on the State side relative to Alaska hare and snowshoe
42 hare.

43
44 (Teleconference interference -
45 participants not muted)

46
47 MR. MERIZON: The first one I'll touch
48 on is Alaska hare. So as you know back in January of
49 last year, 2020, the Board of Game adopted a regulatory
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1 structure for Alaska hare in Unit 23, 22 and Unit 18
2 and that regulatory structure created both a season
3 date, duration, a bag limit and a salvage requirement
4 for Alaska hare.

5
6 Back in 2018 the Board of Game also
7 adopted a similar structure in Unit 9 down on the
8 Alaska Peninsula and the only Game Management Unit, in
9 which there is no regulatory structure for Alaska Hare
10 is currently Unit 17, which I know is outside of this
11 Council's area. I just wanted to bring it to your
12 attention. So we have submitted a proposal to
13 similarly create a season harvest limit and salvage
14 requirement for Alaska hare in Unit 17 and that would
15 make a cohesive and uniformed management structure for
16 Alaska hare throughout the entire species range in the
17 state.

18
19 The second proposal that we've
20 submitted is to create a salvage requirement for Alaska
21 -- or excuse me, for snowshoe hare. So according to
22 State regulations there are two types of salvage that
23 can be implemented by the Board. One is for human.....

24
25 (Teleconference interference -
26 participants not muted)

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28 MR. MERIZON: One is for human
29 consumption and the other is for human use. For human
30 consumption it's fairly strict, it requires the hunter
31 to harvest very specific parts off of the animal for
32 human consumption, and human consumption only.

33
34 The proposal that we have written and
35 wanted to bring before the Council's attention is
36 seeking the other type of salvage requirement which is
37 for human use. So basically anything that a snowshoe
38 hare could be used for and has been used for in the
39 past would be legal. So trappers could still harvest
40 snowshoe hare for trapping bait, folks could still feed
41 snowshoe hares to their dogs. Would still meet the
42 legal salvage requirement by just simply harvesting the
43 hide off of a snowshoe hare and using it, or obviously
44 consuming the meat as well would also meet that salvage
45 requirement. So we just wanted to create a salvage
46 requirement that didn't legally allow hunters to
47 harvest a snowshoe hare and then walk away.

48
49 So I just wanted to very briefly bring
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1 those both to your attention and that concludes my
2 report so I'm happy to take any questions.

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Rick. Does anyone from the Council have anything to share, any comments, questions for Rick and his report.

MR. SHIEDT: Through the Chair, Attamuk here.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Attamuk.

MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, it's hard to put regulation on hare because they decline every seven years, six, seven years and it takes them about three years to build up in population. Those hares are in cycles for years and years and we all know that but we -- I think what we need to do is adopt cycle, cycle use of hare.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk. Anyone else with thoughts on Rick's report.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Just myself, personally, just kind of going off what Attamuk just brought up, especially here in Kotzebue, you can really tell the last three or four years they've become really prevalent of hares and rabbits inside city limits and living and inside the community and now, I mean you couldn't throw a rock without hitting a hare just going down one of the main roads here in Kotzebue prior to this fall. But this winter we're seeing a lot more fox coming in and a lot less hare and rabbit running around, so it just speaks to the cycles that they follow that I've seen my whole short life of 26 years.

But anybody have any recommendations or do we want to just keep this in our back pocket for now and just keep this information, appreciate the report that you did give, Rick.

MR. MERIZON: Mr. Chair, if I may again. This is Rick Merizon online. Just a point of clarification. So there's two proposals that our Program has put before the Board of Game. The snowshoe

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1 hare proposal is not -- there is no desire to create a
2 limit, a daily or season limit, it's simply to create a
3 salvage requirement. And then the second proposal for
4 Alaska hare, which is the -- the species of Native hare
5 to Alaska that is much less abundant, generally, than
6 snowshoe hare and that is the proposal through which
7 we're not only seeking a salvage requirement but also a
8 season and harvest limit. So just wanted to make that
9 point clear.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right. So Alaska
12 hare just the salvage points and then snowshoe hare
13 we're talking about salvage, season and limits on what
14 you can harvest, correct?

15

16 MR. MERIZON: Again, Mr. Chair, Rick
17 Merizon here. So the one proposal is for snowshoe
18 hare, the smaller of the two Native species that is
19 generally far more abundant across the state and with
20 that proposal, for snowshoe hare, we are only seeking a
21 salvage requirement, period. The second proposal is
22 for Alaska hare, the much larger jackrabbit or tundra
23 hare that folks refer to it as, in that proposal we are
24 seeking both a salvage requirement, season and harvest
25 limit. So for snowshoe hare we are not seeking a daily
26 or harvest limit, it's simply a salvage requirement.

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Rick. My
29 apologies, I got them mixed up there. So with that,
30 would anyone on the Board like to give guidance that we
31 do, at a later date, come up with a proposal for this
32 since we can't do one now, do we have any guidance that
33 we'd like to give to the Staff to carry out later so
34 that we have the bones of a proposal, but we could come
35 up with one at a later date. What is the wish of the
36 Council regarding the Alaska hare and snowshoe hare
37 proposals.

38

39

40 (No comments)

41

42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, hearing none,
43 I'm sure at a later date it would prove prudent to just
44 keep consistent with other units with similar
45 populations of Alaska hare and snowshoe hare but it
46 sounds like at this time the Council doesn't really
47 have an opinion on it. Again, Rick, thank you for your
48 report and for the multiple clarifications on my
49 misunderstanding of what you were saying about your
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1 proposals.

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Do we have any other thoughts, comments on what could potentially become a Federal wildlife proposal at a later date.

MR. MOTO: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is Calvin.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Calvin.

MR. MOTO: Yeah, I would like to bring up in this proposal, or suggestion would come more so in the Buckland/Deering area and it's in regard to the muskox situation.

So growing up I know the muskox were kind of brought around and they were really protected, you know, they wanted them to grow and suck but now we have such a problem, they hang out down here on the Seward Peninsula quite a bit and I don't see a whole lot of hunting going on in regards to muskox. But I am the airport maintenance guy here and all summer long I have muskox, they hang out around town, sometimes three or four herds and they end up on the runway, they destroy runway lights on a daily basis, they go up to our cemetery, they destroy grave markers and so on and so forth and I don't know if this would be a solution, but maybe we could increase the Federal -- on the State and Federal level, the bag limit for muskox. I've had some suggestions from locals that they would like to see more hunting of them now that they're, you know, not so much endangered anymore. I'm not sure where all these herds tend to migrate to or where else in Alaska they live, but they are an issue down here on the Seward Peninsula and maybe an increase in bag limit would be a good suggestion or proposal idea, or maybe even more studies and see where the muskox are going now because I haven't seen a lot of documentation or reporting or studies done in the last 10 years, and it'd be nice to get that taken care of. And more regulations, I guess, for the sake of the herd because they are on a destructive path, I mean, you know, they're not threatening other species, they're just destroying and costing the State money and so on and so forth.

Thank you.

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1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Calvin. Do
2 we have anybody on line that might have some background
3 information on muskox regulations, any studies.
4 Personally, I have looked into muskox. One thing, as a
5 local resident, and as I understand it it was all by
6 lottery depending on where you were and you have to
7 apply for the season in advance, and so I'm not sure if
8 necessarily increasing the bag limit would be, but
9 possibly opening it up to who is eligible to harvest
10 muskox.

11
12 But, do we have anyone online that
13 could potentially speak to that?

14
15 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

16
17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go.....

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19 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

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21 CHAIRMAN BAKER:ahead, Zach.

22
23 MR. STEVENSON: Could I comment on it?

24
25 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Zach.

26
27 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you. We are not
28 prepared to address the subject but, however, I would
29 be happy to look into it to see if we could get the
30 Council updated on muskox.

31
32 Thank you.

33
34 If the Council would like, we will do
35 it.

36
37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Zach.
38 I think that would be in order, just to be able to have
39 some more background knowledge on what is being done
40 and what could be done so if we could get that
41 information collected for the Council I think that
42 would be the best action.

43
44 MR. MOTO: Yeah, thank you.

45
46 MS. DAGGETT: Mr. Chair.

47
48 MR. MOTO: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Thank you, Zach.

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1 MS. DAGGETT: Mr. Chair. This is Carmen
2 Daggett and I can provide a little bit of information
3 about muskox if you'd like.

4
5 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, ma'am, please,
6 go.....

7
8 MS. DAGGETT: But I recognize.....

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10 CHAIRMAN BAKER:ahead Carmen.

11
12 MS. DAGGETT:that maybe topics
13 later it might be better discussed, I don't know.

14
15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If you have anything
16 that you would like to share that sounds like it might
17 be beneficial. Please, go ahead, Carmen.

18
19 MS. DAGGETT: Sure. So there's
20 certainly -- last year we did a count on the Cape
21 Thompson muskox population which is a little bit
22 further north and this year we're currently working,
23 actually right now, we have a weather day right now but
24 we're working on the Seward Peninsula muskox survey so
25 we'll have more up to date information on the Seward
26 Peninsula muskox population after this survey here.

27
28 When we did the Cape Thompson muskox
29 population survey, which includes the northern Unit 23,
30 and then also up into 26A, we certainly saw that that
31 population was growing and so I know that I had put in
32 a proposal to the Board of Game to open a hunt in 26A
33 and I had been in discussion with others in Unit 23
34 about what they would like to do about that but I think
35 currently we're not -- it's possible that we might
36 consider doing that but it would just be -- you know,
37 it's going to take a little time to put that together.
38 But I certainly think it might be possible that that
39 might happen.

40
41 So just so that you're kind of aware
42 where we're at with that right now.

43
44 And more to come, I guess, on the
45 Seward Peninsula muskox population numbers for the most
46 recent survey.

47
48 Okay.

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1 MR. FRONSTIN: Mr. Chair, this is
2 wildlife biologist, with (indiscernible) Ramie
3 Fronstin, I just wanted to clarify a few points if
4 that's okay.

5
6 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Ramie.

7
8 MR. FRONSTIN: So, yeah, we do, like
9 Carmen said, we -- the National Park Service and Alaska
10 Fish and Game collaborate to do muskoxen surveys
11 annually and we generally do an annual muskoxen survey
12 on Cape Thompson, a core area of Cape Thompson, and
13 last year we did the expanded -- an expanded survey
14 that went through Noatak and up into 26 -- Unit 26 and
15 like Carmen said, we did find an increase in the
16 population but it wasn't for the Cape Thompson core
17 area, that area hasn't changed. It was for the
18 expanded area. So they've been expanding out eastward
19 from the Cape Thompson area. And again, like Carmen
20 said, right now we're doing the Seward Peninsula
21 muskoxen survey, this year we won't be doing an
22 abundance survey in Cape Thompson due to Covid and
23 funding but we will be attempting a composition survey
24 in the expanded area this spring.

25
26 So that's all I have for now.

27
28 But -- but every RAC meeting, I usually
29 have a wildlife update report and I have all of the
30 recent surveys and data and results that we have found
31 in those.

32
33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you both
34 Carmen and Ramie for that information. Does anybody
35 else have anything they'd like to add on to that.

36
37 MR. SPARKS: Yeah, this is Tom Sparks.
38 We do have a joint management agreement with the Park
39 Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Alaska
40 Department of Fish and Game. And there's a quota
41 that's shared between the agencies, and under the State
42 regulations it's a Tier II hunt and under the Federal
43 it's a draw that we've been administering for quite a
44 number of years. So just a little bit more background
45 on that.

46
47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you, Tom.
48 Was someone else going to say something.

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1 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, can you hear me?

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please identify
4 yourself.

5

6 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, this is Bob
7 Schaeffer in Kotzebue. I think all of the problems
8 that we're having up here is the summertime move of the
9 muskox, you know, when they start going from
10 Krusenstern or that area down to the beaches and then,
11 of course, they follow the beaches and then they start
12 going over towards Sisolik, that area where the people --
13 there are a lot of people there in the summertime,
14 living there and hunting sea mammals and there are some
15 permanent residents as well. And that's where the
16 problem lies, is that they follow it -- get to the end
17 of.....

18

19 (Teleconference interference -
20 participants not muted)

21

22 MR. SCHAEFFER:Sisolik and then
23 start mingling with the folks there, the dogs and the
24 -- you know, it becomes kind of dangerous because
25 they're kind of a large creature and we haven't had an
26 incident where they've attacked humans but it becomes a
27 concern. In the wintertime, of course, we don't have
28 to worry about them they go up to the Krusenstern and
29 there's a few mountains that have a few herds and
30 they're all way over towards the (indiscernible) and
31 toward the Noatak area, toward the Aggie, I've seen all
32 those herds in my time I've been around here. And the
33 herds have pretty much maintained their populations,
34 simply because of the wolf predation and the wolf
35 predation is -- there was a lot of wolves this year.
36 So, in fact, one of the hunters had mentioned that they
37 saw a lone muskox and by the next day the little pack
38 of wolves got a hold of it and then one sat and ate the
39 whole thing because he was there the next day and all
40 there was was bones left. So when the population of
41 wolves, of course, is as high as it was last year, you
42 know, it becomes -- I guess they have a tough time
43 trying to fend them off and survive. But, anyway, I --
44 the local folks last year spent quite a bit of their
45 own resources in trying to push the -- push the muskox
46 away from the populated areas around the Sisolik area,
47 and it took awhile and took -- because they weren't
48 sure if it was illegal for them to do that and after
49 awhile it became kind of a contentious situation over
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1 there and everybody agreed that the best thing to do is
2 try to get a few fourwheelers over there and then chase
3 them away from where the population of Sisolik is.
4 That's what happened, and they stayed away. I know I
5 took some folks over there with my boat and we put our
6 scents up in the narrows there to keep them from coming
7 back but, of course, you can't -- we have no control
8 over the tides, you know, if they can go around the
9 bottom they do. But they didn't.

10

11 But anyway, I wanted to talk a little
12 bit about the hunting of them too, you know, when the
13 State gets ahold of them, of course, it's non-
14 discriminatory because the State has to take care of
15 its populations regardless, you know, and every time
16 you try to do something where the Native people are
17 involved they scream unconstitutional and
18 discrimination, so -- and it's always been a problem up
19 here. So the local folks pretty much don't involve
20 themselves, and, however, the State considers them like
21 a lottery, so what you have is when the lottery goes
22 through you have all the outsiders getting the permits
23 and they go out and then they shoot and people are
24 pretty much left out in the cold. But I wanted to
25 mention that because that was a concern from some of
26 the local folks, that, why should I go into a lottery
27 when I know I'm not going to get one anyway.

28

29 So, anyway, I just thought I'd just
30 mention that, thanks.

31

32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you. I
33 really appreciate having local hunter subsistence user
34 background information on topics like these. Does
35 anybody else have anything relating to muskox or any
36 other ideas for what could potentially be a Federal
37 wildlife proposal.

38

39 MS. LUKIN: Through the Chair. This is
40 Maija Lukin from Western Arctic National Park Land.

41

42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, Maija, go ahead.

43

44 MS. LUKIN: Hi, Thomas, thank you. So
45 we hear the concerns continually about Cape Krusenstern
46 muskox and so one of the ways that Western Arctic has
47 attempted to, you know, listen to the concerns like
48 what Bobby said about, you know, locals not wanting to
49 apply for the draw permits, is that, on Cape

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1 Krusenstern, we have permits for muskox there and we've
2 chosen to listen, you know, to the Subsistence Resource
3 Commission for Cape Krusenstern as well as the RAC
4 meeting members and subsistence users and only allow
5 local people to apply for our draw permit. And so,
6 you know, we have that draw permit every spring -- I'm
7 sorry, every fall, and then you have only local people
8 getting the muskox from Cape Krusenstern from the
9 Federal side. And I just wanted to make sure that that
10 was clarified.

11

12 Thank you.

13

14 MR. HANSON: And through the Chair.
15 This is Alex Hanson, Alaska Department of Fish and
16 Game.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Maija.
19 Go ahead, Alex.

20

21 MR. HANSON: Yeah, just wanted to point
22 out, I'm kind of following the coattails of Maija
23 there, that our muskox harvest is Tier II permits and
24 that is the TX107, the TX106, one of them is on the
25 Northern Seward Peninsula, the other is north of
26 Kotzebue basically. So those are Tier II permits and
27 they're basically -- anybody within the state can
28 apply, however, the way that that system works, only
29 local people can actually qualify to draw those
30 permits, and only local people ever draw those permits.

31

32 So we could certainly do, I think, a
33 better job of informing the public how to get through
34 that process because I realize that process is kind of
35 challenging going through that application and, you
36 know, folks, for instance, in the villages, have a
37 higher probability of drawing than folks even in
38 Kotzebue. But people in Anchorage or outside of the
39 area have almost no chance of obtaining those permits.

40

41 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair.

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

44

45 MR. HOWATH: It's Wilbur.

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

48

49 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, I like what Bob

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1 mentioned. And, anyways, these muskox, I fill out for
2 a permit several years ago and never did get one
3 anyways and I run into muskox almost every fall and boy
4 they look nice and healthy and I always wish I had a
5 permit. But do we have to fill out every year for
6 those permits, anybody know?

7

8 MR. HANSON: Through the Chair. This
9 is Alex Hanson again, for the record, Alaska Department
10 of Fish and Game. That is correct, Calvin [sic], you
11 have to fill out every year for that application and it
12 is in November. We make an effort here in our office
13 to contact the IRAs and Cathy does a good job of trying
14 to put that information out through the radio and
15 through other social media outlets to try to let people
16 know that that application period is open. And we're
17 open to ideas, if you have a better way to reach folks,
18 because we want people to be able to apply and have
19 that opportunity. And my apologies for not doing a
20 better job of getting that out to the public so they
21 know when and how to do that.

22

23 MS. ATKINSON: This is Hannah, can I
24 comment on the Federal hunt, how to apply for that?

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Hannah.

27

28 MS. ATKINSON: Hi, thank you. This is
29 Hannah Atkinson for the record. Multiple Hannahs.
30 Yeah, I just wanted to say that on the Federal side,
31 the hunt -- how to apply for it is to just call our
32 office and get on the list for the draw of the permit.
33 So -- and that starts in -- our notice goes out in
34 July. And I do think that it is an outreach issue and
35 so we can definitely be doing better at getting the
36 flier out that has the information but the process
37 itself to get on that list, and there's only like two
38 permits drawn, but to be considered, is --there's not --
39 it's pretty easy as long as people have the
40 information. So we'll definitely work on getting the
41 information out. And Ramie Fronstin is the person
42 taking care of that Federal hunt process. So if he has
43 any other comments.

44

45 MR. FRONSTIN: Yeah, sure. So actually
46 I'll add to that. So the number of permits that we
47 give is shared with the State but we all decide the
48 number of permits by the population -- by the abundance
49 surveys. So if the populations are going up, those

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1 numbers should go up also, the number of permits. And
2 the -- our drawing is completely random, there are no
3 caveats to it so it's just like rolling a dice so.

4

5 MR. HANSON: And Alex Hanson once
6 again. Aside -- you know, as Ramie mentioned, the Park
7 Service application is completely random, the State's
8 application Tier II is weighted toward cost of living
9 and stuff and so that makes it so people here within
10 the region are pretty much guaranteed to get the
11 permit. As I mentioned, these permits do not go
12 outside of the region.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you.....

15

16 MR. MOTO: Can I.....

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER:Hannah, Ramie and
19 -- who is speaking?

20

21 MR. MOTO: This is Calvin, sorry.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Calvin.

24

25 MR. MOTO: Yeah, in regards to that so
26 I did hear a drawing for two and another gentleman
27 there said that as long as the population's increased
28 well the bag limit -- or the amount of tickets drawn
29 should increase too, and this is kind of veer off the
30 topic a little bit and go towards more of the caribou
31 side, I'm wondering if that's something -- the way
32 you're regulating muskox and Federal permits and such
33 like that, you know, non-resident and resident, can we
34 implement some stuff we're doing in the muskox area to
35 the non-resident caribou hunting? And maybe try to get
36 some of these non-resident hunters that are coming up
37 for caribou more kind of like trying to hunt muskox
38 maybe, or something.

39

40 MR. HANSON: Through the Chair. This
41 is Alex Hanson for Fish and Game. And I can attempt to
42 address your question, Calvin.

43

44 As Ramie mentioned our harvest quotas
45 for muskox are largely based on the population surveys.
46 And so currently we're harvesting what we're able to
47 harvest for muskox. So I think it would be largely
48 unpopular to allow non-local harvest of muskox. If we
49 have the opportunity to harvest more muskox I feel like
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1 it should be, and I suspect the local residents feel
2 like they should have the first opportunity at that and
3 that's probably the direction we would go.

4

5 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is
6 Mike.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

9

10 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, if I could recall
11 when Percy Ballot, out of Buckland was on the Council,
12 I could remember that, you know, Buckland and Deering
13 were having a difficult time getting caribou and/or
14 moose and that they were going to only allow those
15 residents down there, only Deering and Buckland, to
16 fill their freezers to substitute for the lack of
17 caribou and/or moose harvested. I'm trying to remember
18 if they kept that hunt separate just for those two
19 communities because, you know, their lack of ability to
20 be able to harvest caribou and/or moose. If I recall.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you for that
23 Mike. But I think just to kind of wrap up the muskox
24 discussion, if there's no more pertinent information,
25 we've heard a lot of good information and I think if we
26 can kind of gather up what we've heard as well as some
27 more facts, like Zach mentioned earlier, and get that
28 before the Council it would give us a better idea for
29 next time what we may be able to request or put into a
30 proposal.

31

32 MR. MOTO: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is
33 Calvin.

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Calvin.

36

37 MR. MOTO: Can you please note on my
38 statement that my concern is not so much a harvest
39 issue but a nuisance and destruction issue, in terms of
40 maybe controlling them around limits, you know, because
41 when these muskox do destroy grave markers, a lot of
42 people are furious. You know, some people take it to
43 the next level to where, you know, laws can be broke,
44 and they literally if nothing -- if the State doesn't
45 do anything about it they are going to take matters
46 into their own hands. That's kind of where my
47 statement came along, it wasn't so much a
48 hunting/harvest issue, but the harvest part was to
49 maybe be a solution to the population increase, you
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1 know what I'm saying.

2

3

Thank you.

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6

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Calvin.
We'll make a good note of that. Does anybody else have
anything else they'd like to add on to this part of the
discussion or are we ready to move on.

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MR. SCHAEFFER: Just one more comment
on muskox, this is Bob.

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

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MR. SCHAEFFER: There's a lot of
factors involved in why muskox do what they do and I
think we see it with moose, you know, when the
populations of bear increase, they tend to try to go
close to the towns and villages simply because the
bears don't meander in those areas. And when there's a
lot of bears harassing them, you know, they tend to
move to try to get away from them buggers and the
population of bear, of course, is really high. But,
you know, I think the issue is, you know, they do come
to a community, how do you move them off, you know, so
that they won't become a problem to the community. But
what I -- the example I gave across in Sisolik was -- I
thought that was a good move, no one was harmed, they
moved on, and they didn't come back the rest of the
summer so, you know, it's just one of those things
where I think the community has to work with the Park
Service and the Fish and Game and a few others to try
to see if they can move them on so that they don't
become a problem in a community. And I think that's
the real issue there.

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Bob.

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MR. MOTO: And another -- this is

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Calvin.

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MR. MOTO: Another safety concern, too,
is when they're on the runway we'll have planes come in
and attempt to land and they'll be right there on the
runway and we'll have a plane come down and, you know,
buzz them with passengers on board and, you know,
that's kind of not safe -- well, I'm not a pilot but,

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1 you know, it would seem unsafe for the planes to do
2 that and then have to get back up in the air for
3 landing.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Calvin.
8 Does anybody else have anything regarding the muskox
9 situation that Calvin's brought up.

10

11 MR. HANSON: If I may, through the
12 Chair, this is Alex Hanson once again. Calvin, you
13 certainly bring up some very good points. And I guess
14 I would just point out that we are working with the
15 Borough and with DOT on the issues that you're
16 experiencing there in Deering. We were contacted a
17 little while ago as to how we can mitigate some of the
18 issues that you're having around Deering and around the
19 airport, through your airport project that's up and
20 coming. So, please, be in contact with us, Calvin, and
21 we can work to mitigate some of these issues. As Bob
22 pointed out, you know, a lot of times we're seeing
23 muskox and we see this a lot on the Seward Peninsula,
24 around Nome, they're getting pushed closer and closer
25 to the communities and that's where those conflict
26 issues occur. And we, you know, we certainly have ways
27 and better understanding, at least, from the experience
28 in Nome, as how to deal with those issues and we want
29 to work with local communities and move past these
30 issues, if we can. They're certainly challenging, you
31 know, muskox can be challenging so, please keep in
32 contact with us and we'll do what we can to help
33 mitigate this issue.

34

35 MR. MOTO: Thank you. I am the
36 President of the Deering IRA so if you have any
37 documents or any kind of information that you would
38 like to share with us, please, feel free to send that
39 on to the IRA, please.

40

41 MR. HANSON: Duly noted. Thank you,
42 Calvin. We'll get in touch with our area biologist and
43 we can work on getting that information to you and as
44 we work on this project hopefully we can put some
45 measures in place to alleviate some of your problems
46 there.

47

48 MR. MOTO: Thank you, everybody.

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1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex.
2 Thank you, Calvin. Do we have any other potential
3 topics for a Federal wildlife proposal that we'd like
4 to discuss at this time -- actually before we do that
5 I'd just like to note that Member Vida Coaltrain has
6 been trying to call in but due to power issues in the
7 village of Selawik, she's been cut off several times
8 and not able to join us but she is attempting to join
9 us for the record.

10

11 So do we have any other topics for any
12 Federal wildlife proposal or are we ready to move on at
13 this time.

14

15 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. George Pappas.
16 I have one recommendation for consideration.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, George.

19

20 MR. PAPPAS: This is back to our
21 original discussions on the caribou and moose potential
22 closings. There was much discussion earlier today for
23 a special action, and there was discussions last
24 Council meeting about, well, let's not make this
25 permanent let's put this in as a special action for now
26 and possibly submit a proposal to the Federal Board to
27 make the recommended action permanent. So you could,
28 if you want to, express intent of the Council, if they
29 want to see a, you know, a potential special action be
30 submitted and, if so, if that special action would be
31 submitted, a parallel proposal would be submitted to
32 the Federal Board to make that change permanent. So
33 here's an opportunity to discuss intent, if you're
34 interested.

35

36 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George.
39 Does anybody -- would anybody like to respond to
40 George's statement there.

41

42 (Teleconference interference -
43 participants not muted)

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any comments or
46 questions from the Council on that.

47

48 (No comments)

49

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0077

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So George, just from
2 what I've gathered from the meetings that I've attended
3 it sounds like we should -- the Council has wanted to
4 go down that path so I think moving forward, I feel
5 like that's the direction that the Council's wanting to
6 go unless someone has something they'd like to bring up
7 now.

8
9 (No comments)

10
11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do you have any
12 further recommendation, George?

13
14 MR. PAPPAS: No, Mr. Chair. Just when
15 the wildlife rule is published and we can start
16 hammering out proposals that we can have individuals
17 contact this Council, maybe contact us with that
18 direction. So there's a window that's coming up, if
19 you're looking to have that made permanent, I don't
20 recall the discussions, was it October, on what the
21 final idea was but there was the idea just to what,
22 what, September or October, coming up. So, no, I don't
23 have any other suggestions.

24
25 Thank you, very much, Mr. Chair. It's
26 been considered, appreciate it.

27
28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George.
29 Does the Council have any strong feelings on that at
30 this time.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Mike Kramer, are you
35 still on the line?

36
37 MR. KRAMER: Yes, I am.

38
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thanks, Mike. Do you
40 recall what our general feel was last November when we
41 brought this up and kind of got the idea for the
42 special action request. We discussed yours that you
43 initially had done as an individual and then went to
44 the one that we discussed this morning, the draft of
45 the wildlife temporary special action, do you recall --
46 I don't, personally, do you recall what our thoughts
47 were on trying to make it permanent?

48
49 MR. KRAMER: I remember us trying to
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1 push it through as a Federal wildlife proposal but they
2 kept saying that, you know, being able to close it
3 would be kind of difficult, in the way of it being
4 Federal public lands, you know, even though we did have
5 it closed, we still had hunters pouring up here --
6 coming -- I mean there was more hunters than there was
7 local people traveling in and out on the daily flights,
8 you know, to where a lot of people didn't think that
9 was right due to the Covid pandemic and, you know, the
10 possibility of it coming to Kotzebue and going rampant.
11 I know that the Federal Subsistence Board stated that
12 it was beyond their control, even though I had support
13 from Donny Olson, at the time, Representative Lincoln,
14 Liz Cravalho from NANA, Kotzebue IRA, I'm trying to
15 think of several other agencies that I had support
16 letters for but the Federal Subsistence Board still did
17 shoot it down, you know, in kind of a way it was kind
18 of like, you know, what's the point when they're just
19 going to shoot it down and not think of human life over
20 money. It was a very difficult fall last year because
21 there was such a lot of conflict, there was a lot of
22 racial slur by some of these hunters towards local
23 people here in Kotzebue. There was also a lot of
24 issues between local people and hunters at the grocery
25 store where hunters weren't wearing masks.....

26

27 (Teleconference interference -
28 participants not muted)

29

30 MR. KRAMER:and it was just a big
31 controversy. And that was one of the reasons I -- you
32 know, I kind of looked away from that because no matter
33 what we try to do to protect our community, we still
34 get shoved in the corner regardless. I'm trying to
35 protect the people, our subsistence resource. You go
36 to our store, our shelves are empty. You go to the
37 village store, their shelves are empty. We're talking
38 about food security here. That was one of my main
39 reasons for shutting down all hunting in Game
40 Management Unit 23, was to protect our subsistence
41 resources and increase our ability to be able to
42 harvest these animals when the abundance of groceries
43 coming into Kotzebue was minimal and/or into the
44 villages.

45

46 The other thing was public safety, you
47 know, but it was still shot down by the Federal
48 Subsistence Board and so it was -- they said it was
49 beyond their control so, you know, I tried my hardest

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1 to try and push this through but it still got shot
2 down. So, I mean I'd kind of like to leave it up to
3 the Council to see if we should continue to try and do
4 it for this fall but, you know, as the mandates go and
5 people are getting immunized, a lot more people will be
6 able to start traveling now so I'm kind of stuck in
7 between a rock and a hard place.

8
9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So I guess I'd like to
10 put it to the Council now, so basically -- and, George,
11 correct me if I'm not going the right direction, but
12 what we're being kind of faced with is we have the
13 potential to continue on with the special action
14 request that we discussed earlier this morning to where
15 we limit who can come in and who can hunt on the
16 Federal lands in our game unit for this year, for the
17 2021 hunting season, as well as attempting to make it a
18 permanent, beyond this hunting season, what is the wish
19 of the Council, do we want to pursue it as just this
20 season and come back to it on a year by year basis, or
21 would we like to push further and try to make a more
22 permanent long-lasting special action request.

23
24 MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer.

25
26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Elmer.

27
28 MR. ARMSTRONG: I know I traveled for
29 medical to -- last -- end of August and beginning of
30 September and when I came back, you know, I was
31 surprised of how many people were traveling, even
32 though the mandates were in place I saw the hunters
33 come in. I even overheard one of the assistants said,
34 we're going to take you to the caribou. And last fall
35 was pretty hard on many villages because we rely on the
36 caribou as we live through the seasons, fish, caribou,
37 moose, so I think -- this is just my opinion, I think
38 we need to come up with a solid plan that's long-
39 lasting, not -- we could work on another one too for
40 the pandemic, but look like -- I don't know if it's
41 going to end or -- I know the mandates are starting to
42 expire.

43
44 So that's my opinion, thank you.

45
46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.
47 Anyone else from the Council.

48
49 MR. STEVENSON: Thomas may -- may I --
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1 Mr. Chair, may I interrupt.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Zach.

4

5 (No comments)

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Zach, the floor is
8 yours.

9

10 MR. SCHAEFFER: I've got a comment,
11 anybody want to hear my comment.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Who's speaking?

14

15 MR. STEVENSON: I'm sorry -- I'm sorry,
16 go ahead.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Who was that?

19

20 MR. SCHAEFFER: This is Bob, Bob
21 Schaeffer.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Bobby.

24

25 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, just to sort of
26 spin off of what Mike was saying and I've been giving
27 it a lot of thought too and I -- you know, I attended
28 one of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
29 sessions one time when I was with the Borough back in
30 2012, and I sat back and listened, and they were
31 talking about transporters, and the transporters were
32 online and so one of them jumped up who transports up
33 here from Seattle and he got up and said this is my
34 herd, this is my herd, I'm an American citizen, this is
35 my herd. And it kind of -- it kind of got me so I got
36 up and I made a few comments, but one of the comments
37 that I made, of course, I think you're looking at the
38 buffalo syndrome all over again, you know, to where you
39 got a herd of 239,000, you know, and everybody's
40 eyeballing them because they're cut off, all the other
41 herds are depleted to where they have to -- they're
42 over-regulated, you have to save that herd, you know,
43 and I think this is where this is going as well.
44 Because I've never seen so many head hunters come up
45 here in terms of last fall. I mean it was just crazy,
46 you know, and they had access to the herd, where we
47 didn't because, you know, they turned back the herd and
48 it stayed pretty much above the upper Noatak for longer
49 than we've ever seen. So, you know, people were

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1 expecting the herd to be fairly large following the
2 coast so that, you know, those people in Kotzebue and
3 Noorvik and those areas can get the meat that they want
4 but it didn't work out that way and I kept thinking
5 why, well, you know, what's happening, of course we
6 have longer falls now and global warming is playing a
7 real, you know, it's changing everything -- the
8 migration patterns, it's changing the habits of the
9 caribou because, you know, when we have our caribou
10 because, I guess, it's heating up too much in the
11 mountain where they normally -- normally calve and
12 summer -- in fact, you know, the caribou were moving
13 further north and people in Barrow were having a
14 wonderful season. They would go out with their
15 fourwheelers and they'd get all the caribou that they
16 want from our herd and I -- and, you know, in fact, one
17 of them mentioned it looked like the herd is going to
18 stay here and so a large part of the herd had probably
19 never came down and to follow their normal migratory
20 path down south into Buckland so -- the winter -- and
21 so, you know, we waited and, of course, in November,
22 finally we started getting inklings of a little herd
23 going by, we thought it was going to be a major part of
24 the herd but just a couple thousand came by Kotzebue
25 and, of course, some hunters tried to track them, they
26 never slowed down, they just went straight through the
27 Baldwin Peninsula and straight past the -- into the
28 Buckland and Selawik Hills, and so he said that he'd
29 never seen it like that before, the way they -- they
30 didn't even stop to feed and to rest, they just kept on
31 going. And so we had a little opportunity, a few
32 people got some caribou, but some of the other villages
33 waited -- like in Kiana they waited full fall for
34 caribou and never got any and according to Alex that
35 the caribou didn't move from up in the upper part of
36 the Noatak River area until really late and by then,
37 you know, the ice is forming and people can't venture
38 out with their boat anymore and the caribou came
39 through and I'm not sure what percentage or what the
40 population was or the numbers were that came through
41 from Ambler all the way down to Noorvik, or maybe even
42 Kotzebue for that matter.

43

44 And so like I said, you know, I think
45 this global warming thing it's just -- it's just
46 putting a real crimp on what their patterns normally
47 are. So I would just going to suggest maybe -- maybe
48 we should look at it from a different paradigm and then
49 look at it from what kind of affect, you know, the
50

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1 global warming is having on the caribou and which way
2 they're going and what they're doing and if it's
3 changing their patterns or, you know, maybe -- because
4 if you find out that out you could probably manage it
5 better. But right now I just -- I'm kind of at awe as
6 to -- as to, you know, the patterns I'm so used to for--
7 for the last 50 years I've seen them do one thing,
8 they migrate at a certain time and, you know, for the
9 last 20 years it's been so different you can't second
10 guess what they're going to do next. So it's just
11 something I thought about and, you know, one of the
12 points I wanted to make as well as the numbers decrease
13 the headhunters increase as the years have gone by.

14

15 And so I think that, you know, the idea
16 of management of that herd is going to have to change.
17 I think -- I hate to see it where it becomes so small
18 that it becomes over-regulated simply because there's
19 just too much pressure on that herd.

20

21 I thought I'd bring that out because
22 Mike had mentioned it, and it got me thinking about why
23 as to why all of a sudden there's so many outside
24 hunters that are coming up here. Transporters are just
25 making mega bucks transporting those guys out to the
26 different places in the northern part of our borough
27 here to, you know, to intercept and get their caribou.
28 They got their caribou, you know, but we didn't and so
29 there is -- the conflict is still there.

30

31 Instead of it being in a biology form
32 of management, it's become more of a monetary form of
33 management because the State loves it to death because
34 they get all these non-resident hunters and they charge
35 them so much and so it becomes a monetary issue rather
36 than a management issue.

37

38 But I just thought I'd bring that out,
39 and that's just my personal opinion.

40

41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Bobby,
42 appreciate your opinions. So what I'm gathering from
43 the Council is that I feel like -- just going back to
44 your recommendation, George, at this time I believe the
45 Council would approve of moving forward with the
46 special action, the temporary special action that just
47 covers this year but we're going to -- I believe we're
48 going to have to come back together and have some more
49 solid information as to what kind of plan we can
50

0083

1 develop to make it more permanent. This may not be the
2 answer just because of all the factors involved in it,
3 so largely apart from the Covid19 pandemic that started
4 last year, and had such a toll on what could and
5 couldn't happen within this Northwest Arctic region of,
6 who can traveling and who can travel out, so on and so
7 forth.

8
9 So I -- unless there's any objection, I
10 think at this time the Council is happy with moving
11 forward with the temporary special action that Hannah
12 Voorhees went over with us this morning, but we're
13 going to need a bit more planning before we try to do
14 anything to try to become permanent.

15
16 MR. SHIEDT: Thank you. Attamuk here.

17
18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Attamuk.

19
20 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, Mike, you're right
21 -- everybody's right about these sporthunters coming in
22 and due to this global warming. And the Western World
23 don't understand that in our villages there -- it's not
24 like the Lower 48, they have two or three people in
25 their house, here some households are -- there as much
26 as 14 people per house, and on the -- I think we need
27 to worry if this pandemic don't go away that we need to
28 put a plan to stop them from coming in. And my
29 question will be this to the Federals, what's the
30 latest we could put it on Federal Register to stop it
31 because if we are too late we have to go through the
32 process 60 days or something like that through the
33 Federal Register and we got it going two different ways
34 and it will delay -- what's the latest the Board could
35 come up with to stop transporters from coming in. I
36 think that's the best we could take route. Because we
37 can't just do it. Because Mike was right last fall, I
38 couldn't support it because you have to go through the
39 process and put it in the Federal Register in order for
40 us to say no, you know, what's the latest we could hold
41 off and at least make it to close it.

42
43 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. Attamuk.

44
45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, George.

46
47 MR. PAPPAS: So we don't -- since it
48 hasn't been published yet, we don't have the exact
49 deadline but when they usually open up a window it's
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1 like 60 days. So if the window opens up here in the
2 next week or two we'd have 60 days from when it opens
3 to accept proposals. So I don't have a, you know,
4 we've had problems before with this and got delayed, I
5 don't know, I'm not sure that we've had anything past
6 the middle of May for a deadline, but my assumption it
7 would be this spring and I can't -- I honestly cannot
8 tell you exactly when because things are all tied up in
9 Washington, D.C. But the good news is there's been a
10 second wind -- our packages have been pulled out of the
11 main pile being reviewed to be expedited. So I didn't
12 tell you that earlier, the good news is our information
13 has been forwarded but we don't know when it's going to
14 be out but I would say, I don't know I would say at
15 least two months from now, minimum, maybe three months
16 from now.

17

18 And it's very clear as to what the
19 Council is saying, you're building an excellent record,
20 thank you very much. The idea of going forth with a
21 special action for the first year is an idea to take a
22 look and come up with a bigger plan, that's well
23 thought out, is an excellent way of doing such and
24 we've captured this all on record. So as soon as we
25 find out Attamuk I will make sure Zach calls you
26 immediately.

27

28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29

30 MR. SHIEDT: Okay, thank you. So if
31 this sickness don't get better and we don't get better --
32 if we don't go within 70 days -- you said 60 days and
33 if this gets worse by 70 days from now, so even if we
34 put up something it won't do no good until next cycle
35 then, right?

36

37 MR. PAPPAS: For a proposal, that's
38 correct, it won't be evaluated by the Federal
39 Subsistence Board until next, you know, in about a year
40 from now, but you'll have an analysis to look at from
41 us, you'll have, at your next meeting you'd be able to
42 take a look and modify it so if you did decide to put a
43 proposal in to parallel the special action you will
44 have an analysis to look at here in the fall, to take a
45 look at and see if you really want to go through with
46 it. I mean you do have the option of withdrawing a
47 proposal if you change your mind, so that's something
48 we didn't discuss, and I haven't seen that too many
49 times, but there's an option there too.

50

0085

1 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, thank you. And the
2 rest of your Board members keep that in mind that we
3 have a certain cycle we have to go through otherwise
4 what we plan to do in June won't do no good.

5
6 Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
9 Thank you, George. My take on all this is that with
10 the special action request that we've put in already
11 and are working on for this year, we should, as a
12 region, be set. If it goes forward and it's approved
13 and everything and then we can see how affective it is
14 so that by the time we all officially come back in the
15 fall for our second meeting of the year then we would
16 be able to assess, okay, this is what worked well and
17 this is what -- this is where a loophole is, this is
18 where something didn't work as well as we thought it
19 should, so by that point we'll have the entire hunting
20 season to see how effective our action -- our special
21 action will be and if we need to re-up it -- revamp it
22 so that then by a year from now when really that's when
23 things would happen and be able to be reviewed, then we
24 got at least one meeting under our belt where we've got
25 a plan in place, we've discussed, we have evidence of
26 what works and what doesn't then we'll have enough
27 information to say this is exactly what our RAC wants
28 to do, this is what will be best for our region, this
29 is the path we want to start going down to make a
30 permanent change regarding our animals, our traditions,
31 our hunting, who can come in, who can't come in.

32
33 So if there's no other discussion on
34 that, is there anything else for Federal wildlife
35 proposals that we could potentially work on with the
36 Staff.

37
38 MR. SHIEDT: Through the Chair, Attamuk
39 here.

40
41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

42
43 MR. SHIEDT: I hear what you're saying
44 but if we can close it, I think our best bet would be
45 to use the city and the Borough because the city could
46 say, hey, we don't want outsiders to come in to
47 Kotzebue due to if the sickness don't get any better
48 and we could use the Borough, the same thing, saying,
49 Borough, we don't want hunters to go to the villages or
50

0086

1 the planes dropping off hunters near the village. We
2 could use the Borough to close our -- I think we could
3 go on that route with what the city and the Borough
4 could stipulate who could come in. Because I know
5 right now, city put certain stipulations for us,
6 locals, to use, and it shouldn't be not only to locals,
7 it should be to people from the outside world coming
8 in.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Attamuk.
13 And I completely agree. And I think we discussed this
14 last time when we met in November that, we, as the
15 Council members can approach our local cities and the
16 Borough here and start that conversation, I think, now
17 that we've got an idea of what's rolling with the
18 special action request and everything, now, we can get
19 a little bit more information then we can bring that,
20 this summer, before the outsiders start coming up to go
21 hunting and see where we're at, see where things are
22 going, and then we can work with the city and the
23 Borough -- the cities and the Borough.

24

25 MR. SHIEDT: Yeah, and what I'm hearing
26 is transporters and outfitters are taking up way up and
27 disturbing the migration of our caribou, that's what I
28 keep hearing from planes that they could see from non
29 -- people that -- the transporters, when they see other
30 planes out there, they said there's a lot of hunters
31 way up -- way up the Noatak River in the State lands.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you,
34 Attamuk. Do we have anything else that we'd like to
35 cover under potential wildlife proposals at this time.

36

37 (No comments)

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If not, I'd like to
40 move on to the Council charter review. Zach, who would
41 like to speak to that.

42

43 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Can you guys hear me okay?

45

46 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I can. Can everyone
47 hear Zach all right?

48

49 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yes.

50

0087

1 MR. HOWATH: Yeah.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, Zach, the
4 floor is yours.

5

6 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair.
7 It's important that we word with the charter. We have
8 some language that I believe George will read from our
9 script, but it's basically the chance for this Council
10 to modify the rules we follow as a Council to stay
11 above board, to make sure we follow the law.

12

13 One of the changes, the fall meeting
14 was an offer that came this morning from the Refuge
15 through Susan Georgette, who offered to hand deliver
16 the meeting books, to go for direct delivery to the
17 villages because we had some problems with the meeting
18 books with the post office. If the Council wants to
19 proceed with that direction, we thank you Susan
20 Georgette for your help.

21

22 That's all, Mr. Chair.

23

24 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. George Pappas.
25 Yes, I'm required to read a script here for you about
26 the charter review process. Are you ready, sir?

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, sir, go ahead,
29 George.

30

31 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair and Council
32 members.

33

34 Under the Federal Advisory Committee
35 Act, your Council charter is renewed every two years.
36 Before the charter is renewed, the Council has a right
37 to review it and discuss any changes they would like to
38 propose to the Federal Subsistence Board. The Board
39 then reviews the proposed changes and if the Board
40 agrees, the request for proposed changes is forwarded
41 to the Secretary of the Interior. A lot of the
42 language in your charter is actually required by the
43 Federal Advisory Committee Act and its implementing
44 policies so you can't change that language. The
45 changes that you can make in your charters, you can
46 request is the name of your Council, or the number of
47 members on your Council, but you will need to have a
48 reasonable justification for it. You can also request
49 an addition of language that specifies a desired
50

0088

1 membership balance that, if achieved, would allow the
2 members of the Council to represent the entire region.

3

4

5 For example, a few years ago on the
6 Kodiak/Aleutians, they requested and was granted
7 approval, to geographically rebalance the membership to
8 have four members from the Kodiak Archipelago, three
9 from the Alaska Peninsula and three from the 3 Aleutian
10 Pribilof Islands because their region is so spread out
11 so the Council wanted to state that having broader
12 geographic representation is of value for them.

12

13

14 During the last charter review, the
15 Western Interior Alaska Council also added similar
16 language to their charter.

16

17

18 Additionally, with delays in the
19 Council appointments experienced over the last few
20 years, the Council may also want to consider requesting
21 additional -- adding a provision to its charter that
22 allows a member to serve after the expiration of his or
23 her term until a successor is appointed. This is what
24 is called a carryover term that will come into play if
25 appointment letters are late, rather than members terms
26 expiring and the Council having empty seats for that
27 Council, that member could continue to serve until an
28 appointment letter comes in.

28

29

30 If the Council is satisfied with all
31 charter provisions, as is, and requests no changes then
32 the Council can just simply vote to forward its charter
33 to the Board.

33

34

35 As a reminder, during the last charter
36 review in 2019, the Secretaries approved new language
37 suggested by the Councils to their charters that,
38 alternate members may be appointed to the Council to
39 fill vacancies if they occur out of cycle. An
40 alternate member must be approved and appointed by the
41 Secretary before the meeting as a representative. The
42 term for an appointed alternate member will be the same
43 as the term of the member who's vacancy is being
44 filled. However, in order to have alternates there
45 needs to be a sufficient number of applications in your
46 region. Alternates are appointed as members only if a
47 seat was vacated because of a member passing, resigning
48 or moving out of the region.

48

49

50 So that's what I have for you, Mr.

50

0089

1 Chair, thank you. So you're on deck here for your
2 Council charter review to see if you want to make some
3 changes.

4
5 Thank you, sir.
6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George.
8 With that, does anyone from the Council have any
9 recommended changes or are we good with how it reads
10 now.

11
12 (No comments)
13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is there any objection
15 to maintaining the charter as we currently have it or
16 do we want to make any changes as to the way our
17 charter is written as George just read.

18
19 MR. MOTO: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is
20 Calvin.

21
22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Calvin.
23

24 MR. MOTO: Yeah, I'd like to make a
25 suggestion in terms of meeting and place. I'd like to
26 suggest maybe -- I know that we meet twice a year,
27 maybe we could throw in an extra meeting or we delegate
28 one of those meetings to maybe switching yearly and go
29 and have them in the surrounding villages that we
30 represent, much like how NANA holds their annual
31 meetings in different villages. Maybe that way we can
32 get a better understanding from people and get them
33 more involved.

34
35 Thank you.

36
37 MR. KRAMER: Through the Chair, this is
38 Mike.

39
40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Okay, before you go,
41 Mike, just to be clear, Calvin, what you're suggesting
42 is potentially making it so that rather than -- I don't
43 believe we have a set place for the meetings. I'd have
44 to relook at the charter, and someone may be able to
45 inform me of that, but what you are suggesting is
46 holding them in one of -- any of the communities in the
47 region on a rotating basis so as to get more community
48 feedback and input at each meeting, is that what
49 you're.....
50

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1 MR. MOTO: Correct.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER:suggesting
4 Calvin.

5

6 MR. MOTO: Correct, Mr. Chair. Thank
7 you.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Calvin.
10 Mike, did you have something.

11

12 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. I know that we
13 already had that in place prior to the pandemic, you
14 know, we've had meetings -- our first meeting was in
15 Kiana with Raymond Stoney. Our next one was either in
16 Selawik and Buckland, you know, we've had other plans
17 to possibly go to Noatak. So I know that we had at
18 least one meeting here in Kotzebue and it would
19 alternate between villages that we had representatives
20 from.

21

22 I know that if there's a possibility we
23 can increase our Council members, would be able to
24 allow Ambler, Shungnak, Ambler and Kobuk, which I think
25 we need to -- as a Council, we need to write a letter
26 of condolence to one of our Council members, Louie
27 Commack, because he was such a very, very important
28 part of our Council and he did sit on several other
29 Councils, you know, my heartfelt condolences goes out
30 to his family and we do miss him dearly. You know we
31 don't have one from Noatak. I think it would be wise
32 to have several other -- several more Council members
33 added, or alternates added to be able to have, let's
34 say from some of those villages that aren't
35 represented, such as Noatak and upper Kobuk.

36

37 And I know that once we go through this
38 whole pandemic thing and we're starting to meet
39 publicly again, that we were going to look at possibly
40 doing the same, Kotzebue and then the next one is a
41 village of our selection with a representative.

42

43 That's all.

44

45 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mike.
46 That's a great suggestion.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Mike.
49 Zach, do you have anything you're like to add from your
50

0091

1 experience on this point.

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MR. STEVENSON: We can certainly draft a letter, we've done it before and a couple of days after this Council to the Commack family and the IRA.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you.

MR. STEVENSON: Yes, we will write that -- we're very sad that Mr. Commack and we'll make sure to use the -- that we cared a lot about them.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Zach. Any other potential changes to our charter. So from what I'm hearing, what Calvin's suggesting, is already in place, it's just been kind of up ended due to the pandemic, it isn't necessarily something that we would need to put in the charter. And as far as membership, at this point.....

MR. STEVENSON: Oh, sorry, about the travel, yes.

CHAIRMAN BAKER:we need.....

MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Zach.

MR. STEVENSON: The only reason we do not have more meetings in the villages is the cost is very high. We are the most -- we are one of the biggest traveling programs in the Fish and Wildlife Service right now, the Office of Subsistence Management, but if you would like to meet in a certain location outside of Kotzebue we can look at the cost and if it's not too bad we can make it happen. It's up to you guys. You tell me where you'd like to meet.

MR. SHIEDT: Through the Chair, Attamuk here.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Just to clarify that -- one minute, Attamuk. To clarify that, that's not necessarily in the charter that needs to be discussed in the charter review, correct? That's just.....

0092

1 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER:an
4 administrative.....

5

6 MR. STEVENSON: That's strictly -- no,
7 it does not.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER:change.

10

11 MR. STEVENSON: No, it does not up for
12 discussing, it's not for policy, that's a separate
13 issue.

14

15 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. For this
16 subject matter about the Council travel, we don't need
17 to discuss that, we can discuss the meeting time and
18 dates on the agenda Item No. 13, sir.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, George.

23

24 MR. PAPPAS: But, Mr. Chair, I do have
25 a recommendation for a clarification. Yes, looking for
26 more members so if we can add a recommendation, how
27 many members, one or two, I mean, are you looking for a
28 Council with 12 people on it, 13, I don't know, we'll
29 put it on paper and start the process. And the
30 justification was built, you need people from all the
31 regional areas, but also -- not to switch gears on you,
32 but the recommendation from traveling to remote
33 villages. As this pandemic, you know, once we get on
34 step with all this, there's something to consider that
35 we've never been involved with before, maybe we can
36 teleconference, or videoconference a majority of
37 several Staff so we don't need to have everybody
38 travel, to save money, and still have the meetings out
39 in the villages, I don't know. That's something that's
40 new that needs to be mixed into the program.

41

42 Let's go back to the charter. I
43 understand you're looking for a possibility of a couple
44 more people, it'd be great to have a number.

45

46 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, everybody, I just
49 got dropped from the call. This is Thomas. But, yes,

50

0093

1 thank you, Zach, for that clarification. Did I miss
2 anything while I was not online.

3

4 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Thomas --
5 Mr. Chair. No, we are just wrapping up right now.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, so with all
8 that, as Calvin brought up, Mike brought up some good
9 points and Zach brought some clarification, is there
10 anything specific to the charter going along with what
11 George kind of lined us out on earlier that we would
12 like to change at this time or are we -- from what I'm
13 hearing a lot of, what we would like to do is more
14 administrative level rather than the hard -- the code
15 of what our Council goes by.

16

17 Is there anything else that we would
18 like to review in the charter or are we fine with
19 passing it on as it is?

20

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

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Bless you.

25

26 MR. MOTO: This is Calvin. I have no
27 problem with the charter as is. But I would like to
28 ask if I may be excused to attend to my work, please, I
29 need to check on the airport.

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So at this time, it is
32 now 1:00 o'clock, if we could just wrap this up, would
33 anyone like to -- what I'd like to do at this time is
34 if we could vote on whether we'd like to just pass on
35 the charter as it is and I believe we may be at a good
36 stopping point for today and then if we could reconvene
37 tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. with our law enforcement
38 update and then go down with the agency reports and
39 what not, Zach, or George, would there be any issue
40 with that course of action.

41

42 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. George Pappas.
43 We -- looking at any complications here, I see, while
44 you have a quorum, the Council charter should be voted
45 on, and then the times and dates need to be voted on
46 while you have a quorum, otherwise the other reports
47 can be shuffled around. I'm uncertain who will be
48 available tomorrow from the other agencies to report
49 but it's your call, Mr. Chair, we will accommodate your
50

0094

1 request.

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George. Does anyone from the Council have any objections to what I just suggested, would we like to vote -- while we have a quorum would we like to vote on the charter review and setting the meeting dates for this fall and next winter, and then coming back tomorrow morning to hear agency reports and closing comments.

MR. PAPPAS: Or another option, Mr. Chair, is to take an hour lunch break or so and finish up this afternoon, whatever you want to do, we're here to serve you, sir.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George. What is the wish of the Council. We have some options, we can do everything today, after a lunch break; we can end now come back tomorrow morning, or what is the wish of the Council.

MR. MOTO: I would like to reconvene tomorrow morning. This is Calvin.

MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

MR. HOWATH: I understand that charter and with the option of adding two more to the Council would be my wish.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: So adding two positions to the Council in the charter is what you'd like to do Wilbur?

MR. HOWATH: Yes.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Does anyone oppose adding two positions, I believe that would bring us up to a Council of 12, if I'm not mistaken, does anyone have any objection to that so we can wrap up the charter review.

(No comments)

MR. STEVENSON: We need a motion on the

0095

1 record, a motion on the floor for the charter, and a
2 second.

3

4 MR. ARMSTRONG: I second, this is
5 Elmer.

6

7 MR. MOTO: Second.

8

9 CHAIRMAN BAKER: So moved by Wilbur to
10 add two positions on the Council to create a total of
11 12, seconded by Calvin. All those in favor, please say
12 aye.

13

14 IN UNISON: Aye.

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All those opposed,
17 same sign.

18

19 (No opposing votes)

20

21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Passed unanimously.
22 Seeing what the wish of the Council, if we hear no --
23 I'm hearing no other changes to the charter, just
24 increasing our membership from 10 to 12 Council member,
25 if there are no other changes to the charter, do I hear
26 a motion to update the charter.

27

28 MR. HOWATH: So moved, Mr. Chair.
29 Wilbur.

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moved by Wilbur to
32 update the charter with the previously mentioned
33 change. Do I hear a second.

34

35 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second. This is Elmer.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Elmer.
38 All those in favor please say aye.

39

40 IN UNISON: Aye.

41

42 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All those opposed,
43 same sign.

44

45 (No opposing votes)

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right. Well, to
48 Zach and George, that covers our Council charter
49 review. What is the wish of the Council at this time,
50

0096

1 do we want to take an hour lunch break or do we want to
2 come back tomorrow morning and finish things up.

3

4 MR. SHIEDT: Tomorrow -- Attamuk here.
5 Tomorrow I won't be here, I'm going to Noatak for my
6 cousin's funeral.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right. Well,
9 while we've got a quorum then, let's vote on the future
10 meeting dates. Well, I'd like to suggest that we just
11 take an hour lunch and then come back and then we just
12 wrap everything up while we still have a quorum today,
13 if everybody's okay with that.

14

15 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, because -- this is
16 Mike. Because tomorrow I'll be at work so I won't be
17 here tomorrow, I was luckily be able to get today off.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,
20 Mike. Do I hear a motion to take an hour lunch and
21 reconvene at 2:06 p.m.

22

23 MR. MOTO: I make a motion. This is
24 Calvin.

25

26 MR. KRAMER: Second.

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moved by Calvin for an
29 hour lunch. Seconded by, was that Mike?

30

31 MR. KRAMER: Yes.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, moved by
34 Calvin, seconded by Mike. All those in favor please
35 say aye.

36

37 IN UNISON: Aye.

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All those opposed,
40 same sign.

41

42 (No opposing votes)

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank.....

45

46 MR. STEVENSON: Good work everybody.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER:you everyone.

49

50

0097

1 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you everyone for
4 a long morning, we will come back at 2:05 and we will
5 pick back up with the law enforcement update.

6

7 Thanks, everybody.

8

9 MR. PAPPAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10

11 (Off record)

12

13 (On record)

14

15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: This is Thomas Baker,
16 it's now 2:05. Real quick we have Mike Kramer, Wilbur
17 Howath, Elmer Armstrong, anybody else from the Council
18 get back on.

19

20 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, me.

21

22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Who's that?

23

24 MR. SCHAEFFER: Bob Schaeffer.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, Bob. Any other
27 Council members call in.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, moving forward,
32 the last thing under new business was the law
33 enforcement update which we didn't get to. Zach, who
34 will be taking care of that one.

35

36 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 I believe we have Mr. Dallemolle from Park Service on
38 the phone, along with Damon Schaeffer with NANA
39 Trespass.

40

41 OFFICER SAMPLE: Well, hi, you have
42 actually Scott Sample on the phone, the Senior Law
43 Enforcement Officer for Western Arctic Park Lands.

44

45 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Scott, go
46 ahead.

47

48 REPORTER: Hi, wait a second, excuse
49 me, just one moment. So I didn't get your last name,
50

0098

1 could you spell that for me, this is the reporter.

2

3 OFFICER SAMPLE: Sure. It's Sample, S-
4 A-M-P-L-E.

5

6 REPORTER: And that's what I thought
7 but just making sure, thank you. Go ahead.

8

9 OFFICER SAMPLE: Sure. Okay. Well,
10 hello everyone. And what I have today is just some
11 information about activities in 2020.

12

13 I'll start off by saying that Joe is
14 still with us, and, fortunately in Kotzebue, he's not
15 on the call today. We also are hiring a new subject to
16 furlough Ranger, Jim Hans, Jim's worked with us for
17 three seasons as a seasonal ranger and he'll be coming
18 on as a permanent ranger working most of the year out
19 of Kotzebue. So for those that know Jim, you'll know
20 that he's a great fit for Kotzebue and the for the
21 Western Arctic Park Lands and he starts late April.

22

23 We also have a seasonal coming on, a
24 law enforcement seasonal ranger, Jacob Marshall.
25 Jacob, this will be his first season with the National
26 Park Service. He's coming from the Military Air Force,
27 and so we look forward to meeting and having Jacob on
28 board. He will start in late April as well. So we
29 hope that we can get our Staff around to meet all of
30 you in your community.

31

32 I want to talk about the 2020-- so I
33 oversee the -- the program oversees the commercial use
34 and the concession operations within the Noatak
35 Preserve and the Park and the Monument, specifically I
36 have the tally of every year when the commercial use
37 authorizations and the guides operate, by November they
38 are to report to us through their contract who they --
39 you know, basically how many people they took, where
40 they took them, how much money they earned and on the
41 concessions they give us a percentage of their earnings
42 that goes back into a fund to help manage the program.
43 In 2020 due to Covid we had -- the air taxis were
44 pretty normal but the ecotourism types, the backpacking
45 and the floating, kind of CUAs, a lot of those
46 cancelled because of the restrictions.

47

48 Our guides, we have three guides for
49 the Noatak that's Jake (indiscernible).....

50

0099

1 (Teleconference interference -
2 participants not muted)

3
4 OFFICER SAMPLE:Mont Mahoney and
5 Brad.....

6
7 (Teleconference interference -
8 participants not muted)

9
10 OFFICER SAMPLE: Jake did not operate
11 this year, but Mont Mahoney did as well as Brad Salsa.
12 But when I give you these stats that you're going to
13 listen to, this includes all the information we have
14 from the CUAs and from the hunt guide concessions in
15 the Parks. But since this is the RAC I'll just stick
16 primarily with the Noatak.

17
18 Based on reports, we had about \$2
19 million worth of gross income for the companies, which
20 was approximately 456 visitors came into the Preserve
21 via one of the CUAs or guides. We had approximately
22 366 caribou taken, reported through hunt reports, that
23 are required to be submitted to us. They are also
24 submitted to the State, so the State records should
25 match what we receive and we had 16 grizzly bear taken,
26 one moose and one wolf were also reported taken in
27 2020.

28
29 For the flight, we wrote down our
30 flights. The Noatak had approximately 360 flights
31 throughout the whole year, that's from January 1
32 through December 31st. A lot of times these reports,
33 although they're submitted in November, there's not a
34 lot of activity, you know, from November 15th through
35 the end of December so generally that number is pretty
36 accurate.

37
38 So we calculate visitor nights and
39 visitor days in the Park and, you know, based on how
40 many days visitors stay and so with 300-some visitors
41 staying a total of 2,800 nights basically so, you know,
42 you can divide 2,800 by 360 and that gives you the
43 approximate nights in the Preserve somebody stayed,
44 mostly for, you know, this year, it was primarily for
45 hunting as the ecotourism-type CUAs didn't operate.

46
47 And primarily looking at the stats
48 there was some research flying, five participants -- we
49 had six participants rafting, four were recreating and
50

0100

1 hunting and 346 -- or, I'm sorry, four were hiking, and
2 346 were hunting in the Preserve. So, that's, again,
3 the breakdown of activity for last year.

4

5 That's kind of my brief overview for
6 the activity. What questions are there or any
7 clarifications needed?

8

9 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, this is Elmer.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Elmer.

12

13 MR. ARMSTRONG: How many guests you
14 said there was, 400?

15

16 OFFICER SAMPLE: 456 in the Noatak
17 alone.

18

19 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you.

20

21 OFFICER SAMPLE: You're welcome.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we have any other
24 questions or comments for Scott's report.

25

26 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, this is Mike.

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

29

30 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, you know, just out
31 of curiosity, I know that there was a lot of people
32 operating up in there, you know, are the numbers this
33 year compared to last year or what I'm trying to get at
34 is did they take advantage of this Covid19 pandemic to
35 get a bunch of people up here. I'm unsure as to last
36 year's numbers, I can't recall.....

37

38 (Teleconference interference -
39 participants not muted)

40

41 MR. KRAMER:that's a lot of
42 people that came up here.

43

44 OFFICER SAMPLE: Right. I'm looking it
45 up right now, 2019, so I can give you that. Noatak, so
46 let's see -- okay, so last year Noatak had 543 reported
47 and then this year was 456 so it's slightly less this
48 year than last year which would be expected but not by
49 much really, when you think about it.

50

0101

1 MR. KRAMER: Okay.

2

3 OFFICER SAMPLE: Let me see here.

4 There was a lot more -- now this is -- the hunt guides --
5 so this is from 2019, had 16 guided trips so that's
6 for, yeah, 543, total with hunt -- with CUAs and
7 concessionaires, days in the Park -- days in the Park
8 was 4,019 but nights in the Park was 2,700. A lot of
9 that was -- there's a lot of one day flights into the
10 various Park Lands for people to want their National
11 Park Service stamp, so they'll -- a lot of that
12 visitation is at like the Kobuk Sand Dunes or maybe
13 just doing a one -- you know, they'll fly out of
14 Bettles or they'll fly out of Kotzebue and they'll just
15 kind of hop -- you know, do a landing in Noatak, do a
16 landing at Cape Krusenstern and do a landing at Kobuk
17 and then when they call the Park later they request a
18 stamp and so that seems -- that was pretty common in
19 '19. So I'm looking at the Noatak, had 3,000 days but
20 2,200 nights. So, again, a lot of day use going in and
21 out.

22

23 Last year, comparably speaking, via
24 transporter and guides, we show 165 caribou reported
25 and I believe, yeah, that was only via transporters and
26 guides, so we don't get a tally of private aircraft
27 that fly in, you know, we really don't know who flies
28 in, there's probably not that many, but there are
29 people that do fly in and hunt without going through
30 one of the air taxis, either at Gates of the Arctic --
31 the other thing that, you know, a lot of people maybe
32 recreationally float and then add a hunt into that so
33 they could start in Gates of the Arctic, float down the
34 Noatak to the Preserve start hunting there and then
35 picked up out of, you know, out of Bettles. So, you
36 know, give or take, these are ballpark numbers of what
37 we're seeing for the last few years.

38

39 MR. KRAMER: I know that moose tickets
40 haven't really been handed out, was that a guided trip.
41 Because I know in Alaska, big game is dall sheep, moose
42 and bear that are required to be a dall sheep hunt -- I
43 mean guided hunts required.

44

45 OFFICER SAMPLE: Correct.

46

47 MR. KRAMER: Those are all guides that
48 take those animals?

49

50

0103

1 especially with people going in and out, straight from
2 like the airplane to the air taxi to the field and
3 back, you know, if we're not told about -- reported
4 about from other hunters or, you know, we don't --
5 we're not able to pursue any violations but the ones
6 that we do get reported on, of course, we pursue to the
7 fullest extent. So cases are infrequent but -- or
8 tickets are infrequent but large cases like this are
9 more frequent because, you know, people think they can
10 get away with it for awhile then eventually they're caught.

11

12 MR. KRAMER: Okay, thank you.

13

14 OFFICER SAMPLE: And one of the -- I
15 correct myself. One of the citations we did write was
16 actually a Federal subsistence closure citation on a
17 non-CUA drop-off. So this was a -- the rangers were
18 out on patrol on the Noatak, it was within the 5 mile
19 corridor that the Federal Subsistence Board, you know,
20 closed to sporthunting, and the ranger in an aerial
21 patrol observed a private aircraft within that five
22 mile corridor landed and that person had taken a
23 caribou, so that person did receive a citation for an
24 illegal take of a caribou within the Federal
25 Subsistence closure. So that was a really good --
26 another example of a really good contact with a really
27 good case that will go -- you know, that person will be
28 telling his hunting friend that, you know, the
29 subsistence closure that the FSB set aside, you know,
30 is being enforced, and I thought that was excellent, so
31 I forgot to mention that one.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: This is Thomas Baker,
34 that is a really good one to know that we're catching
35 people in the act and keeping up with that kind of
36 stuff. Does anybody else have any questions or
37 comments for Scott.

38

39 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, this is Elmer.
40 How many bears were taken?

41

42 OFFICER SAMPLE: 16 reported taken
43 between both guides and transporters.

44

45 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you.

46

47 OFFICER SAMPLE: Uh-huh.

48

49 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair. This is

50

0104

1 Wilbur.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, go ahead,

4 Wilbur.

5

6 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, Scott, and these
7 bears, were they just taken in the Park not on our
8 Federal lands?

9

10 OFFICER SAMPLE: Well, the 16 bears
11 were taken in the Noatak Preserve. And the CUAs are
12 only reporting this criteria on Federal lands. So if
13 they -- if the CUAs go outside the Noatak Preserve, I
14 do not get that data because that's not relevant to,
15 you know, their commercial use authorization so this
16 tells me that 16 bears were reportedly taken in the
17 Noatak Preserve on Federal lands.

18

19 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you.

20

21 OFFICER SAMPLE: Uh-huh.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Anyone else for Scott.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, hearing none,
28 appreciate the report, Scott. And, I, for one am
29 looking forward to seeing the maps and where exactly
30 people are setting up their campsites and where people
31 and where animals are moving inside the Park so I
32 really appreciate your report.

33

34 OFFICER SAMPLE: Yeah, you're welcome.

35

36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If there's no other
37 questions for Scott, was there anything else in the law
38 enforcement update.

39

40 OFFICER SAMPLE: Nothing from me.
41 We're still working together with NANA Trespass and the
42 Alaska State Troopers and the BLM and the Fish and
43 Wildlife Service, so, again, that working group's still
44 in play and we talk frequently throughout the year to
45 ensure that everybody's on the same page and sharing
46 information. So that's going very well.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great. That is really
49 good to hear.

50

0105

1 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

4

5 MR. KRAMER: Yeah for Scott. You know,
6 when you get these new Park rangers that come up here
7 from down South, please, please remind them to be
8 culturally respectful. You know we've been here since
9 the ice age and they need to learn to understand that
10 we're trying to fill our freezers, you know, four rib
11 eye steaks around here is 75 bucks and those things are
12 only cut like a half an inch. That's a lot of money.
13 So we spend a lot of our time, and a lot of our efforts
14 on subsistence resources so, please ensure that your
15 people are culturally respectful towards people.
16 Because, you know, they're out there trying to fill
17 their freezers. The last year and a half, I'd have to
18 say the shelves within the grocery stores within this
19 region have been pretty empty. I mean I've even seen
20 Kotzebue get hit hard. When you got to go to the
21 grocery store you got to have five different menus to
22 think of, or maybe more because they're not going to
23 have a lot of that stuff. So a lot of the people in
24 these villages are dependent on those subsistence
25 resources. So if they approach somebody who's out
26 there hunting, please have cultural respect.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 OFFICER SAMPLE: Thank you. We will
31 certainly do that.

32

33 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair.

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead.

36

37 MR. HOWATH: It's Wilbur. Yeah, I have
38 one more for Scott. These NANA Trespass officers, do
39 you guys have training for them when they just join or
40 how do you go about the NANA trespass officers?

41

42 OFFICER SAMPLE: So you're asking about
43 how do we train our rangers?

44

45 MR. HOWATH: The NANA trespass
46 officers.

47

48 OFFICER SAMPLE: Okay.

49

50

0106

1 MR. D. SCHAEFFER: Scott, I can answer
2 that question. Mr. Chair, this is Damon Schaeffer with
3 NANA Regional Corporation. I had the opportunity to
4 oversee and work with the Trespass Program as well as
5 our officers. So the answer to your question, Wilbur,
6 was the -- so our training for the officers, is we hold
7 -- typically we hold it in Kotzebue and it's usually
8 done at the end of July, we have a three to four day
9 intensive training, we fly all the officers in, we
10 cover everything from First-Aid to some of their safety
11 equipment, what's required for their individual
12 patrols. They do some law enforcement tactics. So
13 there's a long list of training that happens within
14 those four days.

15
16 This past season we weren't able to fly
17 everybody in because of the Pandemic but we worked with
18 NANA Management Services, Purcell Security, they
19 oversee and administer the Trespass Program, so we were
20 able to create and develop a virtual training program
21 for the officers to receive their training so that we
22 could employ people and actually have a trespass season
23 this year.

24
25 MR. HOWATH: Okay, thank you, Damon.

26
27 MR. D. SCHAEFFER: You're welcome.

28
29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Damon.
30 Good to hear from you. While you're on the line,
31 really quick, just curious, how many of your trespass
32 officers are local to the region versus brought in from
33 outside, just out of curiosity?

34
35 MR. D. SCHAEFFER: So if it's okay with
36 the Council I can provide a short update for this past
37 season. Would that be all right, Mr. Chair.

38
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please.

40
41 MR. D. SCHAEFFER: Okay, great. So
42 this past season, like I mentioned, we conducted a
43 virtual screening and then we -- our season typically
44 lasts about 14 weeks, which is what we did this past
45 season. The program is funded by NANA and the
46 Northwest Arctic Borough. We hired 19 officers this
47 past season, which is up from 15 last season, so even
48 though the pandemic was happening we were still able to
49 have a successful and safe program and actually employ
50

0107

1 more people than we had in the past, which is a good
2 thing.

3
4 So all of the officers that we employ,
5 are all local officers. So for all the villages, I
6 think we were able to hire two officers in most all the
7 villages, except for Kobuk and Deering.

8
9 And then as far as the reportable
10 incidents, we had some incidents this past season, low
11 flying aircraft, we reported that to the Troopers. I
12 mean there's some reports that we do receive through
13 the program that we're just not able to address, and
14 it's not within our authority to do so but we make sure
15 that it's reported to the appropriate authority. We
16 had a report of an airplane hunting on NANA lands in
17 the Squirrel River, that was investigated, it was
18 determined they were legally hunting in an authorized
19 area. We had a report of some non-shareholders hunting
20 on the Redstone River above Ambler. That area, the
21 water is extremely shallow, we weren't able to -- we
22 have a boat up there, it does have a prop on it and so
23 we weren't able to get to that area to investigate. We
24 had a report of a improperly harvested moose located on
25 the Kobuk River and it was determined it was a predator
26 kill and then we had a report of an unauthorized party
27 trespassing on NANA lands hunting. And that was --
28 that party was hunting in the Park Service lands.

29
30 We didn't issue any citations this year
31 but we did field a lot of reports. And as Scott had
32 mentioned, we still have the partnership with the other
33 land managers so as we're working together we're
34 getting this reports, a lot of those reports come
35 through our Trespass Program and they're reported to
36 our officers so that partnership with the other land
37 managers is working very well on our ability to respond
38 effectively.

39
40 We did have the two posts up at the Red
41 Dog Mine, one was the hunter shack post where we check
42 hunters in and out who are going to be on the port side
43 road for subsistence hunting. And then we also have a
44 post that we -- it's a caribou monitoring post where
45 the -- where we have an officer that patrols the road
46 and he's looking for migrating caribou and if he sees
47 migrating caribou he's relaying that information back
48 to the port road traffic. Those two posts, we got
49 started this past season, but due to some Covid issues
50

0108

1 at the mine we had to suspend those services earlier
2 than expected.

3

4 And that's what I've got unless there
5 are any questions.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thanks, Damon.
8 Does anybody have any questions for Damon and the NANA
9 portions of things here in his report.

10

11 MR. HOWATH: Thank you, Damon.

12

13 MR. ARMSTRONG: This is Elmer for
14 Damon.

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Elmer.

17

18 MR. ARMSTRONG: So why couldn't those
19 posts operate within the mandate posted, to keep
20 operating.

21

22 MR. D. SCHAEFFER: I'm sorry, what was
23 the question, Elmer.

24

25 MR. ARMSTRONG: Why didn't the program
26 keep operating within the mandates that were given?

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: You mean the Red Dog
29 ones that he mentioned that had to end a little early?

30

31 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah.

32

33 MR. D. SCHAEFFER: Well, based on the
34 information that we had at the time, you know, like I
35 said -- I think -- in any situation we want to make
36 sure that if we're going to make an error, we're going
37 to err on the side of safety and I think based on the
38 reports that we had received, and not only the reports
39 that we had received and about the concern for the
40 community's safety but also for our employees, that are
41 employed by the program, our officers that go and they
42 conduct that patrol, I think we took that all into --
43 we factored that all in and I think the decision at the
44 time was that one -- a couple of things were happening.

45

46 It's like caribou were not migrating at
47 the time. We didn't have a lot of people accessing the
48 road at the time to harvest and subsist. And there was
49 a concern about community safety. And so the decision
50

0109

1 was made to suspend the services for the remainder of
2 the season. And so if you -- so to put that in like a
3 timeline schedule so how many short were we from past
4 years, is we were about six weeks shy of what we've
5 done in the past.

6
7 MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you.

8
9 MR. D. SCHAEFFER: You're welcome.

10
11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Anyone else for Damon.

12
13 MS. CRAVALHO: Mr. Chair.

14
15 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead.

16
17 MS. CRAVALHO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
18 This is Liz Cravalho. I haven't been able to be on the
19 call the whole time but I just wanted to appreciate
20 that you all have included us in your discussions and
21 allowed us to provide an update on the Trespass
22 Program. I think we recognize how important this is to
23 the region, not only to NANA lands, but to the region
24 in general. And appreciate, again, Damon, presenting
25 to you all and you all making time for us today.

26
27 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28
29 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Liz.
30 We do really appreciate, across the whole region, I'm
31 pretty sure everybody appreciates the efforts that NANA
32 and Purcell Security put in to making sure that we're
33 watching out for our lands and it's our own people
34 basically being the gatekeepers for what's going on in
35 the region. So pretty good to hear about what's going
36 on.

37
38 Do we have any other questions or
39 comments for Damon and his NANA report.

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If not, again, thank
44 you Damon for presenting that and answering those
45 questions. Do we have anybody else with law
46 enforcement type update that we could go over now.

47
48 (No comments)

49
50

0110

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, then we
2 can move on down to the agency reports and it looks
3 like the first one will be tribal governments. Before
4 we get into that I'd just like to remind everybody that
5 there is a time limit on this portion of 15 minutes
6 unless approved in advance. I'm not sure if anybody
7 needs extra time but we will start with tribal
8 governments. So if anybody from a tribal government
9 has any agency reports please let us know and the floor
10 is yours.

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any tribal governments
15 for an agency report.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If not, then we can
20 move to Native organizations.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moving right along to
25 U.S. Fish and.....

26

27 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

28

29 CHAIRMAN BAKER:Wildlife.....

30

31 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER:Service.....

34

35 MR. STEVENSON: I have.....

36

37 MS. GEORGETTE: Yes, hi, Mr. Chair.
38 This is Susan Georgette.

39

40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi Susan. One moment,
41 what was that, was that you, Zach.

42

43 MR. STEVENSON: Yeah, before Susan,
44 real quick. I just wanted to tell the Council, because
45 a lot of folks are new, that if you go back home and
46 people ask what happen, you can report to the IRA and
47 give an update of the meeting, that way the
48 communication is both ways, between the village and
49 this body.

50

0111

1 Thank you.

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Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, good reminder, thank you, Zach. So, again, if any of us on the Council, it's a good time to be taking notes to relay back to our communities and let them know what's going on with the different agencies in the region.

So Susan the floor is yours.

MS. GEORGETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, thank you to all the members for giving me a chance to speak to you today. It's great to hear everyone's voices and I want to give a big welcome to the new members. It's great to hear you and I'm looking forward to when we can meet again in person.

If you don't know me, a little bit about myself. I'm the Refuge manager for the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. I've lived in Kotzebue for more than 30 years. Raised two sons here, Reed and Grant Magdanz. I'm originally from California. I've worked at the Refuge for about 15 years.

You've heard a couple other people today that work with me here, Bill Carter is our fish biologist, and Brittany Sweeney is our outreach specialist, Sean Nelson is our maintenance worker, and Christina Nelson is our wildlife Refuge specialist, who's new to Kotzebue.

In Selawik, we have two people who work for us, Sonny Berry and Nichole Hanshaw.

We don't have any law enforcement persons stationed here, just to let you know. We depend on our colleagues, the NANA Trespass Program, the Alaska Wildlife Troopers and the Park Service. And if we need to call someone in we can get help from our Fairbanks office.

We don't have a lot new to report since the November meeting. And partly for the new members, I thought I'd just give a short overview of how our program works.

So Selawik Refuge is one of more than 500 Wildlife Refuges in the United States. It was set up in 1980 by Congress along with the other Parks in

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1 the region. The purpose of Wildlife Refuges is to
2 preserve America's fish and wildlife resources for
3 present and future generation, and we're part of the
4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For subsistence and
5 recreational use, Selawik Refuge doesn't have any
6 special restrictions, you're welcome to fish, camp,
7 hunt, pick berries, cut dry firewood or any of those
8 activities under the same general region-wide regs for
9 hunting and fishing. For commercial uses, or for
10 research or things like that you need a special use
11 permit.

12
13 So we have one biologist, Bill, who
14 you've heard from, and he's a fish biologist. We don't
15 have any wildlife, big game type biologists. Again, we
16 work a lot with our colleagues at the Park Service and
17 the Department of Fish and Game and we really depend on
18 them for the bear and caribou and moose kinds of work.
19 We've decided to focus on fish and aquatic habitat.
20 Selawik Refuge, as you know, is very fish productive
21 and full of water ways and the Kobuk River is also very
22 fish productive and so we've chosen to focus our
23 program on fisheries. And Bill is the only fish
24 biologist who is stationed year-round in Kotzebue, so
25 he'll help out other agencies and villages too when he
26 can. The Selawik Refuge, I mean to mention is, it
27 includes most of the Selawik River Valley and the Kobuk
28 River Delta. So there's a lot of NANA lands
29 interspersed in there and the Federal lands in that
30 area, the Kobuk Delta up to Kiana and then almost the
31 whole Selawik River Valley and the north side of
32 Selawik Lake is part of the Refuge. Bill also
33 specializes in whitefish and sheefish so as you've
34 heard he knows a lot about those. Bill has also been
35 working with Alex Whiting at the Native Village of
36 Kotzebue on the algae blooms that we've seen lately in
37 Kobuk Lake and surround areas.

38
39 And then quickly, Brittany Sweeney, in
40 our outreach program, we have a very active FaceBook
41 page that she keeps current so check that out if you're
42 interested, if you haven't already. Brittany also is
43 good at communications on a lot of things, but partly
44 on translating hunting regulations into language people
45 can understand in the area, and she's produced several
46 fact sheets that I've handed out at past RAC meetings
47 on moose hunting and caribou hunting, bear hunting,
48 spring waterfowl hunting in our region that are a lot
49 easier to read than the Fish and Game regulations. So,
50

0113

1 we, again, work with our colleagues at Park Service and
2 BLM and Fish and Game and other places on that.

3

4

5 And then in preCovid times, we often
6 support outings with youth on the Refuge in Selawik,
7 sometimes in Noorvik, and we look forward to getting
8 back to those.

8

9

10 A couple other things I want to
11 mention. So Scott was talking about the fly-in hunters
12 in the Noatak area. So Selawik Refuge has a similar
13 permit program and in 2020 we only had two hunters who
14 were brought into the Refuge by the air taxis and
15 transporters. And I've said this at other RAC
16 meetings, but Selawik Refuge, because there's usually
17 no caribou there lately during September, it doesn't
18 get many fly-in hunters, and the moose season for non-
19 residents is closed in our unit. So we used to have a
20 guide that operated on the Refuge with non-resident
21 moose hunters, and he has pretty much abandoned that in
22 the last few years.

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And the last thing I want to mention is
that we got a report in December that beavers had
dammed the creek near the hot springs in the upper
Selawik Refuge, Selawik hot springs, or Shungnak hot
springs, and we advised them to -- or authorized them
to dismantle the dam enough to drain the water out and
I've talked with upper Kobuk communities and between
the upper Kobuk and maybe our Staff, depending on
Covid, we'll try to check out what's going on up there
and see what we can do to help.

So that's the report from Selawik Refuge.

If you have any questions I'm happy to
answer them.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Awesome, thank you,
Susan. Does anybody have any questions for Susan and
the Refuge.

MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Wilbur.

MR. HOWATH: I have one for Brittany or
Susan. This one, on the beaver damming up there, is
there a lot of beaver because they're really showing up

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1 here below Noorvik on the (indiscernible) side, but
2 anyways in '80 -- I would say maybe '86, 1986, there
3 was an open -- or they added like 30 beaver a person
4 because they were just damming up all over and there
5 was so much beaver so it was like 30 beaver a person
6 and that really stopped them from really damming up the
7 place and all the fish were coming back, many, so,
8 yeah, there's a lot of beaver going on all over now.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 MS. GEORGETTE: Yeah, thank you,
13 Wilbur. They really have moved west over the last
14 however many decades and, yeah, the hot springs, yeah,
15 I mean this is the first time that I've heard that
16 they've dammed the creek right by the hot springs which
17 created problems. And, yeah, they have moved north and
18 west over the years.

19

20 MR. HOWATH: Thank you.

21

22 MR. CARTER: This is Bill. Wilbur, to
23 your question about the limit, the ADF&G's limit for
24 Game Unit 23 is no limit and no closed season for
25 hunting regulations. I don't have their trapping
26 regulations on hand right now though.

27

28 MR. HOWATH: Okay.

29

30 MS. SWEENEY: Yeah, this is Brittany.
31 I was going to say the same thing is what is in the
32 Federal regs, there's no limit and it's open year-
33 round. So, yeah, so harvest is one method of local
34 beaver population control.

35

36 MR. HOWATH: Thank you so much.

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: That's a good point,
39 thank you for bringing that up Wilbur. That's a good
40 point for all of us to share with our communities and
41 just remind people that if we are having issues with
42 beavers like what Wilbur is describing and Susan
43 mentioned, go and get them, there's no limit.

44

45 (Laughter)

46

47 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions or
48 comments for Susan, or any of her team.

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0115

1 (No comments)

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CHAIRMAN BAKER: If there's nothing else from the Council, I just want to say thank you, Susan, appreciate the report. I've worked with you on and off for awhile since I was in high school going on the Selawik hot springs trip with you all. And I appreciate the report. And if there's nothing else, appreciate you for joining us today.

MS. GEORGETTE: Yeah, thanks so much, and I sure hope we can all get together in person, I miss seeing everyone. So thanks again to all of you.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, thank you. And then we will move down to the National Park Service, if someone would like to take the floor on that.

MS. LUKIN: Through the Chair, this is Maija.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hi, Maija, go ahead.

MS. LUKIN: Thank you. Wonderful meeting. I think that this one is a little bit easier than the last time and I appreciate that. I wanted -- oh, for the record I'm Maija Lukin, the Superintendent Western Arctic National Park Lands here in Kotzebue. I'm just going to give a real quick management overview. We have some big changes coming and I wanted to make sure that the RAC was informed and then Hannah will give some more information for Western Arctic.

So welcome to the new Chair, Thomas, congratulations, and I did want to thank the outgoing Chair, Mike Kramer, for all of the work that he's done also. This will be my last meeting as the Superintendent at Western Arctic. I do start a new position in the Regional Office for the Park Service in Anchorage on March 1st. I'll be the Tribal Affairs Program Manager for Region 11. So there will be an acting Superintendent coming into this position, you know, after they classify the position and announcement, there will be a new Superintendent that comes also. So if the RAC has any recommendations for -- to maybe pass along to the Regional Office you can reach out to any of the Staff and they can relay your wishes over to them.

0116

1 I did want to make sure to thank the
2 RAC for continually working with our Staff,
3 recommending projects as well as recommending, you
4 know, management policies of our subsistence resources.
5 I've heard multiple times today during the meeting
6 that, you know, it's a way of life, it's our survival
7 and I agree, I live a subsistence lifestyle like all of
8 you do, so I understand. But I did want to point out
9 that, you know, because of the RAC and the RAC's
10 recommendations we do have a Law Enforcement work
11 group, and you heard from Scott and Damon already.
12 We've also developed multiple projects with people -- I
13 know our Staff has worked continually with RAC members
14 and with the RAC on proposals, et cetera, so, you know,
15 thank you for working with our Staff on that.

16
17 And I encourage you to keep reaching
18 out to Hannah and Ramie and the Staff, you know, even
19 when I'm gone, they're going to be there, they're the
20 backbone of Western Arctic and, you know, they're full
21 of information.

22
23 So for the new members, I noticed that
24 there are a few new members. I did want to point out
25 that Western Arctic National Park Lands is the three
26 Parks in Northwest Alaska in Unit 23, we have just
27 about 9 million acres of Federal public land, we have
28 Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Kobuk Valley
29 National Park -- so Cape Krusenstern National Monument,
30 is kind of Sisolik and above on the coast, between
31 Sisolik and Kivalina. Kobuk Valley National Park is
32 between Kiana and Ambler on the Kobuk River right
33 there, it includes Onion Portage. And then we have
34 Noatak National Preserve, which is to the east of
35 Noatak and north of Kobuk Valley National Park. So for
36 subsistence purposes, Cape Krusenstern National
37 Monument and Kobuk Valley National Park, in order to
38 hunt subsistence resources in those two Parks you have
39 to be a Federally-qualified subsistence user, which
40 means you are a local person. So only local people can
41 hunt in those two Parks. And for Noatak, it's a
42 Preserve, so it's open to anyone in the areas outside
43 of this region, outside of Alaska even, to hunt as long
44 as they have a valid hunting license. And it's open
45 throughout the entire Preserve except for the closures --
46 except for the targeted closures that we've worked
47 with the RAC and other members, the Western Arctic
48 Caribou Herd Working Group, et cetera, so there are
49 targeted closures and those are the only areas that are
50

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1 closed to caribou hunting except for Federally-
2 qualified subsistence users so we do -- let's see, we
3 have a Staff of about 17 people at Western Arctic and
4 many of them are on the call right now.

5

6 So that's my management update, and
7 I'll turn it over to (In Native) to give the rest.

8

9 MS. ATKINSON: Hello. Thank you,
10 Maija. so was there a question?

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 MS. ATKINSON: Hi. (In Native) My
15 name is Hannah Atkinson, I work for the National Park
16 Service as a Cultural Anthropologist.

17

18 And then a large part of my job is
19 subsistence coordinator for the Cape Krusenstern
20 National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission and
21 Kobuk Valley National Park Subsistence Resource
22 Commission. And those Commissions are similar to the
23 RAC, they meet twice a year and they have nine members
24 on them, and they advise the National Park Service on
25 subsistence management so it is specific to like Cape
26 Krusenstern and then Kobuk Valley, but then also
27 because of the regional focus of subsistence, you know,
28 like caribou migrate everywhere, not just in one unit,
29 we definitely to take up issues that are throughout the
30 region.

31

32 And so I guess my update for today on
33 that is just the upcoming meetings for them, they have
34 a winter meeting -- or a fall meeting and a spring
35 meeting similar to the RACs, and the upcoming meeting
36 for them is Cape Krusenstern meeting on March 1st, and
37 then it'll go into March 2nd if they need more time.
38 It'll start at 1:00 p.m., and then go through the
39 afternoon, and then through the next day if they need
40 more time. And then for the Kobuk Valley Subsistence
41 Resource Commission, it'll start on the afternoon of
42 March 3rd and then go into the morning of March 4th if
43 they need more time. I can provide that information to
44 anybody who is interested in calling in and it's also
45 going to be put out on the radio and you can look out
46 for that. The first week of March is when those
47 Subsistence Resource Commissions are meeting.

48

49 And one connection to the Regional

50

0118

1 Advisory Council that the SRCs have is that a member;
2 three positions on the Subsistence Resource Commission
3 are appointed by the RAC. And so at times I'll bring
4 vacancies to the RAC and ask if there are
5 recommendations for appointment, or sometimes there are
6 people interested and we'll go over the people
7 interested.

8

9 So that is just a little bit of an
10 overview on the upcoming meeting for the SRCs. Are
11 there any questions about that.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any questions for
14 Hannah.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

19

20 MS. ATKINSON: I thought I heard a
21 question, too, is there anyone that had a question.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 MS. ATKINSON: Okay. I also just
26 wanted to say that I've worked with the National Park
27 Service permanently since like 2014 and so I was here
28 for one of the transitional periods that we had after
29 Frank Hayes left the position and it is a good time in
30 those periods of transition to give input to what you
31 are interested in seeing from the National Park Service
32 and the leadership of the Park Service. And I remember
33 that time seeing a lot of questions about relationships
34 with local entities and just like how we could build on
35 them and there had been some relationships that had
36 kind of been broken or not quite tended to very much,
37 and then with Maija taking on the Superintendent role
38 we've been able to do so much with our relationships
39 and so I just wanted to bring that up, that we've
40 definitely seen a lot of progress with our working
41 within the region from our National Park Service
42 office, and I hope that continues into the future after
43 -- and I'm sure it will because of the progress that
44 we've made. So I think that I just appreciated working
45 for Maija and all of the good work that has been
46 supported with the RAC.

47

48 So moving on from that, I think that
49 I'm going to hand it over to Ramie Fronstin, our

50

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1 wildlife biologist, because he has a couple of things
2 in wildlife to update you on and then I think, you
3 know, any other Staff that are on the call, because
4 there are new members, it's good to introduce ourselves
5 although it will be much better in person when you can
6 see our faces.

7

8 But, Ramie.

9

10 MR. FRONSTIN: Thanks, Hannah. Hi
11 everyone. This is Ramie Fronstin, as Hannah said, I'm
12 the wildlife biologist for Western Arctic Park Land
13 here in Kotzebue. And I will -- like Susan and Alex
14 have said, we -- ADF&G and Park Service and Fish and
15 Wildlife, we all collaborate here, all of the agencies,
16 to get the work done that we need to do and so I am
17 involved in the large mammal surveys and research that
18 goes on. And generally most of our surveys occur in
19 spring and summer and so, really, due to winter and
20 Covid there's no new wildlife data to report since our
21 last meeting in the fall, but I can fill you in on our
22 upcoming survey plans.

23

24 So Alex covered caribou. For moose, we
25 -- Alaska Fish and Game and the Park Service will begin
26 a moose count survey of the Selawik area in early
27 April. There are no -- will be no dall sheep surveys --
28 I think I said this last time -- no dall sheep survey
29 this year. For muskoxen, I said this earlier, but I'll
30 repeat it, we'll be attempting a composition survey in
31 the expanded area, which is the area that is east of
32 Cape Thompson area, or Cape Krusen -- or -- yeah, Cape
33 Krusenstern. So we won't be doing an abundance survey
34 in that core area, but we have done an abundance survey
35 there annually since 2010. And we weren't able to
36 complete the composition survey of that expanded area
37 last year when we did the expanded area count so we're
38 going to try to do that this year. And like we said
39 earlier, also, the -- in the core area, for muskoxen
40 numbers, we didn't find any difference, the numbers
41 remained the same, however, we did find growth since
42 2016 in the expanded area. So in 2016 muskoxen numbers
43 were estimated at 556 and then last year we estimated
44 911.

45

46 MR. SCHAEFFER: Wow.

47

48 MR. FRONSTIN: And brown -- yeah,
49 pretty significant change in that expanded area. So we

50

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1 will definitely consider that when determining our
2 permitting, the number of permits we put out this
3 coming year and next year.

4
5 Brown bears, we're still in the midst
6 of planning the next brown bear survey. The next
7 survey is supposed to be on Seward Peninsula. It was
8 postponed because of Covid and hopefully we'll get to
9 have that completed next year.

10
11 And then we will be continuing the wolf
12 surveys that we started this summer, the wolf den
13 survey. Depending on how Covid plays out and our
14 regulations on that, we'll either do the same study we
15 did over the summer, which is we'll have a pilot go
16 themselves in order to prevent transmission with an
17 observer, and they can look for dens in Noatak and they
18 fill out surveys and take GPS points and then pass that
19 data off to us. If things are looking better and we
20 can go out then we will be able to collect some DNA and
21 samples for further analysis.

22
23 And that's all of the updates I have
24 for now.

25
26 Any questions.

27
28 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

29
30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

31
32 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, I have one for
33 Ramie. Did you guys do a moose count this fall, I saw
34 helicopters or planes flying real low and back and
35 forth, was that the moose count being done. Our
36 administrator sent me a letter to ask that question.

37
38 MR. FRONSTIN: Thanks, Wilbur. We did
39 -- ADF&G completed a moose composition survey in
40 Selawik, so if you saw planes over that area, and for
41 the moose we just used planes, no helicopters. So if
42 you see helicopters it wouldn't be moose -- we'll use
43 helicopter in the spring for muskoxen over the Cape
44 Thompson area and expanded area. But this fall it was --
45 they did the moose composition in Selawik.

46
47 MR. HOWATH: When is your next moose
48 count here in the lower Kobuk?

49
50

0121

1 MR. FRONSTIN: Let me see, so our last
2 moose count in lower Kobuk was 2017.

3
4 MR. HOWATH: Yeah.

5
6 MR. FRONSTIN: And so it should be
7 actually coming up very -- it looks like it's the next
8 one after -- so it should be probably be next year. I
9 need to speak with Alaska Fish and Game also because we
10 kind of coordinate but that's what it looks like.

11
12 MR. HOWATH: Okay, thank you so much.

13
14 MR. FRONSTIN: Yeah, no problem, thank
15 you.

16
17 MR. SCHAEFFER: I've got a question.

18
19 MR. FRONSTIN: Sure.

20
21 MR. SCHAEFFER: This is Bob.

22
23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Bob.

24
25 MR. SCHAEFFER: Who monitors the health
26 of the population, especially when it comes to calving,
27 I know the State does some work on it, does the Parks
28 monitor calving as well, the numbers, and predation?

29
30 MR. FRONSTIN: Actually the State --
31 you're right, the State does most of the calving and
32 predation studies. Our constituents at BELA, I think
33 they're doing some brow surveys which can get a, you
34 know, an estimate of condition because if their habitat
35 is really good, you know, we can kind of infer that
36 their health is good. But we haven't -- the Park
37 Service hasn't done anything like that here since I've
38 been here and I've been here only three years so, but.

39
40 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, because I've been
41 concerned, I know that when they do calve the bears are
42 out and the wolves are already denning and that's
43 probably the easiest prey around because, you know,
44 pretty much guaranteed to get them. So I think we're
45 all talking about the health of the moose population
46 because it's one of our main resources, protein, that
47 we have in the villages.

48
49 MR. FRONSTIN: Right. And I know that

50

0122

1 there is preliminary data out. I'm not sure if the
2 actual all of the results have come out yet from that
3 moose predation study on calves and they were looking
4 at the percentage of predators, what predators were
5 getting moose calves and how many, you know, calves
6 were being preyed upon. And Alex and ADF&G would have
7 that data.

8
9 MR. HANSON: Yeah, this is Alex.
10 Through the Chair. If you would like I could provide a
11 shortened synopsis of that.

12
13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Alex, you're a couple
14 spots down the list, will it be just a really brief or
15 is it going to be a few minutes?

16
17 MR. HANSON: I've basically given all
18 my information but I can just speak to Bob's question
19 if you'd like about the moose predation in the lower
20 Kobuk, specifically.

21
22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, go for it, Alex.

23
24 MR. HANSON: So one of our colleagues
25 with Fish and Game out of the Nome office, Warren
26 Hanson, was doing a study here in the lower Kobuk and
27 he collared, along with our team, about 70 to 75
28 individual moose calves each year from 2017 through
29 2020, so we did three years of that, and the finding
30 was that generally what we were seeing was grizzly
31 bears harvested or killed about 77 percent of those
32 calves. We lost another 8 percent to wolves, 9 percent
33 drowning and then 6 percent to other, of those
34 individuals that perished. So we were losing roughly
35 60 percent in that first couple of months to bears.
36 And that was in the lower Kobuk, specifically.

37
38 MR. SCHAEFFER: Wow, that's a lot.
39 Thank you.

40
41 MR. HANSON: Yep.

42
43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex. Any
44 other questions for National Park Service Western
45 Arctic National Park Land Staff.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, just
50

0123

1 wanted to say thank you to Maija, Hannah, and Ramie for
2 all the information and all the support that you
3 provide to the RAC. Specifically to Maija, on behalf
4 of the RAC, I'd like to thank you for your years of
5 service directly here in the region and wish you luck
6 moving forward to your new position. We're going to be
7 losing someone with a lot of knowledge and hope to be
8 able to continue working with you as possible, and
9 thank you for all your service to the region.

10

11 MS. LUKIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I
12 appreciate it. If there's no questions for Western
13 Arctic, I'm going to jump off for another meeting but
14 my Staff will stay on.

15

16 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Great, thank you,
17 Maija.

18

19 MR. HOWATH: Thank you, Maija.

20

21 MS. LUKIN: Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do we have anyone from
24 the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
25 still on the line, I believe we had someone this
26 morning.

27

28 MS. OKADA: Yes, Mr. Chair. This is
29 Marcy Okada with Gates of the Arctic National Park and
30 Preserve. And I'll be giving a short update on
31 subsistence and dall sheep survey, and then Kyle Joly
32 will be giving an update on caribou and moose.

33

34 So I'll go ahead and get started.

35

36 I'd like to reference three handouts
37 that you might have received in your supplemental
38 meeting packet and if you didn't receive those in the
39 mail, then you can also access these handouts on the
40 Office of Subsistence Management website under your
41 Northwest Arctic RAC meeting materials -- supplemental
42 meeting materials.

43

44 But I'll just be quickly going over our
45 Subsistence Resource Commission. Hannah Atkinson had
46 already mentioned the existence of Subsistence Resource
47 Commissions for National Parks and Monuments, and so we
48 have one for Gates of the Arctic National Park. And
49 the Park actually covers three regions, so Northwest
50

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1 Arctic, North Slope and the upper portion of the
2 Western Interior. So for Gates of the Arctic, the
3 western end of the Park enters Unit 23, or the Kotzebue
4 region, and we primarily work with the upper Kobuk
5 communities of Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk. Our last
6 meeting was November 18th via teleconference. We have
7 an upcoming meeting April 14th via teleconference. And
8 our SRC primarily hears updates from our Park Service
9 Staff. We've also been giving updates on the Ambler
10 Mining District Road project since a portion of it will
11 be going through Gates of the Arctic, the southern
12 Preserve unit of Gates of the Arctic. And our SRC also
13 provide input on subsistence management within the
14 Park. And that entails providing comments on Federal
15 subsistence wildlife proposals, as well as Board of
16 Game proposals.

17

18 So do folks have any questions on our
19 SRC?

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 MS. OKADA: Oh, and, quickly, I just
24 want to mention that we do have two seats for the upper
25 Kobuk on our SRC and we have one seat that's currently
26 vacant so we're hoping to fill it shortly. Louie
27 Commack was a member of our SRC and we're hoping to
28 fill his seat.

29

30 And if there's no further questions
31 I'll just go over quickly the work that was conducted
32 on a dall sheep survey last year.

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 MS. OKADA: 2020 was slated to have the
37 all Park survey and unfortunately due to Covid that
38 wasn't possible. So the portions that were surveyed
39 for dall sheep were areas around Anaktuvuk Pass and the
40 northeastern portion of Gates of the Arctic, which is
41 Killik Preserve. And this was just a pilot count, it
42 was just a lone pilot that was conducting these
43 surveys, again, due to Covid, and not all of the
44 subunits within the survey area were able to be
45 surveyed and that was mainly due to weather. There was
46 continual persistent fog during that time. So seeing
47 that a survey was unable to -- a Park-wide survey was
48 unable to be conducted last year, there's a push to
49 have it done this year, and the first primary area to
50

0125

1 be surveyed will be the southern portion of the Park or
2 the southern portion of the Brooks Range. This is
3 mainly due to deep snow events that occurred over the
4 winter of 2019/2020 and so that area, southern portion
5 of the Brooks Range is going to be primarily targeted
6 first.

7
8 The data that did come out of the
9 survey that was done last year, shows that the sheep
10 populations are mainly stable in number, but I think
11 when a survey is conducted this year, more information
12 will come out of that just to see how the populations
13 are doing all over.

14
15 Do folks have any questions.

16
17 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is
18 Michael.

19
20 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

21
22 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, Marcy. Was there
23 any harvest taken this year? I know that upper Kobuk
24 -- Kobuk, Shungnak and possibly Ambler are the ones
25 that can harvest from there. Was there any harvest
26 this last year?

27
28 MS. OKADA: I think, Mr. Kramer,
29 through the Chair. I think due to the deep, deep snow
30 events, I don't know for sure if harvest was taken from
31 Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk, but I think it's highly likely
32 there was real limited harvest just because of the deep
33 snow event and, you know, the local area, and then
34 heading into the Park, so it's highly unlikely any
35 harvest occurred in the Park for sheep.

36
37 MR. KRAMER: Okay, thank you.

38
39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Any
40 other questions for Marcy.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, do you
45 have any.....

46
47 MS. OKADA: And if there's.....

48
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

50

0126

1 MS. OKADA: Oh, sorry about that, Mr.
2 Chair. And if there's no questions for me I'd like to
3 pass it on to Kyle Joly to go over more wildlife
4 updates.

5
6 Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Marcy.
9 We'll move on to Kyle.

10
11 MR. JOLY: Hello, Mr. Chairman, can you
12 hear me okay?

13
14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, sir, loud and
15 clear.

16
17 MR. JOLY: Great. Thanks. My name is
18 Kyle Joly, I'm a Wildlife Biologist for Gates of the
19 Arctic National Park and Preserve. I'm also the lead
20 caribou biologist for the National Park Service
21 focusing in on the Western Arctic Herd. I've been
22 working in Northwest Alaska for over 20 years now and
23 have been working with this RAC for about 15.

24
25 I just want to start with a brief
26 overview of what's been going on with the Western
27 Arctic Herd in terms of movement.

28
29 As recently as 2011, we had caribou
30 crossing the Kobuk River as early as late August and
31 this year we didn't have a single collared caribou
32 cross the Kobuk until November. We also, as you have
33 noted -- this Council has noted, that we're seeing
34 fewer, and fewer animals cross the Kobuk. 10 years ago
35 we used to be seeing 70, 80, 85 as high as 90 percent
36 of our collars crossing the Kobuk in a year, and in the
37 last three years we haven't had 50 percent across and
38 as low as 20 percent. This year we haven't run the
39 numbers yet but it'll probably be a record low number
40 of collars crossing the Kobuk. And Alex might have
41 mentioned it earlier but we didn't put out any collars
42 at all at Onion Portage this year and we're going to
43 have to go use helicopters again starting next month to
44 deploy collars to get our sample size back up and
45 that'll be a Fish and Game led operation with
46 assistance from the National Park Service.

47
48 I'll take any questions on caribou
49 before I move on.

50

0127

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Any
2 questions for Kyle.

3
4 MR. SCHAEFFER: I've got one. Yeah,
5 this is Bob. I'm kind of wondering about the
6 distribution of the caribou this year. Some of the
7 village folks I talked to said they weren't sure what
8 they did or where the main part of the herd was but
9 they wanted to know where the distribution was.

10
11 MR. JOLY: Yeah, thank you. This is
12 Kyle Joly again. So, yeah, it was a very unusual year
13 at least compared to the last 15 or so, even starting
14 as early as the summer, we saw caribou hanging farther
15 west than we normally see and it wasn't until much
16 later in the summer that they started moving east and
17 then it looked like they were going to start migrating
18 across the Noatak, and some did but into September,
19 when we normally do capture operations in Kobuk Valley,
20 you know, they weren't coming through, they were stuck
21 in the upper Noatak, you know, all the way into
22 October, when we finally decided to send the crew out
23 in hopes that some caribou were crossing, they still
24 didn't cross. And the majority of the collars, the
25 majority of the herd ended up in Gates of the Arctic,
26 the western and central portions of Gates of the
27 Arctic, and we actually had animals move all the way to
28 Anaktuvuk and actually a little bit east of Anaktuvuk
29 and we haven't seen animals get that far east from the
30 Western Arctic Herd in about 10 years. The last time
31 was 2012.

32
33 There are scattered dens, we have some
34 in the northern Nulato Hills, which is kind of a
35 typical area. And then there's some up kind of along
36 the northwest coast, kind of up in the Wainwright area,
37 a few scattered around. But this bulk of animals
38 ending up in Gates of the Arctic, we hadn't seen until
39 a couple years ago and now we see it three out of the
40 past four years, that they're just hanging out in the
41 winter in the mountains of Gates of the Arctic, so it's
42 a very different distribution of animals that we see
43 even as recent as five years ago.

44
45 MR. SCHAEFFER: So obviously their
46 habits are changing. I'm just kind of curious as to
47 the approach that the Fish and Game and the Park
48 Service is taking towards that. I know they're animals
49 and they, if they over graze one area they'll go to
50

0128

1 another, you know, that's just the way they work, and
2 I'm not sure if that's happening or not.

3

4 Anyway, thank you.

5

6 MR. JOLY: You're welcome. And that's
7 a great observation, you know, I know some people are
8 thinking, you know, perhaps it's climate change related
9 and it very well may be but, yes, we do see changes in
10 winter range use related to grazing and so, you know,
11 they'll hit one area for a few years and lower the
12 lichen abundance and then move to a different area. We
13 also see changes in distribution with changes in herd
14 size and it generally works that the smaller the herd,
15 the smaller the area that they use. And the herd is
16 down from, you know, its historic highs that we saw
17 back in the early 2000s when it reached about a half a
18 million animals, so it's likely a combination of
19 factors that are leading to these changes in
20 distribution and movements.

21

22 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead, Wilbur.

25

26 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, Kyle, it's not going
27 to happen like it did so many years ago that our
28 Western Arctic Herd mixed up with the Porcupine, how
29 far away is the Porcupine Herd now to our Western
30 Arctic Herd, any idea?

31

32 MR. JOLY: Yeah, I don't have a great
33 idea. I don't get Porcupine data. I do get reports
34 and so generally what, you know, I've been seeing is
35 that they are east of the Haul Road, east of the Dalton
36 Highway and all of our Western Arctic Herd animals are
37 west of the highway. That being said, there is quite a
38 bit of mixing with the Teshekpuk Herd and the Central
39 Arctic Herd and that happens fairly frequently during
40 the wintertime and especially when the Western Arctic
41 Herd ends up in the Gates of the Arctic in the Central
42 Brooks Range, there's a lot more mixing with those two
43 other herds. We recently published a paper on
44 interchange between these herds and what we found is
45 that animals actually moved between herds more than
46 most people expected. What we did see was that we
47 found more movement from the smaller herds to the
48 bigger herds, so more animals from the Teshekpuk ended
49 up with the Western Arctic Herd than say Western Arctic
50

0129

1 Herd animals with the Western -- or the Western Arctic
2 Herd with the Teshekpuk. We really didn't see any
3 interchange between the Western Arctic Herd and
4 Porcupine, it was mostly between adjacent herds so
5 Western with Teshekpuk, Teshekpuk with Western and
6 Central Arctic, and then Central Arctic with Teshekpuk
7 and Porcupine.

8

9 MR. HOWATH: Okay, thank you, so much.
10 I was concerned.

11

12 MR. JOLY: You're welcome.

13

14 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur.
15 Anyone else with questions for Kyle.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, thank you,
20 Kyle. Was there anything else that you wanted to share
21 with the Council.

22

23 MR. JOLY: Yes, I've got two more
24 little bits of information. First is you've got a
25 couple handouts that Marcy sent out. They relate to a
26 couple of papers that we recently published. One is on
27 caribou and that was a paper that another biologist
28 that I work with, Matt Cameron, led and it looked at
29 where caribou, Western Arctic Herd caribou are calving
30 and he did it for the last several years and in that
31 handout you can see that they're still utilizing the
32 Yukok Uplands for their calving and they go there
33 pretty much every year. There is some variability from
34 year to year but there is a core area that they
35 continue to use and, you know, we've documented that
36 they've continued to use it and people in the past have
37 noted that they were using it in the 1960s. And the
38 researcher back then, Peter Lent, he had talked to
39 elders in nearby villages and they said that they had
40 been using it for at least 50 years prior to that, so
41 that documents use of the core calving area for over
42 100 years, which is really an interesting thing. And,
43 you know, that core calving area is entirely within the
44 National Petroleum Reserve. One of the really
45 interesting things that this work was able to do is it
46 linked the greening of the environment, so the flush of
47 new growth after spring snow melt occurs, and so the
48 caribou were going to areas where there was a high
49 likelihood that the green-up would be happening in time
50

0130

1 for them to regain their nutrient stores from a long
2 winter and meet the energetic demands of producing milk
3 for their calves.

4

5 So that was one of the papers.

6

7 The other paper stems from a project
8 that we did over on the east side of Gates of the
9 Arctic. It was actually a project that ran from 2008
10 to 2013, but the data's still being used and a PhD
11 student used it to look at how moose were utilizing
12 habitat. And so in the Lower 48 states moose are
13 actually declining and heat stress has been thought to
14 be one of the primary factors for those declines. And
15 so what she did is she looked at how caribou -- or,
16 excuse me, moose, were utilizing habitat in relation to
17 temperatures and she was able to document that even in
18 the Arctic, moose were moving to places that were
19 cooler and more shaded in response to these hot days.

20

21 I'll answer questions on those two
22 papers and then I just wanted to bring up one last
23 topic.

24

25 MR. KRAMER: Mr. Chairman, this is
26 Mike.

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Mike.

29

30 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, you know, there was
31 a lot of concerns about that Ambler Road project. I
32 know that one of the road, how do you say it,
33 selections had to go through an area that had natural
34 reoccurring asbestos, I'm trying to remember -- I know
35 that there was three separate road suggestions that you
36 guys were going through and I -- you know I always
37 requested updates on a yearly basis on the Ambler Road
38 project as to which one they had selected, you know,
39 whether it's going to be the one that goes through the
40 natural reoccurring asbestos areas near Ambler, you
41 know, that's a serious concern when it comes down to,
42 you know, caribou migrations. Especially if they're
43 going to be going through an area of natural
44 reoccurring asbestos then, you know, they'll get cancer
45 and then so will we. There's always that concern.

46

47 That's one of the things that I'd like
48 to make sure that we get information on on a year
49 basis, or a meetingly [sic] basis is that Ambler Road
50

0131

1 project, because that's a pretty serious thing. I know
2 that they did the impact statement, subsistence impact
3 statement, you know, which I haven't really got to see
4 fully. But, you know, there is always going to be that
5 concern about the direction that is chosen for that
6 Ambler Road project to Ambler, you know, whether the
7 public safety is going to be looking at it or the
8 safety of our subsistence resources.

9

10 That's all I have for right now.

11

12 MR. JOLY: Thank you for that question.
13 Again, this is Kyle Joly with the National Park
14 Service. So I forget the date off the top of my head,
15 but it's been more than a month now that a selection
16 was chosen and the route that they chose was what we
17 call the northern route, so it would be a route
18 stemming from the Dalton Highway, skirting the southern
19 part of Gates of the Arctic, running by the village of
20 Bettles through Gates of the Arctic Preserve just south
21 of Walker Lake and then running through that Valley
22 almost all the way to the village of Ambler. So, yes,
23 there is naturally occurring asbestos in the ground
24 along this route, that is the route that was selected
25 by BLM. And I know there's a couple of lawsuits about
26 that selection but that was the selection that was made
27 and we'll see how it goes from here.

28

29 That's the latest update I have on the
30 Ambler Road.

31

32 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, that was my concern
33 because, you know, with our caribou herd moving through
34 that area at times, you know, they could be picking up
35 this asbestos and we all know that asbestos is not good
36 for consumption of any animal. You know I just wanted
37 to make sure that, you know, our concerns are heard for
38 our subsistence resources and ourselves. Because we
39 depend on that area a lot for caribou -- Ambler,
40 Shungnak and Kobuk, they do hunt sheep. So I just want
41 to make sure that these concerns are brought up and,
42 you know, explained very well.

43

44 Okay, thank you.

45

46 MS. CRAVALHO: Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, go ahead.

49

50

0132

1 MS. CRAVALHO: This is Liz Cravalho
2 with NANA. I appreciate that I'm butting in a little
3 bit here. Mike, I really appreciate what you raised
4 and just wanted to also share, to add to the comment
5 about the lawsuit. The second lawsuit that was filed
6 on behalf of Tanana Chiefs Conference specifically
7 sites concerns related to subsistence and so I would
8 expect that as that litigation continues that some of
9 those topics will certainly be looked at by the court.
10 It's something that we're monitoring very closely. In
11 our comments we shared concerns related to asbestos and
12 how they plan to mitigate that which is discussed in
13 the record of decision. But I just wanted to let you
14 know that, that if there are -- there are the two
15 suits. The second one -- I know both deal with the
16 overall record of decision, but I see the second suit
17 is really narrowing in on some of the subsistence
18 concerns and subsistence issues. And so just wanted to
19 flag that for you and I know it's something we're
20 watching very closely, too.

21
22 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Liz. Does
25 anybody have any other questions for Kyle.

26
27 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, this is Elmer. I
28 just wanted to add on to Mike's discussion about
29 asbestos.

30
31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

32
33 MR. ARMSTRONG: Ambler, a couple years
34 ago they did rehab on the runway, in order for them to
35 get the gravel, there was a House Bill tasked in order
36 for them to get gravel because it had asbestos, like
37 what Mike was talking about. So I think that House
38 Bill is tied into all the gravel through that route for
39 them to use it. So I don't know what we could do to
40 reverse it.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.
45 Anything else for Kyle.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Kyle, did you have
50

0133

1 anything else?

2

3

4 MR. JOLY: Yeah, I just want to bring
5 up one more topic that I haven't heard discussed. I
6 also work in another Park Unit called Yukon-Charley
7 National Preserve -- Yukon-Charlie Rivers National
8 Preserve, and it's over on the east side of the state
9 and abuts Canada. We were part of a lawsuit that came
10 to be known as Sturgeon versus Frost that ended up in
11 the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court ended up
12 ruling on that and their decision was that the Nation
13 River, which is a navigable river was not part of the
14 Park, the Preserve there, and this will likely have
15 implications statewide, on not only Park Service lands,
16 but all Federal lands that where navigability is in
17 question. And so anything that is determined to be
18 navigable, those lands, the submerged lands underneath
19 those waterways are going to be turned over to the
20 State, they'll be under State management. And I just
21 want this Committee -- this Council to be aware of that
22 decision and aware of some of the implications where,
23 you know, an obvious potential situation is along the
24 Kobuk River, where people have hunted in Kobuk Valley
25 on the river under Federal subsistence regulations.
26 With this decision there may be implications where the
27 State hunters would be allowed to hunt on navigable
28 waterways, changing how things were done out there, and
29 also Federal subsistence hunters would then not be
30 hunting under Federal subsistence regulations in those
31 areas. And the Department of Interior is still working
32 on how to implement the Supreme Court Decision, but
33 that is working its way through the system.

33

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And so it's just something I think
should be on the Council's radar.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Kyle. It's
a pretty good point to bring up. Does anybody have any
final questions or comments for Kyle at this time.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank
you for everything that you brought up Kyle. At this
time, it is now 3:40, do I hear a motion from the
Council to take a 10 minute recess before we hear from
the Bureau of Land Management.

MR. KRAMER: I make a motion for a 10

0134

1 minute recess.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moved by Mike. Do I
4 hear a second.

5

6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Second. This is Elmer.

7

8 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Elmer.
9 All those in favor please say aye.

10

11 IN UNISON: Aye.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Those opposed, same
14 sign.

15

16 (No opposing votes)

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, everyone,
19 we'll just take a brief 10 minute recess and then come
20 back and listen to the agency report from the Bureau of
21 Land Management.

22

23 (Off record)

24

25 (On record)

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, it is now
28 3:50, do we have our Council members back, Wilbur,
29 Elmer, Mike, anybody else join us?

30

31 MR. KRAMER: This is Mike, I'm here.

32

33 MR. HOWATH: Wilbur, I'm here.

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: And did we lose
36 Attamuk and Calvin.

37

38 MR. MOTO: This is Elmer, I'm back on.

39

40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, well, at
41 this time we will get back started. Before we listen
42 to the BLM report Brittany Sweeney mentioned that she
43 had some clarification on her previous information she
44 shared about beaver. Brittany, the floor is yours.

45

46 MS. SWEENEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
47 Yes, I just wanted to come back on and make sure that I
48 had given complete information. So as I stated before
49 under the Federal subsistence hunting regulations for
50

0135

1 beavers in Unit 23, there's no closed season and no
2 limit, but under the Federal trapping regulations,
3 which I hadn't looked at, there is a bag limit of 30
4 beaver, or 50 if you're in the Kobuk and Selawik
5 drainage. And then I went and I checked the State
6 hunting regs and the State trapping regs and under both
7 of those there's no bag limit. So I just wanted to
8 point out that there is a bag limit under the Federal
9 subsistence trapping one. And I didn't know if that
10 would be something that the Council would probably or
11 maybe like to amend or clean up, or look at while the
12 call for wildlife proposals is open.

13

14 But I leave that to you.

15

16 Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Brittany.
19 Does anyone have any questions regarding that earlier
20 part of the discussion.

21

22 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair, it's Wilbur.

23

24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead, Wilbur.

25

26 MR. HOWATH: Thank you, Brittany. We,
27 myself, I would say open it up to subsistence trappers,
28 open it up to no limit. Is that something we can do,
29 or can we propose that?

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Wilbur, I'm not sure
32 if we can at this time. I might be incorrect. But it
33 might fall under one of those things that we could
34 discuss now and then prepare it later to be a Federal
35 wildlife proposal, like we discussed before lunch. So
36 if that's what the Council is wanting to go after I
37 think that that's a good thing for Staff to take note
38 of and collect some information on so that we could get
39 something prepared.

40

41 MR. HOWATH: Yeah. Yeah, thank you.

42

43 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Any other questions or
44 comments for Brittany.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, hearing none,
49 thank you again for that clarification, Brittany. And

50

0136

1 to Zach and George, I think that that'll be something
2 we'll want to look at a little more in-depth and get
3 some more information for the Council. At this time
4 I'd like to move on to the Bureau of Land Management
5 report, do we have Tom Sparks on the line?

6

7 MR. SPARKS: Yes, I am, can you hear me
8 okay, Mr. Chairman?

9

10 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, I can. Whenever
11 you're ready the floor is yours.

12

13 MR. SPARKS: All right, I appreciate
14 that. I know that we sent in a couple page flier, it
15 should be in your packet, so I don't want to, you know,
16 go word for word over that. But I would like -- like
17 Susan did, is maybe give you a little background about
18 myself and also the Bureau of Land Management Anchorage
19 Field Office.

20

21 I've been in Nome for 40 years. I've
22 been with BLM for 17, going on 18 now. When I first
23 started with BLM I worked for the Fairbanks District
24 and was administratively transferred to the Anchorage
25 District when there was a realignment of the boundary
26 between the two District Offices. The Anchorage Field
27 Office, it's the largest field office in the United
28 States, it's almost 24 million acres. Most of our
29 lands are held in the Nulato Hills, as far as the
30 public lands that we manage. Our field office goes as
31 far north as Kivalina and as far south down into the
32 Bristol Bay area.

33

34 Just wanted to hit a couple of things
35 that are on that little flier.

36

37 One, is that we continue to participate
38 in the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group. We
39 have provided funding in the past for that group,
40 particularly with some of the kids that have attended.
41 And I wanted to kind of give some more detail on some
42 of the transporter and guide activities. BLM has five
43 transporters, none of them were active last year
44 because the Squirrel River is closed to other -- other
45 than those that qualify under the Federal subsistence
46 regulations. But the transporters that we have on our
47 books is Arctic Air, Golden Eagle, Ram Aviation,
48 TransMountain Aviation, and Arctic BackCountry. We
49 have one guide currently, his name is Brad Salsa, he

50

0137

1 did operate last year. He harvested -- his clients
2 harvested two brown bears and one male caribou.

3

4

5 The only other thing I'd like to update
6 is the Veteran's Allotment Act. We -- BLM had a
7 revocation process for the ANCSA D1 withdrawals. There
8 was some quite recent action, actually with -- it
9 happened on Monday this week, which is going to put a
10 60 day hold on Veterans applying for allotments until
11 April 19th because some of those lands have been closed
12 off. So we needed to revoke the withdrawals in order
13 to make those lands available for Veterans. So it's a
14 little disappointing but we have got a really good
15 website that has available lands on a map and I'd be
16 happy to walk anybody through that that is needing help
17 out there.

17

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And I also wanted to give my contact
number here in Nome. I can be reached at 443-2177 and
by email at tsparks@blm.gov.

And I don't know if Walker Gusse is on
the line, our law enforcement officer, if he'd like to
say a word, or Bruce Seppi, our subsistence biologist,
but I'd be happy to answer any questions that the
Council might have.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Tom. Does
anybody have any questions for Tom and the BLM report.

MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair, I have a
question.

CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

MR. STEVENSON: I was made aware of the
Eastern Interior region recently, and so is the Western
Interior region recently commenting on the BLM planning
process that is also affecting Northwest Arctic. Can
Tom speak to that.

Thank you.

MR. SPARKS: What was that question
again, it was land use planning efforts?

MR. STEVENSON: Yes. The Chairman of

0138

1 the Western Interior RAC, Jack Reakoff, contacted me
2 and asked if this Council was interested in the issue,
3 I don't know which one in the process so.

4

5 MR. SPARKS: We did sign the Bering Sea
6 Western Interior land use plan and.....

7

8 MR. STEVENSON: Yes, that's it. Yes.

9

10 MR. SPARKS: Yes, that one -- we did
11 approve that and the protest period is over, we haven't
12 been sued on it, so unless that happens, the plan will
13 go into -- it's in effect currently. I'd be happy to
14 dive into some of those issues on there but that plan
15 is also available online. The Northwest Arctic, it's
16 covered -- a portion of the Borough is covered in that
17 Bering Sea Western Interior and then the rest of the
18 area is covered by the Kobuk Seward Land Use Plan. And
19 those land use plans guide our management activities
20 when proposals come before us in terms of our
21 permitting and lease authorities. And they're very
22 broad, by the way, the BLM really has a lot of
23 authorities, we're a multi-use agency and our -- what I
24 like to say is we can permit basically anything that's
25 not illegal. So we have a very broad spectrum from oil
26 and gas to mining to roads, and rights-of-ways,
27 utilities, gravel sales, it's just a myriad of things
28 that the BLM is involved in.

29

30 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Zach, does that cover
31 your question?

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Well, thank you for
36 that clarification, Tom. Does anybody else have
37 questions for the Bureau of Land Management.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none,
42 appreciate your report Tom. Lots of good information.
43 If there's nothing else thank you for your time.

44

45 MR. SPARKS: Appreciate that very much,
46 Mr. Chair.

47

48 MR. SCHAEFFER: Thank you, Tom.

49

50

0139

1 MR. SPARKS: You're quite welcome.

2

3 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Next we have the
4 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Alex Hanson was --
5 I feel like you -- you might have mentioned that you
6 covered most of your report already, was there anyone
7 else from the Department of Fish and Game that would be
8 reporting today?

9

10 MR. HANSON: Through the Chair. This
11 is Alex Hanson, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
12 You are correct. I think we've -- you were able to
13 accommodate us a little bit earlier in the agenda and
14 we appreciate that. I'm unaware of anyone else who
15 might have anything to report.

16

17 I will just briefly mention, if I may,
18 just take two minutes here to say that, you know, if
19 folks encounter anything interesting or strange in
20 their harvest or in their meat, then please report that
21 to us. We're very interested in any disease monitoring
22 and interested in hearing from folks from the field on
23 condition of animals and stuff.

24

25 So just wanted to throw that out there.

26

27 We are working on a new disease
28 pamphlet so we can distribute that to folks so that
29 they'll have a resource at their fingertips. We had a
30 little booklet that has gone out of print but we're
31 working on a new product so we'll be distributing it as
32 soon as we have that, potentially electronically and
33 then hopefully we get those in print as well so.

34

35 So that is all I had unless if anyone
36 else had any questions for Fish and Game.

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Alex. Is
39 there any last questions for Fish and Game from the
40 Council.

41

42 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I've got
43 something, this is Bob.

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Go ahead.

46

47 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I've been
48 monitoring working with the university, you know, the
49 one monitoring water, water temperature, the algae

50

0140

1 blooms when fall comes around and listening to people
2 as to what is happening with our waters and fishing,
3 and their concerns about the health of some of our
4 subsistence fish species. And as time goes on and as
5 the air heats up, which is more than likely what's
6 going to happen, it's going to affect the water and the
7 waters are going to get warm, and I've never seen so
8 much algae blooms in the last five or six years boating
9 around Kotzebue and Kobuk Lake and the mouth of the
10 Kobuk River areas. And I just happened to be fishing
11 with a guy a couple weeks ago, he's from Noorvik and he
12 said, hey, maybe you could tell me what this is, Bob, I
13 said, what, I got a seal last fall at the mouth of the
14 Kobuk and I wanted to show you since you're involved in
15 this stuff and I said, surely what -- he showed me a
16 photo, it was a green seal, he said, I got a green seal
17 and I said you got to be kidding me, and so he showed
18 it to me and sure enough it was just covered with so
19 much algae growth and I'm not sure how that was
20 affecting the seals, it was bald in certain areas and --
21 but anyway, I was kind of curious as to what the
22 Department is doing and monitoring fish and even game
23 species around Kotzebue Sound since we're probably more
24 affected so far, additional heat in our area than most
25 places in our state, but I think -- if it does get
26 worse we might probably see something like we did in
27 2014 when millions of salmon died up the Kobuk River
28 because remember that year was just -- it was just so
29 hot, that the waters got hot in the Kobuk River and
30 couldn't support life anymore.

31

32 But I just thought I'd bring that out
33 because I think it's something that might get worse and
34 it's something I think the Department of Fish and Game
35 should really, really keep tabs of and monitor from
36 year to year.

37

38 MR. FRONSTIN: Through the Chair. This
39 is Ramie Fronstin with the Park Service, if I may. I'm
40 involved with monitoring here with NOAA and FBMS -- or
41 not FBMS, I always forget that acronym, anyways, NOAA,
42 and their subsidiaries and I do the summer monitoring
43 on the pH for all marine mammals and in fact I also
44 found a seal like you were saying, that had moss or
45 green algae all over it, and I have submitted samples
46 to NOAA. I submit samples of all of the seals that I
47 find. You are welcome to contact me or anyone who
48 finds a seal is welcome to contact me so that I can
49 come out and sample it or if you want to -- if you need
50

0141

1 information to get me samples you can do that as well.

2

3

4 (Teleconference interference -
5 participants not muted)

6

7 MR. FRONSTIN: Sorry, did I hear a
8 question.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 MR. FRONSTIN: No. Okay. So my number
13 is 907-412-0480. And it'S Ramie Fronstin. But we are
14 monitoring that and I'm also -- there's also an, I feel
15 unusual mortality event group that -- and we meet
16 monthly to discuss all of the findings in the areas,
17 even over on Russia side. So, thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, thank you,
20 Ramie. Were there any other questions for the
21 Department of Fish and Game.

22

23 MS. GEORGETTE: Mr. Chairman. This is
24 Susan Georgette. Could I just say one more thing for
25 that last conversation.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yep, the floor is
28 yours.

29

30 MS. GEORGETTE: Just quickly, I had
31 mentioned that Bill Carter in our office is working
32 with Alex Whiting at the Kotzebue Tribe and with an
33 algae expert at a New York University and they've been
34 going out to Kobuk Lake and taking samples of those
35 algae blooms when they happen, trying to figure out
36 what exactly kind of things it is. And, yeah, so we
37 appreciate your concerns, Bobby, and we'll keep working
38 on it and you're welcome to contact us, too, because
39 we're concerned the same way you are about potential
40 impact on fish at some point.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Susan.
45 Bobby, did you have any other part to your question or
46 did that cover it?

47

48 MR. SCHAEFFER: Well, I guess it's kind
49 of multi-faceted because it's not a simple solution to
50

0142

1 something like this because it not only affects the
2 animals out there but it affects, I know the clams are
3 totally infected by it because, you know, how clams
4 work, they're just like a little water vacuum down
5 there that sucks in all the water and they suck in all
6 the algae and they in turn get infected and either die
7 or they live with a horrible toxin. But I'm also
8 concerned about some of the whitefish and other species
9 that feed on the smaller clams. There's those really
10 tiny little small clams that you find in the whitefish
11 species when you cut into them and I kind of wonder,
12 you know, how safe they will be for humans to eat. So
13 that algae bloom affects everything around it and I
14 just wanted to bring that out in hopes that someone
15 takes note.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Bobby.
20 If there's nothing else for the Department of Fish and
21 Game, we'll move on to the Office of Subsistence
22 Management.

23

24 MR. HOWATH: Ramie -- I mean, Mr.
25 Chair, it's Wilbur.

26

27 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yep, go ahead, Wilbur.

28

29 MR. HOWATH: I wanted to get -- yeah,
30 can I get Ramie's phone number again, 412.....

31

32 MR. FRONSTIN: Hi, Wilbur. 412-0480.

33

34 MR. HOWATH: Okay, thank you. Thank
35 you, Mr. Chair.

36

37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: No problem. Do we
38 still have, is it Steve, from the Office of Subsistence
39 Management on the line.

40

41 MR. FADDEN: Mr. Chairman, thank you.
42 Yes, this is me.

43

44 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All right, well, the
45 floor is all yours.

46

47 MR. FADDEN: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
48 Chair, members of the Council. My name is Steve
49 Fadden. I'm the Acting Wildlife Division Chief for OSM

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0143

1 in Anchorage.

2

3 First of all we wanted to thank you all
4 for your work. It's been a very difficult period for
5 all of us dealing with the Covid19 environment.

6

7 We are holding all 10 winter 2021
8 Regional Advisory Council meetings via teleconference.
9 This decision was made with the utmost consideration
10 and concern for the health and safety of Council
11 members, families, rural communities, the public and
12 Staff, who are all part of the Council meetings. The
13 health and safety of everyone is our highest priority.
14 The Center for Disease Control and Prevention
15 guidelines suggest that people avoid travel and refrain
16 from meeting in person to minimize the risk and to help
17 prevent the spread of Covid19.

18

19 The Regional Advisory Councils are the
20 foundation of Alaska's Federal Subsistence Management
21 Program. We recognize that holding face to face
22 Council meetings in rural communities across Alaska is
23 preferable for engaging the public most effectively.
24 The Federal Subsistence Management Program is fully
25 committed to resuming in-person Council meetings across
26 Alaska as soon as it is possible to do so safely.

27

28 Since your last Council meeting, the
29 following Staffing changes have occurred.

30

31 Doctor Brent Vickers started at OSM as
32 OSM Anthropology Chief in December.

33

34 Greg Risdahl moved over to U.S. Forest
35 Service in January, and will be their representative on
36 the ISC.

37

38 We are grateful to have experienced
39 people on the ISC that will remain in the Program as
40 advisors to their Board member.

41

42 George Pappas is currently the acting
43 OSM Fisheries Division Chief, in addition to his normal
44 job as liaison to the State Fish and Wildlife Programs.

45

46 Katya Wessels, Council Coordinator, is
47 currently acting as OSM Policy Coordinator. And Katya
48 was just selected as Council Coordination Division
49 Chief and will be starting in mid-March.

50

0144

1 Steve Fadden came to us from the U.S.
2 Fish and Wildlife Refuges to be the acting OSM Wildlife
3 Division Chief.

4
5 Sabrina Schmidt has served as one of
6 the clerks at OSM and she took a promotion with the
7 military in January.

8
9 Annual Council appointment process is
10 very complex and takes about 15 months to complete. It
11 begins in September of each year when the Federal
12 Subsistence Board announces the application period for
13 the Council membership. During a six month application
14 period the Program conducts extensive statewide
15 recruitment and effort. The Program distributes
16 approximately 2,000 applications throughout Alaska via
17 mail and email to individuals, agencies and
18 organizations. Additionally the Program conducts
19 wide-ranging outreach through a variety of media
20 outlets including, but not limited to newspaper, radio,
21 TV, internet, FaceBook and public conferences. Last
22 year's effort resulted in 74 applications to fill 62
23 [sic] vacated or expiring seats. After the InterAgency
24 Nominations Panel conducted interviews, the Federal
25 Subsistence Board reviewed the applications and
26 forwarded their recommendations to the Secretaries of
27 Interior and Agriculture on September the 4th, 2020.
28 On January the 15th, 2021, last month, OSM received
29 copies of the Regional Advisory Council appointment
30 letters signed by the former Secretary of Interior.
31 The original appointment letters were sent out by
32 regular post and applicants whose appointments were
33 approved should be receiving the letters soon, if they
34 have not already received them. We received full
35 appointments for three Councils, Kodiak/Aleutians,
36 Bristol Bay, and Seward Peninsula, and partial
37 appointments for four Councils, Eastern Interior,
38 Northwest Arctic, North Slope and Southcentral. Three
39 Councils, Western Interior, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta
40 Council and Southeast Council did not receive
41 appointments at all. Some Councils that received
42 partial appointments left them with three to four
43 vacant seats. We are working with our U.S. Fish and
44 Wildlife Service Headquarter's office as well as with
45 the Department of Interior to see if we can get the
46 additional appointments considered out of cycle. The
47 application period for this year's 2021 Regional
48 Advisory Council appointments is open until March 12th.
49 By December the 2nd of this year we're going to have 62
50

1 open seats for appointment or reappointment, and as of
2 today we have received very few applications for this
3 appointment cycle. We are encouraging Council members,
4 whose terms will expire in December 2022 to reapply.
5 Your Council Coordinator should have contacted you if
6 your membership expires this coming December. We also
7 encourage other rural Alaskans to apply for Council
8 memberships. Serving on a Regional Advisory Councils
9 is the best way to proactively participate in the
10 Federal Subsistence Management regulatory process and
11 help to sustain the traditional way of life. Your
12 participation on the Regional Advisory Councils allows
13 for better regulations to be developed that satisfy the
14 needs of users in the region, and, at the same time,
15 assure continued viability of fish and wildlife
16 populations. Please let your coordinator know if you
17 want to reapply or apply so they can get you the
18 application form.

19

20 Over the past two years we've been
21 reminding Council members about the change in
22 requirements for IDs at airports. This has been
23 postponed until October the 1st, 2021. Note that all
24 Council members will need to make sure they have the
25 required RealID for travel next fall. If you do not
26 have the correct ID, please make sure that you get it
27 before the fall 2021 Council meeting cycle.

28

29 On August 10th, 2020, the State of
30 Alaska filed a lawsuit against the Federal Subsistence
31 Board after it adopted emergency special action WSA19-
32 14. This allowed the village of Kake to engage in a
33 community harvest of two antlered moose and five male
34 Sitka black-tailed deer. Also lands in Units 13A and
35 13B to non-Federally-qualified moose and caribou
36 hunters. As part of the lawsuit the State asked the
37 court to issue two preliminary injunctions. One to
38 prevent the unit 13 closure from taking effect and
39 another vacating the Kake hunt and prohibiting the
40 Board from allowing any additional emergency hunts
41 related to the impacts of Covid19. On September the
42 18th the U.S. District Court denied the State's request
43 for a preliminary injunction on the Unit 13 closure.
44 The court found that, because the State has not
45 demonstrated either a likelihood of success or serious
46 questions on the merits of its claims, the court need
47 not consider the remaining elements of the preliminary
48 injunction analysis.

49

50

0146

1 Two months later on November the 18th,
2 the Court also denied the State's motion for a
3 preliminary injunction on the Kake hunt after Judge
4 Gleason concluded that the State had not demonstrated a
5 likelihood of success on the merits, raising serious
6 questions on the merits of its claim, or demonstrated
7 any likelihood of irreparable harm.

8
9 While these rulings on preliminary
10 injunction are encouraging, they do not resolve the
11 litigation. Settlement negotiations between the
12 Department of Justice, the DOI Solicitor's Office, and
13 USDA Office of General Counsel, and the State are
14 ongoing. The parties have agreed to delay the court
15 proceedings while these discussions are underway.
16 Barring a settlement, the Solicitor's Office now
17 estimates that the briefings should be complete in
18 summer 2021 and that the court will issue its decision
19 in late summer.

20
21 Based on legal guidance, Program Staff
22 does not comment on any active litigation directed
23 against the Federal Subsistence Board beyond what has
24 been set forth here.

25
26 I'd be happy to answer any questions.

27
28 Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of
29 the Council.

30
31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Steve. Do
32 we have any questions or comments for Steve's report
33 from the Office of Subsistence Management.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN BAKER: If there are no
38 questions or comments, I'd just like to say thank you,
39 Steve, for your report. Pretty good information, and
40 I'm always grateful for hearing from OSM Staff, you
41 guys are doing a great job supporting the RAC and we
42 look forward to learning more about what's going on.

43
44 Any other questions or comments for
45 OSM.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, thank
50

0147

1 you for your report. Before we move on to Item 13,
2 it's been brought up that if the RAC does wish to
3 develop some form of proposal on the beaver issue that
4 was brought up by Wilbur and kind of clarified, would
5 we like to vote on that now, what is the wish of the
6 Council. Do we want to submit a wildlife temporary
7 special action, some kind of proposal regarding
8 changing what the limits are on Federal lands for
9 harvesting beaver.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Anyone from the
14 Council like to make a motion supporting that we create
15 a proposal that the Staff create a proposal so at a
16 later meeting we could act on it.

17

18 MR. HOWATH: So moved, Mr. Chair.
19 Wilbur.

20

21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Motion made by Wilbur.
22 Do we hear a second.

23

24 MR. SCHAEFFER: Second by Bob.

25

26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Seconded by Bobby.
27 All those in favor, please say aye.

28

29 IN UNISON: Aye.

30

31 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All those, opposed,
32 same sign please.

33

34 (No opposing votes)

35

36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing no opposition
37 we will go ahead and ask the Staff to put together a
38 proposal and work with the Council to do whatever we
39 need to get something put together about changing the
40 harvest limit for beaver.

41

42 Was there anything else, Zach, that we
43 need to say at this time regarding that subject?

44

45 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. George Pappas,
46 stepping in, sorry Zach. Yes, sir, so you're looking
47 at a proposal, when the window opens, to be crafted to
48 match the State's harvest limits, correct in which --
49 and all Unit 22 and 23?

50

0148

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George,
2 yes. I'm -- I hope that's what everybody is agreeing
3 on.

4
5 MR. PAPPAS: And some justifications
6 have been provided before. Once that window opens up
7 then we can contact for more justification but as I
8 understand from Wilbur's comments from earlier in the
9 meeting about concerns about having the same
10 regulations and, you know, similar regulations across
11 the board in an area. But we'll work on that later on.
12 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Captured. Understood.

13
14 I had one procedural question that's
15 pinging me in the background from folks, how many -- we
16 need to figure out and make sure we have a quorum here.
17 I wonder if we can get a roll call, Zach, or if the RAC
18 members can step up and make sure we have a quorum
19 online.

20
21 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair, could we do
22 a roll call real quick.

23
24 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, please, if you'd
25 like to rattle us off Zach.

26
27 MR. STEVENSON: Bob Schaeffer, are you
28 there?

29
30 (No comments)

31
32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is that Bobby
33 Schaeffer?

34
35 MR. STEVENSON: I think he left. And
36 Enoch Shiedt left, right.

37
38 (No comments)

39
40 MR. STEVENSON: Enoch Shiedt went to
41 work on his snowmachine.

42
43 Mr. Chair, that leaves you -- well,
44 you're there obviously.

45
46 Vida Coaltrain, if she's on the phone,
47 Vida are you there?

48
49 (No comments)

50

0149

1 CHAIRMAN BAKER: You're breaking up a
2 little, Zach. What I have as of right now, Bobby
3 Schaeffer, are you present?

4
5 MR. SCHAEFFER: I am present.

6
7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Bobby.

8
9 Wilbur Howath.

10
11 MR. HOWATH: Yep, present.

12
13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Elmer Armstrong.

14
15 MR. ARMSTRONG: Present.

16
17 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Mike Kramer.

18
19 MR. KRAMER: Present.

20
21 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Enoch, Attamuk,
22 Shiedt.

23
24 (No comments)

25
26 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I believe he had to go
27 and work on his snowmachine.

28
29 MR. STEVENSON: No, he went to a
30 funeral.

31
32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Calvin Moto, II.

33
34 (No comments)

35
36 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you, Zach.
37 Do we have Calvin Moto, II back on line?

38
39 (No comments)

40
41 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Who have I missed,
42 Zach?

43
44 MR. STEVENSON: I think that's
45 everyone. No, my apologies, did you mention Barbara
46 Atoruk.

47
48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yeah, Barbara Atoruk
49 was excused for today. Are there any other members who
50

0150

1 we have not mentioned by name or have not called in
2 that we're overlooking?

3

4 MR. HOWATH: Mr. Chair, I believe it was
5 Vida Coaltrain excused.

6

7 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes, thank you. Thank
8 you for that, Vida in Selawik had to be excused because
9 of the power situation in Selawik.

10

11 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Yes.

14

15 MR. STEVENSON: Excuse me, I believe we
16 did not hear from Bryan Lee Jones in Ambler.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Who was that, Bryan
19 Lee Jones?

20

21 MR. STEVENSON: From Ambler, yes.

22

23 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Is Bryan Lee Jones on
24 the line with us?

25

26 MR. STEVENSON: No, I don't think so,
27 he was absent.

28

29 MR. PAPPAS: Okay, thank you, Mr.
30 Chair, for the clarification. The intent was captured,
31 that won't be an official action item since we don't
32 have a quorum, our final action item, we can just make
33 it discussion and you can come up with recommendations
34 but it won't be final -- but we're good, we've got a
35 vast majority of the meeting completed and the intent
36 of this last conversation was captured clearly.

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, George and
39 thank you, Zach, for the clarifications. So at this
40 time our next action item which we are not able to act
41 on as we don't have a full quorum is the future meeting
42 dates. Would it be appropriate, Zach, and/or George if
43 we look at the fall 2021 meeting date and the winter
44 2022 dates and say yes or no now just looking at the
45 calendar but then do a poll vote at a later date
46 amongst the whole Council, whether it be somebody
47 reaching out to the Council members via the phone or
48 email or what have you, would that be appropriate at
49 this time?

50

0151

1 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair, that's
2 what.....

3
4 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

5
6 MR. PAPPAS:we have for an
7 option.

8
9 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair.
10 (Indiscernible).

11
12 MR. PAPPAS: So to help out the
13 process, on Page 26 of you meeting materials has the
14 2021 fall calendar and it looks like Kotzebue Northwest
15 Arctic RAC is on for November 1 and 2, it looks like
16 that's in place.

17
18 So looking at a pretty clean state for
19 the winter meeting. The window opens February 7th and
20 it ends on March 25th if you have a preference.

21
22 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Do any Council members
23 have a preference for the winter 2022 meeting date.
24 I'm looking at my calendar now in the meeting
25 materials. Today's the 18th of February, if we plan
26 for -- as of right now, February 14, 15, 2022, is that
27 agreeable, or would we like to do later in that window.

28
29 MR. KRAMER: This is Mike. I make a
30 motion for February 14th and 15th.

31
32 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike. Does
33 anybody -- at this time I don't think we can do any
34 motions and take any votes just because we don't have a
35 quorum. Does anybody have any problems with February 14
36 and 15, 2022 for our winter meeting next year?

37
38 MR. HOWATH: Nope.

39
40 CHAIRMAN BAKER: I'd like to ask that
41 the Staff do a poll vote of the full Council and once
42 we get a date ironed out, that we get that sent out to
43 the whole group.

44
45 Are there any objections at this time.

46
47 (No objections)

48
49 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Hearing none, I'd like
50

0152

1 to move on down to closing comments. We will start
2 with our newer members that are on the line and first
3 we'll start with Mr. Bobby Schaeffer, do you have any
4 closing comments.

5
6 MR. SCHAEFFER: Yeah, I do. I know
7 it's real difficult to try to do things telephonically
8 and you're not there talking to folks and talking to
9 folks about some of the concerns, you know, it's
10 difficult to do over the phone compared to doing it
11 personally. But, anyway, I'm kind of happy to be on
12 the Council. I've been thinking about it for a long
13 time and then when I was on the IRA Council here in
14 town we had a lot of concerns about the health of our
15 subsistence resources and I think this is a perfect
16 forum to address all of those resources because we have
17 pretty much every Federal agency in here listening and
18 are part of this. And I'm kind of excited to get my
19 feet wet -- I didn't have time to look at all the
20 information and to try to -- try to consume it all to
21 act like I know what I'm talking about.

22
23 Anyway, I'm glad to be on this
24 Committee and I look forward to an exciting time.

25
26 Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Bob. It's
29 a pleasure to have you on board. Thank you for your
30 comments.

31
32 Next, we'll go to Wilbur Howath, do you
33 have any closing comments.

34
35 MR. HOWATH: Yeah, this is a real good
36 meeting. I thank you all for your reports and, Bob,
37 I'm glad you're on this Council with us. Yes, we got
38 to speak up for our members, our tribes. And thank
39 you, Mr. Chair, you're doing a real good job.

40
41 To the rest of the Council, Mike,
42 Elmer, Calvin, real good meeting, look forward to the
43 next one, and, once again thank you for all the
44 reports.

45
46 Taikuu.

47
48 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Wilbur,
49 appreciate that.

50

0153

1 Moving on, Elmer Armstrong, Jr., any
2 closing comments.

3

4 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, good meeting,
5 good discussions. I look forward to working with the
6 RAC to protect our way of life, our subsistence
7 lifestyle.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Elmer.

12

13 Next, Mike Kramer, any closing
14 comments.

15

16 MR. KRAMER: Yeah. It's so good to see
17 that we got more people on board. You know I worked
18 many years with Pete Schaeffer and old Victor Karmun
19 and all them elderly gentlemen, back then I was known
20 as the kid because I was the youngest one on the board
21 for many years, it's good to see that we've got Thomas
22 on board, he's the youngest one. It's always been a
23 pleasure working with these agencies. I'm so glad we
24 got Elmer and Mr. Howath, and we got Bobby, Mr. Moto in
25 Deering. It's always a pleasure working with people
26 from the villages and, you know, it's always good to
27 try to see if we could get some that represent some of
28 the other villages, such as Noatak, Selawik, Ambler,
29 Shungnak and Kobuk. But it's always good to have these
30 meetings and I hope you guys stick around, you know,
31 because we can't always just fight this battle ourself.
32 So it'll be good to see you guys in person some time
33 and I'm kind of glad that we all get to work together
34 to make sure that our subsistence resources continue
35 down the line.

36

37 Thank you.

38

39 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Mike. I
40 believe I'm the last one on the Council that's on the
41 line, if there's nobody else that's joined us.

42

43 (No comments)

44

45 CHAIRMAN BAKER: For my closing
46 comment, I'd just like to say thank you everybody.
47 It's really good hearing everyone, it'd be better to
48 see everybody in person, and make things a little
49 easier, but being able to hear everyone and the passion
50

0154

1 that everybody shows in their respective field is
2 pretty evident, whether it's from the subsistence on
3 the ground side, or it's doing the studies and getting
4 all this information prepared or just organizing these
5 meetings, it's a great thing when we all come together,
6 and thanks everybody for all the hard work.

7

8 Thank you for the opportunity to serve
9 as Chair.

10

11 At this time I don't see anything else
12 on the agenda besides adjournment, do we have a move to
13 adjourn.

14

15 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair. I wanted to
16 thank you for your service. You did a great job.

17

18 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, Zach,
19 appreciate that. Would anybody like to move to adjourn
20 the meeting.

21

22 MR. HOWATH: So moved, Mr. Chair. This
23 is Wilbur.

24

25 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, it's Mike. Mike
26 seconds.

27

28 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Moved by Wilbur,
29 seconded by Mike. All those in favor, please say aye.

30

31 IN UNISON: Aye.

32

33 CHAIRMAN BAKER: All opposed, same
34 sign.

35

36 (No opposing votes)

37

38 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you, everyone.
39 Thanks to everybody and all the agencies, appreciate
40 your time, glad we got through everything today and
41 hope everybody has a safe rest of your week.

42

43 MR. KRAMER: Thank you.

44

45 MR. HOWATH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

46

47 MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

48

49 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, everyone.

50

0155

1 MR. PAPPAS: You did a wonderful job,
2 Mr. Chair, and thank you.

3
4 CHAIRMAN BAKER: Thank you. Thank you.

5
6 (Off record)

7
8 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered ___ through ___ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, taken electronically on the 18th of February 2021;

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

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 2nd day of March 2021.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22