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EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

Pike's Waterfront Lodge
Fairbanks, Alaska
March 1, 2023
9:02 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sue Entsminger, Chair
Andrew Bassich
Eva Burk
Linda Evans
Amanda Pope
Donald Woodruff
Robert Wright

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

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

2

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(Fairbanks, Alaska - 3/1/2023)

4

5

(On record)

6

7

8

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I'm going to
call the meeting to order, 9:02. I need to get my
cheatsheet here. I did not ask anyone to do the
invocation so would you all stand.

10

11

12

(Prayer)

13

14

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Roll call.

15

16

17

MS. MCDAVID: Since our Secretary is no
longer on the Council I will do roll call in their
stead.

18

19

20

Eva Burk.

21

22

MS. BURK: Here.

23

24

MS. MCDAVID: Linda Evans.

25

26

(No comments)

27

28

29

MS. MCDAVID: She's not yet here but
should be joining us.

30

31

Amanda Pope.

32

33

MS. POPE: Here.

34

35

36

MS. MCDAVID: Bill Glanz, are you
online.

37

38

(No comments)

39

40

41

MS. MCDAVID: Bill said he might be
calling in so we'll keep an ear out for him.

42

43

Andrew Bassich.

44

45

MR. BASSICH: Present.

46

47

MS. MCDAVID: Charlie Wright.

48

49

MR. WRIGHT: Charlie Wright is here.

50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Charlie Jagow is absent.
2 He was here but had to go fly.

3
4 Donald Woodruff.

5
6 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Donald.

7
8 MR. WOODRUFF: Present.

9
10 MS. MCDAVID: And Chair Sue Entsminger.

11
12 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Here.

13
14 (Teleconference interference -
15 participants not muted)

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: With six members present
18 we have a quorum.

19
20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Hey, Charlie,
21 did you just blow your noise. Is he able to mute --
22 Charlie, are you able to mute?

23
24 MR. WRIGHT: That's not me.

25
26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: What?

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: If folks on the line
29 could please press star six to mute your phones we're
30 getting some feedback.

31
32 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Meeting
33 announcements.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, thank you, Madame
36 Chair. A couple of housekeeping announcements before
37 we get started. First off good morning everyone and
38 welcome to the Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional
39 Advisory Council meeting. My name is Brooke McDavid
40 and I am the Council Coordinator for the Eastern
41 Interior RAC and also the designated Federal Officer
42 for this meeting.

43
44 For those of you here in person, please
45 remember to sign in each day of the meeting on the
46 table in the back of the room and for those joining us
47 on the phone, you're able to find the agenda and all
48 the meeting materials on the Federal Subsistence
49 Management Program website and that address is
50

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1 www.doi.gov/subsistence, and then under the regions
2 tabs you'll choose Eastern Interior and then meeting
3 materials. Also for everyone on the phone please
4 remember to mute your phones when you're not speaking
5 and if you don't have a mute button on your phone you
6 can press star six. And the same if you would like to
7 speak you can unmute your phone by pressing star six.

8
9 There will opportunities for public
10 comments during this meeting and for oral comments each
11 morning of the meeting there'll be an opportunity to
12 comment on non-agenda items and the Chair will announce
13 when that opportunity is going to take place and we'll
14 call on the individuals who wish to address the
15 Council. There are blue cards to sign up to comment
16 for people here in the room and if you're online the
17 Chair will -- or the phone, the Chair will call on you
18 when it's time to speak.

19
20 You can also submit written comments
21 instead or in addition to oral comments and you can
22 turn those in to me here in the room or email them to
23 subsistence@fws.gov. And when you're giving comments,
24 whether oral or written please remember to identify
25 yourself for the record stating your first and last
26 name and any affiliation that you might have.

27
28 I do have an update on Council
29 membership. We have two new members who were appointed
30 to the Council in December. Amanda Pope. She's here
31 with us in the room. And Eva Burk, who is joining us
32 via teleconference today. Welcome to you both and
33 thanks for volunteering to serve subsistence users in
34 the region.

35
36 We also had one resignation from the
37 Council this winter. Will Koehler stepped down from
38 the Council and there was a vacant spot until the
39 middle of the night last night and we got a signed
40 letter from Washington D.C., appointing the alternate
41 to fill Will's seat and Katya is currently out trying
42 to get ahold of her, it's Dorothy Shockley and she is
43 from Manley Hot Springs. So if we're able to get ahold
44 of her and she might be able to call in or if she's
45 able to drive to Fairbanks could possibly join us at
46 the meeting.

47
48 I also wanted to remind everyone that
49 the application period for Regional Advisory Council
50

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1 seats is still currently open, just for a couple more
2 days. The application period closes on Tuesday, March
3 7th, so that's next week on Tuesday. We do have
4 application copies on the back table and also on our
5 website.

6
7 And then lastly I have a statement to
8 give about Council member conduct and ethics just a
9 reminder.

10
11 As Council members you all represent
12 the people of the Eastern Interior region to the
13 Federal Subsistence Board, the Secretaries of Interior
14 and Agriculture, agency Staff and the general public.
15 As Secretarial appointees Council members also
16 represent the Federal Subsistence Management Program to
17 the people of your regions, therefore, Council members
18 are expected to engage respectfully towards all persons
19 at both public meetings and elsewhere.

20
21 Council meetings are conducted
22 according to Robert's Rules of Order. And as outlined
23 in Robert's Rules of Order the Chair can call on any
24 members if there's unorderly conduct and Council
25 members may also ask the Chair to address any unorderly
26 conduct.

27
28 And, lastly, the Department does have a
29 policy regarding ethics, responsibility of Advisory
30 Council members which states that; quote, Council or
31 subcommittee will participate in any specific party
32 matter, including a lease license permit, contract
33 claim agreement or related litigation with the
34 Department in which the member has a direct financial
35 interest. And that's just to say if any topic will be
36 discussed during the meeting where you have a conflict
37 of interest, please state so for the record and recuse
38 yourself from discussion.

39
40 And those were all the housekeeping
41 announcements I had, thank you, Madame Chair.

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
44 Brooke. Anybody have any questions.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Next
49 is welcome and introductions. So I welcome everyone.
50

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1 Good morning. It's kind of nice to have seen the
2 Northern Lights a few nights ago.

3
4 I will start with the Council members
5 -- well, Brooke, you introduce yourself again and then
6 we'll go around the table and then we'll to the room.

7
8 , you know, Good morning again everyone, Brooke
9 McDavid, Council Coordinator.

10
11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And Sue
12 Entsminger from Mentasta Pass.

13
14 MR. BASSICH: Andy Bassich from Eagle.

15
16 MS. POPE: Amanda Pope from Circle.

17
18 MR. WOODRUFF: Don Woodruff, Eagle.

19
20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. So can
21 we start by -- I'll start with Katya and go around the
22 room and I guess do you want the mics turned on --
23 okay, he just turned them on for us, yeah, and you can
24 stand and say your name. I think it's a small enough
25 room and it'll work.

26
27 MS. WESSELS: Good morning, Madame
28 Chair and members of the Council. My name is Katya
29 Wessels and I am Council Coordination Division
30 Supervisor with OSM. I'm glad to see you here this
31 morning.

32
33 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Is it
34 necessary that they come up.

35
36 REPORTER: It's probably okay.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.

39
40 MR. PLANK: Good morning everybody.
41 I'm Tom Plank.

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I think you
44 can just stand. I Tom.

45
46 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. This is
47 Liz Williams, Anthropologist at Office of Subsistence
48 Management.

49
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1 MS. CANFIELD: Good morning everyone.
2 My name is Gabe Canfield and I'm the Project
3 Coordinator of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
4 Association.

5
6 MS. CELLARIUS: Good morning. This is
7 Barbara Cellarius. I'm the Cultural Anthropologist and
8 Subsistence Coordinator at Wrangell-St. Elias National
9 Park and Preserve, Copper Center.

10
11 MR. MCKEE: Good morning everyone. I'm
12 Chris McKee. I'm the Statewide Subsistence Coordinator
13 for the Bureau of Land Management out of Anchorage.

14
15 MR. RASIC: Good morning. I'm Jeff
16 Rasic. I work for the National Park Service for Yukon-
17 Charley Rivers and I'm the Resource Program Manager.

18
19 MR. LEONARD: Good morning everyone.
20 My name is Paul Leonard, I'm an Ecologist at Arctic
21 National Wildlife Refuge.

22
23 MS. ZETZKI: (PH) I'm GeorgiaZetzki.
24 I'm a Wildlife Technician with the National Park
25 Service out of Yukon-Charley.

26
27 MR. RANSBURY: Good morning everyone.
28 My name is Shane Ransbury. I work for Alaska
29 Department of Fish and Game, Fall Season Assistant
30 Manager.

31
32 MS. JALLEN: And good morning. Also
33 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Deena
34 Jallen, Yukon River Summer Season Salmon Manager.

35
36 MS. GLEASON: and good morning, I'm
37 Christie Gleason and I'm with the Alaska Department of
38 Fish and Game here in Fairbanks and I'm the Yukon River
39 Fall Season Manager.

40
41 MS. WOODRUFF: Jan Woodruff, Eagle.

42
43 MR. NELSON: Good morning. Mark Nelson.
44 Alaska Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist
45 for this area.

46
47 MS. PILCHER: Good morning everybody.
48 Nissa Pilcher. Council Coordinator for Western
49 Interior and Seward Peninsula. I just wanted to hear
50

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1 everybody and see everybody in person.

2

3 NICOLE: Good morning. I'm Nicole.

4 I'm a Fisheries Biologist at the Tanana Chiefs

5 Conference.

6

7 MR. HAWKALUK: Good morning. Nathan

8 Hawkaluk, Acting Refuge Manager for the Arctic National

9 Wildlife Refuge.

10

11 MR. CAMERON: Good morning. I'm Matt

12 Cameron, Wildlife Biologist with National Park Service,

13 and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

14

15 MS. OKADA: good morning. Marcy Okada,

16 Subsistence Coordinator for Yukon-Charley Rivers

17 National Preserve. Good morning.

18

19 MS. CRAVER: Good morning. I'm Amy

20 Craver and I'm a Cultural Anthropologist and

21 Subsistence Coordinator for Denali National Park and

22 Preserve.

23

24 MS. MILLER: I'm Em (ph) Miller, I'm a

25 member of the public.

26

27 MR. MASCHMANN: I'm Gerald Maschmann

28 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service here in

29 Fairbanks.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So that gets

32 everyone in the room. I guess you need his mics turned

33 off, uh. Okay. So anyone called in, it's time to

34 introduce yourself, maybe start with OSM.

35

36 MR. GRAHAM: Good morning. This is

37 Cory Graham, Fish Biologist with OSM.

38

39 (Teleconference interference -

40 participants not muted)

41

42 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Is there

43 anyone else from OSM.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. I

48 could go by all these entities but I'm just going to go

49 ahead and introduce yourself, one at a time, as best

50

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1 you can.

2

3 MS. BROWN: This is Caroline Brown,
4 Research Director for Subsistence at Fish and Game in
5 Fairbanks.

6

7 MR. REAKOFF: This is Jack Reakoff,
8 WIRAC Chair listening in to your meeting. Good
9 morning.

10

11 MS. JOCHUM: Good morning. This is Kim
12 Jochum, a Subsistence Program Analyst with the Regional
13 Office for the National Park Service.

14

15 MR. RICHARDS: Good morning. This is
16 Mark Richards with Resident Hunters of Alaska listening
17 in.

18

19 MS. MONCRIEFF: Hi. Good morning.
20 This is Catherine Moncrieff with the Yukon River
21 Drainage Fisheries Association.

22

23 MR. SARAFIN: Good morning. This is
24 Dave Sarafin, the Fisheries Biologist at Wrangell-St.
25 Elias National Park and Preserve.

26

27 MR. JOLY: Good morning. This is Kyle
28 Joly. I'm a Wildlife Biologist with Yukon-Charley
29 National River Preserves -- Rivers National Preserve.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone else
32 online.

33

34 MR. STEVENS: Good morning. My name is
35 Ben Stevens and I'm calling in from Fairbanks. Just --
36 I'm with the Tanana Chiefs and I'm just listening in.
37 Thank -- thank you very much.

38

39 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone else
40 listening in.

41

42 MS. ADAMS: Hi, can you hear me?

43

44 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, go
45 ahead.

46

47 MS. ADAMS: Good morning. Rochelle
48 Adams from Beaver and Ft. Yukon, Subsistence User and
49 also on YRDFA.

50

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1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone else.

2

3 MR. ROBERTS: Hello.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go ahead.

6

7 MR. ROBERTS: Yes.

8

9 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Introduce
10 yourself, please.

11

12 MR. ROBERTS: Hello.

13

14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Hi, we can
15 hear you.

16

17 MR. ROBERTS: This is Fred Roberts.
18 You can hear me?

19

20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, we can.
21 Introduce yourself, please.

22

23 MR. ROBERTS: Okay. Yeah, I'm Fred
24 Roberts, I'm from Ft, Yukon.

25

26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Is
27 there anyone else.

28

29 MR. ROBERTS: Is there anyone on the
30 caribou.....

31

32 MR. TWITCHELL: This is Wilson
33 Twitchell calling in from Kasigluk, Subsistence User
34 and just calling in to listen in.

35

36 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Can you
37 restate your name please.

38

39 MR. TWITCHELL: Wilson Twitchell.

40

41 MR. ROBERTS: (Indiscernible)

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Wilson and
44 then the last name.

45

46 MR. TWITCHELL: Twitchell.

47

48 MR. BASSICH: Twitchell.

49

50

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1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Twitchell.

2

3 MR. BASSICH: Twitchell.

4

5 MR. TWITCHELL: And I'm a subsistence
6 user calling in to listen in.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, anyone
9 else.

10

11 MS. : Good morning. This is
12 (Indiscernible)n in Fairbanks with Fish and Wildlife
13 Service just listening in.

14

15 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Is
16 there anyone else on the line.

17

18 MR. ROBERTS: Open that up.

19

20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Okay,
21 those listening online that have introduced yourselves
22 you'll have to push star six to mute yourself and then
23 when we call in you hit star six again to get back on.

24

25 Is there anyone else online.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, hearing
30 none, I just saw one person walk in the room. Hey,
31 Jim, you want to introduce yourself.

32

33 MR. HERRIGES: Yeah. Sorry I'm late but
34 Jim Herriges, Wildlife Biologist from the Eastern
35 Interior Field Office, Bureau of Land Management.

36

37 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, thanks.
38 Jim Herriges.

39

40 MS. WESSELS: Madame Chair.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes.

43

44 MS. WESSELS: I'm sorry to say this but
45 the people online cannot hear us when we speak from the
46 audience so everybody will have to come to the mics.

47

48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: We just got
49 word that we need to go through that again.

50

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1 MS. WESSELS: No, you don't.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.

4

5 MS. WESSELS: I'm just saying.....

6

7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: In the future
8 it is -- okay, well, we've done it before that way so,
9 okay. All right, my apologies, I thought we could be
10 simple but it's never simple.

11

12 All right, well, the next thing on the
13 agenda is to review and adopt the agenda. Council
14 members have you looked at the agenda. So does each
15 one have the new one?

16

17 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. So for Council
18 members I printed the most recent copy of the agenda on
19 the yellow paper and it's the same one -- it's in white
20 on the back table if anyone in the room needs a copy.
21 And for Charlie and Eva, the copy you got with your
22 supplemental materials in the mail is virtually the
23 same, there was just like one minor update and that is
24 online if you want to download an updated copy.

25

26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. So I
27 think we did have a couple changes that you and I
28 talked about, but that's already done, right?

29

30 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, everything we
31 talked about, Sue, is on the agenda. I guess I would
32 just point out that there are a couple of time certain
33 items and you have a list of those and they are noted
34 on the agenda when those will occur.

35

36 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Does the
37 Council have this?

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: They don't have that but
40 it is also noted on the agenda.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: On the new
43 agenda?

44

45 MS. MCDAVID: Yes.

46

47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. So if
48 anybody has any questions about the agenda there are
49 people that come forward, and they want, okay, I can't
50

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1 be here at such and such a time so we do a time certain
2 which we've done often before.

3

4 Are there any corrections or additions
5 to the agenda.

6

7 MR. BASSICH: Madame Chair. Make a
8 motion to adopt the agenda as presented to our Chair
9 with the modifications and also allow the Chair to
10 deviate from the agenda upon consent from the Council.

11

12 Thank you, Madame Chair.

13

14 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: It's been
17 moved and seconded to adopt the agenda as provided to
18 the Chair and be somewhat flexible when we need to be
19 and Council members can agree or not.

20

21 Okay, is there any more discussion.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, hearing
26 none. I'm going to call for unanimous consent. Anyone
27 opposed.

28

29 (No opposition)

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Hearing none,
32 the motion passes. So next on the agenda is the
33 election of officers and I'll turn it over to the
34 Coordinator, Brooke.

35

36 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madame Chair.
37 So in accordance with the Council charter the Council
38 members elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary to
39 serve a one year term and this usually happens at your
40 winter meeting which is this meeting and those terms
41 are typically for one year, like I said, so we'll have
42 another election at this time next year. And I will
43 open the floor first for nominations for Council Chair
44 and nominations don't need to be seconded, just so you
45 know.

46

47 MR. BASSICH: I'd like to nominate Sue
48 Entsminger as our Chair.

49

50

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: I would like to nominate
2 Charlie Wright for Chair position.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Any other nominations for
5 Chair.

6
7 (No comments)

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: All right. So we have
10 Sue Entsminger and Charlie Wright nominated for the
11 Council's Chair. I'll first ask for those in support
12 of Sue to please say aye, and raise your hand just so I
13 can get a count.

14
15 MR. BASSICH: Aye.

16
17 MS. POPE: Aye.

18
19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Man, that's just
20 really wrong.

21
22 MS. MCDAVID: Someone on the phone
23 doesn't have their line muted.

24
25 MR. BASSICH: How do we get Charlie and
26 Eva's vote.

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: And Charlie and Eva, if
29 you would want to vote for Sue now would be the time to
30 say aye.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: All right. And now, I
35 will ask for votes for Charlie Wright, please say aye
36 and raise your hand.

37
38 MS. EVANS: Aye.

39
40 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, Don, I think you
41 voted for -- okay.

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: He voted for
44 me?

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. Charlie and Eva
47 are you on the line.

48
49 (No comments)

50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: You might be muted.
2 We're looking for your vote for Council Chair and
3 Charlie Wright and Sue Entsminger have been nominated.

4
5 (No comments)

6
7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: They can't
8 unmute.

9
10 MS. MCDAVID: Try pressing star six.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 MS. WESSELS: They should hang up and
15 call back.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, Charlie and Eva
18 we're going to ask you to please hang up and try to
19 call and see if that resolves the issue. We'll
20 standby.

21
22 MS. BURK: Can you hear me now, this is
23 Eva.

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, Eva, we got you.

26
27 MS. BURK: We're going to hang up the
28 other line. It was.....

29
30 MR. WRIGHT: I got a question.

31
32 MS. BURK: Oh, hang on.

33
34 MR. WRIGHT: I got a question.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Sure.

37
38 MR. WRIGHT: I appreciate the people's
39 vote and nomination but I was under the understanding
40 that Sue was going to hang around long enough to mentor
41 me into becoming the Chair, or is this the proper way
42 to do it or is there another way to do it. I just want
43 to understand before I vote, on what's going on.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Sure, Charlie. I think
46 Katya has some words of wisdom for us.

47
48 MS. WESSELS: I don't know if they're
49 words of wisdom. So the Chair, Vice Chair and
50

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1 Secretary are elected for a one year term. Sue was
2 elected the Chair last year. She served as the Chair
3 last year. Right now is the election of a Chair for
4 this year, whoever is elected at this moment will serve
5 as the Chair for the entire year unless they relinquish
6 that position and then you can have another election at
7 the fall meeting if, you know, the Chair resigns from
8 their position. I mean they can still remain on the
9 Council but they can say that they no longer want to
10 serve as the Chair so then you would need to have
11 another election at the fall meeting. Does that bring
12 some more understanding to you, Charlie.

13

14 MR. WRIGHT: Yes.

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: So, Charlie, this is
17 Brooke. If you want to make a statement, if, you know,
18 you want to be willing to be serve as Chair, if you'd
19 prefer to wait as you said and have Sue mentor you some
20 more, you know, the other Council members might take
21 that into consideration but we do need a vote from both
22 you and Eva if possible.

23

24 MR. WRIGHT: So is this the vote for
25 Sue?

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, for Sue or yourself.
28 It's kind of hard to do with you guys on the phone.

29

30 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, it is really hard
31 and it kind of jumped me.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: Well, you were nominated
34 so we'll start with you, you can vote for yourself or
35 vote for Sue.

36

37 MR. WRIGHT: I kind of want to talk to
38 Sue before we do this vote.

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 MR. STEVENS: With all due respect, Ben
43 Stevens, interrupting rudely. Charlie, you were just
44 given direction that you have to do something, you
45 don't. We've been asking OSM for critical needs and we
46 have been left wanting and so in something as simple
47 this, I say that we can chill.

48

49 (Teleconference interference -

50

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1 participants not muted)

2

3 MR. STEVENS: I would not feel pressure
4 to give an answer right now considering the fact that
5 it may be that we're not prepared.

6

7 MS. WESSELS: Whoever is on the phone,
8 first of all, please introduce yourself because we can
9 hear you but we don't know who you are and maybe that
10 was not intended for the entire Council and public to
11 be heard.

12

13 MR. STEVENS: Katya Wessels. My name
14 is Ben Stevens and that was most definitely intended
15 for everyone to hear.

16

17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Was that out
18 of order because the Council.....

19

20 MR. STEVENS: What I was advising is
21 that just because OSM demands that we make a decision
22 right now, even though we are not ready it is
23 unacceptable.

24

25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I appreciate
26 your.....

27

28 MR. STEVENS: Considering the fact that
29 we have not.....

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:
32comments, Ben, but.....

33

34 MR. STEVENS:been able to get --
35 hello, hello.....

36

37 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Ben,
38 appreciate your comments but.....

39

40 MR. STEVENS: Hello. Hello.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:we're
43 going to take a short break.

44

45 MR. STEVENS: Thank you.

46

47 MS. MCDAVID: Charlie Wright, this is
48 Brooke. Sue is willing to chat with you either on the
49 phone or if you want her to come down to the room, she
50

0018

1 would be willing to do that. We're going to stand down
2 for a few minutes.

3

4 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Don't say his
5 room, just chat -- just tell him to test me.

6

7 MS. BURK: We're pretty sick. You
8 better -- I wouldn't advise that you come down here.

9

10 (Off record)

11

12 (On record)

13

14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, we're
15 back. Quiet everyone. I was able to stand back six
16 feet and talk to Charlie.

17

18 (Banging)

19

20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, I need
21 someone to handle that thing, and it does work better
22 on there.

23

24 Our phones wouldn't even work, that's
25 how good things were working here today, we couldn't
26 even call each other. So we talked outside the room.

27

28 So we're back and there's -- and I
29 haven't voted yet and those two haven't voted yet so
30 Brooke take over.

31

32 MR. WRIGHT: Hello.

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: Hi, Charlie.

35

36 MR. WRIGHT: Can you hear me Brooke?

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, we gotcha.

39

40 MR. WRIGHT: Okay, so it's my turn to
41 vote, right.

42

43 MS. MCDAVID: Let me make one quick
44 announcement real quick and just remind everyone that
45 during the Council member elections, it's just the time
46 for Council members to participate and we don't accept
47 public comments during this time. And, Charlie, you
48 are -- it's your turn to vote.

49

50

0019

1 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I vote for Sue.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, thank you. And

4 Eva.

5

6 MS. BURK: Can I nominate -- I got to

7 vote.

8

9 MR. WRIGHT: For this one -- so that's

10 next.

11

12 MS. BURK: So vote for Sue.

13

14 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah.

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, we're voting for
17 the Chair now and then we'll accept nominations for
18 Vice Chair next.

19

20 MS. BURK: Okay. This is Eva and I

21 vote for Sue please.

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, thank you.

24

25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And I'll vote
26 for Charlie.

27

28 MS. MCDAVID: And.....

29

30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Oh, and I'm
31 voting for Charlie.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. With all Council
34 members casting a vote, Sue Entsminger was nominated to
35 serve as the Council's Chair. Congrats Sue.

36

37 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: This is
38 unbelievable.

39

40 MS. MCDAVID: And I'll turn it over to
41 you to do the Vice Chair elections.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.
44 And I will remind the public that this is Council
45 business and I'm sorry I was a little confused, it's
46 not proper to interrupt like that but I had stepped
47 down from the Chair at that moment and Brooke was there
48 and so I got a little confused and my apologies for
49 that.

50

0020

1 Next is the nominations for the Vice
2 Chair.

3
4 MR. BASSICH: I'd like to nominate
5 Charlie Wright as Vice Chair for the Eastern Interior
6 Regional Advisory Council.

7
8 MS. EVANS: I'll second.

9
10 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Don't need a
11 second.

12
13 MS. EVANS: Okay.

14
15 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Are
16 there any other nominations for Vice Chair.

17
18 (Teleconference interference -
19 participants not muted)

20
21 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: We're hearing
22 some people. Any other nominations for Vice Chair.

23
24 (No comments)

25
26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. So
27 hearing none Charlie is the Vice Chair, unopposed. And
28 next is the Secretary, any nominations for Secretary.

29
30 MR. BASSICH: I'd like to nominate Don
31 Woodruff as Secretary for the Eastern Interior Regional
32 Advisory Council.

33
34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
35 nominations for Secretary.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
40 nominations.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Sometimes we
45 take a motion to close but are we okay with.....

46
47 MR. BASSICH: Yeah.

48
49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:
50

0021

1procedurally.

2

3

MR. BASSICH: Yes.

4

5

6

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah. All right, there are no other nominations so Donald is now the Secretary.

7

8

9

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

10

11

12

13

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you guys. Next is the minutes, review and adopt the minutes.

14

15

16

MS. MCDAVID: Those can be found on Page 5 of your meeting books.

17

18

19

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Donald.

20

21

22

23

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Madame Chair. I read through the minutes several times and I don't see any mistakes or corrections to make so I would like to move that we adopt the minutes.

24

25

26

MR. BASSICH: Second.

27

28

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: It's been moved and.....

29

30

31

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

32

33

34

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:seconded to adopt the minutes. Any discussion.

35

36

37

(No comments)

38

39

40

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. I'm going to ask for unanimous consent for adoption of the minutes. If there's anyone opposed please say so.

41

42

43

(No objections)

44

45

46

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, the minutes are approved. Next is reports. Council member reports.

47

48

49

50

Charlie, would you be okay going first.

0022

1 MR. WRIGHT: Can you hear me?

2

3 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yep, go
4 ahead.

5

6 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I could go first.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, go
9 ahead.

10

11 MR. WRIGHT: Okay. Good morning, Board
12 members. I got a lot to say and I'll try to say it as
13 respectful as I can.

14

15 I want to start with fish.

16

17 As you know we're all suffering and
18 been suffering for a few years now, not only our salmon
19 are suffering, our local fish numbers are also down for
20 some reason. Whitefish are hard to catch in the
21 spring now when there used to be really a lot of them
22 around, the round whitefish. The only time I'm able to
23 catch a good number of whitefish is right when the ice
24 starts to run now. There ain't a lot then either.
25 They last a really short -- if you catch them you do
26 pretty good but if you wait a day or two either or then
27 you miss them. And that's the local part of it.

28

29 But I went to the Board of Fish last
30 week, all week long, and before then I was at the
31 Federal Subsistence Board meeting and after that
32 meeting OSM put in comments in that they didn't think
33 that any of the proposals would help the AYK fisheries
34 in getting any numbers back up in the Yukon and the
35 Kuskokwim River and all their tributaries to help feed
36 120,000 people. That was very discouraging to me to
37 not try to find a way, and work to find a way to try to
38 help get those fish back in there. At the Board of
39 Fish we tried many angles to make windows and caps to
40 see if we could get a little bit more fish past the
41 Area M into the AYK, it failed, every one of our angles
42 we tried, every proposal we worked on was failed and I
43 thought maybe just a little test fishery for one year
44 would even have been good enough to tell whether those
45 numbers were coming back to help. All we were trying
46 to do is to get people to get some food on the table,
47 worried about the future generations and sustainable
48 management which is the -- supposed to be the utmost
49 priority of all of our managers from all entities. I

50

0023

1 don't have to say no more -- not much more than that,
2 I'm guessing that people who've been involved, people
3 know what's going on, it's all over FaceBook and people
4 are talking about. It was very discouraging that --
5 not to point fingers at nobody or no fishery but I
6 think that we need to try to work better together to
7 try to figure out what's going on. There are a lot of
8 hungry people.

9
10 That's why I serve on these boards is
11 to try to make sure that the management of our
12 resources in fish, animals, our food is done
13 sustainably and responsibly to make sure that future
14 generations have that ability to eat and feed their
15 families as we have for millennium.

16
17 That's enough of that for fish.

18
19 I'll move on to caribou management. It
20 falls right in line.

21
22 We're not doing a very good job of
23 managing those either. The people in the villages, for
24 instance, up near the border have a hard time finding
25 the caribou. You have to have a bulletproof vest to go
26 out during the season. I think we need to really take
27 a step back and take a really good look at our
28 resources that are feeding our people and whether
29 they're being managed sustainably.

30
31 Moose in the Interior, the numbers are
32 way down, right in the Interior around where I live.
33 You take a picture of a moose track when you see it
34 because it's so far and few between it's like seeing
35 Big Foot tracks nowadays, you take a picture and show
36 it around, it's terrible. And, again, I'm not pointing
37 fingers at nobody, this is just something that we just
38 have to work collectively towards doing a better job at
39 managing. Maybe start shutting down some areas where
40 those numbers are low. I said it before the people
41 that live in these areas that have low moose counts,
42 they just hunt harder and they still get a moose and it
43 still goes down as a count for a moose. Those hunters
44 hunt really hard and I think it should be, not the
45 number of moose shot as the count now, it should be how
46 many days we need to look at. Back in the day it would
47 take one or two days to get a moose, now it takes the
48 whole season, if you're lucky. So we really need to
49 look into that.

50

0024

1 It's really hard to hear people over
2 and over and over again say that we can't feed our
3 families. The moose is down. The caribou is down.
4 There's no berries. The local fish are in trouble. We
5 just need to work a little bit harder and try a little
6 bit harder to work together.

7
8 It just hurts me to know that people
9 are going hungry again and it doesn't look very good
10 going into the future.

11
12 With that, I think that's about all I
13 have, Madame Chair, thank you.

14
15 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
16 Charlie. Eva, do you feel comfortable going next.

17
18 MS. BURK: Oh, yeah.

19
20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, go
21 ahead.

22
23 MS. BURK: I agree a lot with Charlie.
24 I'm also the Nenana/Minto Fish and Game Advisory
25 Committee, I'm the spokesperson for that right now.
26 But in this moment I will be an EIRAC Council member.

27
28 That was my first Board of Fish meeting
29 and it's my understanding that the AYK region, this was
30 their first time attending the Alaska Peninsula
31 Aleutian Island Board of Fish meeting and there is a
32 clear understanding why we would attend that meeting.
33 I grew up commercial fishing on the Tanana River and
34 that -- the overfishing crashed in the '80s, '90s,
35 before 2000 -- before climate change was even a major
36 issue so it's real evident that overfishing is the
37 likely cause of the decline of our own in-river
38 commercial fishing and now that same overfishing, along
39 with climate change is really putting our wild salmon
40 stocks at risk and that is what -- what we're seeing is
41 that every salmon counts and it has to be a collective
42 effort from Board of Fish, Fish and Game, tribal
43 government, Federal Subsistence Board to work together
44 to preserve these wild stocks of salmon. That is
45 policy to preserve wild stocks of salmon for Alaska and
46 it is also policy to provide subsistence uses and to
47 eliminate other uses when subsistence uses are not
48 being met and we weren't asking for that, the people of
49 the AYK region weren't asking for that area to shut
50

0025

1 down, they were asking them to reduce time to allow
2 fish passage.

3

4

5 And, you know, being a scientist
6 myself, the science was there, there was clear data
7 from many, many years, from different datasets showing
8 the presence of Central Western Alaska chum migrating
9 through the Aleutian Islands all the way back to the
10 1950s and even before that. There is clear data to
11 allow for staggered 72 hour openings to allow those
12 chums to pass through the Aleutian Islands. And we had
13 several, you know, well known scientists testify on the
14 presence of the chum as well the.....

15

16 (Cell phone ringing)

17

18 MS. BURK:need for a 72 hour
19 opening.

20

21 (Cell phone ringing)

22

23 MS. BURK: Sorry. We also -- one thing
24 that had been done in the past was trying to put caps
25 in place and that was proven to be a failed attempt,
26 that testimony from local fishermen in the area as well
27 as law enforcement about how caps do not work and they
28 can incentives chum -- it can incentives chum chucking.
29 And the Board of Fish was -- it was clear that four of
30 seven Board members were dead set on this adaptive
31 management proposed by commercial fishermen. So the
32 State of Alaska was entrusting commercial fishermen to
33 self regulate. And every other person that understands
34 adaptive management in that meeting was like, this is
35 not adaptive management, this is giving way too much
36 power to industry and industry is driven by dollars and
37 greed and they should not be making these type of
38 decisions.

39

40 And in order to allow sufficient chum
41 to pass in 2022 these same fishermen self-regulated and
42 stood down, they reduced their fishing time by 180
43 hours in 2022, that's how much time it took -- they had
44 to stand down to allow for chum passage. And given
45 that 2019 was a really hard year for the chum with the
46 fish floating up dead, the low water, extremely high
47 air temperatures, extremely high water temperatures in
48 both the ocean and in-river, so 2023 and 2024 are the
49 return years for the 2019 season, and so 2023 and 2024
50 should be years of utmost caution. We should be using

51

0026

1 precautionary approaches to salmon management as
2 defined in policy. And so one would expect in 2022, if
3 these fishermen had to reduce their hours by 180 -- 180
4 hours they stood down, that that probably would be the
5 amount of time they would need to stand down in both
6 2023 and 2024 and we were asking for them to stand down
7 a 160 hours so that we could spread the 72 hour
8 openings. And you should think that should be in
9 regulation, I feel that would be a good approach to
10 reducing fishing time, creating these staggered 72 hour
11 openings to allow for sufficient chum passage which
12 every scientist and regulatory person believed that
13 except for the Board of Fish and these Area M
14 fishermen.

15
16 So they, instead, the Board was dead
17 set on placing the trigger or cap. Caps that were
18 based -- that were well above the average run of chum
19 at that timing. So for example, I think she said what
20 was the average from June 18th, with the exception of
21 2021 because that was a high catch year, and it was
22 like 234,000 chum, but their first trigger is 300,000,
23 significantly higher than the average. So the caps
24 that they placed were even too high. And the 72 hour
25 passage that they placed -- I talked to Mr. Jensen
26 myself and he said -- I told him, and the data showed
27 and many people spoke to this, scientists as well, is
28 that the 72 hour passage that they placed was after the
29 first period and all the data shows that that 72 hour
30 for best results should have been placed after the
31 second period of fishing. So closer -- so after a June
32 15th date, that would be the most effective 72 hour
33 passage. I brought that to Mr. Jensen's attention and
34 he told me, they're not going to want to come out of
35 the water at that time.

36
37 So -- and what I want to say in saying
38 all this data because data is important, that's what we
39 should be making decisions on, I want to say that I was
40 really disappointed by OSM's position and the letter
41 that came out to us, that they're -- that the action in
42 this meeting would not have a significant affect
43 because our fisheries were so far away, and, in fact,
44 that is a real blatant -- that is misinformation. The
45 salmon that we're talking about migrate 1,800 plus
46 miles and they definitely migrate through the area that
47 is in question, Area M, Aleutian Islands, Alaska
48 Peninsula. So to say that those two areas are not
49 related is not factual. And OSM should reevaluate
50

0027

1 their position on that entire proposal and the
2 statement that was made to us.

3
4 So I don't want to go on too long, but
5 I want the data to be there and on record.

6
7 Thank you.

8
9 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
10 Eva. And welcome to the Council.

11
12 Next is Donald.

13
14 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Madame Chair.

15
16 MS. BURK: (Indiscernible) more on this
17 issue.

18
19 MR. WRIGHT: I know. You didn't have
20 to stop there.

21
22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Don't forget
23 to mute yourself.

24
25 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Madame Chair.
26 I would like to start out by saying that I agree with
27 what Charlie had to say about the caribou and fish.
28 I'm terribly disappointed in the returns of the chum
29 and the chinook and I agree there's a lot of people out
30 there hungry. And the Board of Fish proposal that we
31 supported, 140, was statewide support for that, our AC
32 unanimously voted for that. And I'm really
33 disappointed to see that the Board of Fish shot it
34 down, it's -- to me it seems like there's no connection
35 on an ecosystem type of management for our fisheries.
36 And I don't think that there's fish out there to eat, I
37 think there's only fish for the replacement of the
38 fish. If we can't make an escapement in a few years,
39 there won't be fish, period. It'll be like, you know,
40 you might cry when you see a chinook sometime because
41 it's like, oh.....

42
43 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Is this Sally.

44
45 MR. WOODRUFF:it's still out
46 there, you know. I think it's time to take Yukon River
47 chinook and the fall chum and put them on the list and
48 designate them by threatened and I spoke about this at
49 the last meeting on my Council comments. And I would
50

0028

1 like to know what the Federal agency is that can help
2 us do that, to process these fish into a threatened
3 category. I feel really strong about this and I'm
4 going to keep speaking about this.

5

6 My other point is that the subsistence
7 use of BLM lands, which is -- they abut my property, my
8 personal property, but on the overall Eastern Interior,
9 there's a miscommunication between subsistence and
10 commercial use. And when I was using remote BLM land
11 for trapping on the Kandik River and Judge Creek, I got
12 permission to cut logs and pay for the stumpage fee
13 from BLM and a \$200 fee per year to have my trapping
14 permit there. Well, 200 bucks when you're only
15 catching 10 or 15 martin is a big deal. And I don't
16 think that BLM should be an encumbrance, I think there
17 should be a commercial category and a subsistence
18 category and I think that exists but I think that the
19 communication level between the public and BLM is not
20 incorporated into that.

21

22 And that's all I have right now.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thanks Don.

27

28 Linda.

29

30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Or, I have to
31 apologize again. You walked in and I didn't recognize
32 that you came in at the meeting after we had started.
33 So Linda came in just shortly after we started, and,
34 thank you, Linda, go ahead.

35

36 MS. EVANS: It's Linda Evans. I'm from
37 Rampart, Fairbanks, North Pole area. I just really
38 dismayed about our resources, fish and game resources
39 that we have subsisted off all our lives, you know. My
40 grandparents, my parents.

41

42 (Teleconference interference -
43 participants not muted)

44

45 MS. EVANS: Myself. My kids. You
46 know, all of us subsist off of them. And there should
47 be a way where we can do this so that it's there for
48 everyone.

49

50

0029

1 The people that are -- you know, the
2 Board of Fish, I think really disregarded us along the
3 river. They -- it's like they didn't care about
4 whether we ate or not and that really made me feel like
5 a lower class citizen, you know, I can't -- they didn't
6 care about us, whether we fish or not. That, to me, is
7 very disappointing. These people are supposed to be
8 representing us.

9
10 I really don't know what else to say in
11 my report. I haven't been to Rampart since falltime so
12 -- but I know where I live there's lots of snow. It's
13 been snowing quite a bit. The temperature's been
14 pretty warm but I still haven't seen much animal tracks
15 around. Maybe it's because I live in the outskirts of
16 North Pole, I guess, there's still cars and stuff
17 traveling so.

18
19 I thank you for your time.

20
21 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
22 Linda.

23
24 Amanda. Can you turn your mic off,
25 Linda.

26
27 MS. POPE: Hello everyone. My name is
28 Amanda Pope. I am from Circle. I grew up in Ft. Yukon
29 and in Circle. I currently sit on the Yukon Flats AC
30 and Circle Native Corporation Board and now I'm proudly
31 to sit on this Council. I have two children, a husband
32 and we live out in the remote area.

33
34 I'll just give my report here, like my
35 Council member report.

36
37 So I hear already testimonies that have
38 been given and I had attended the fisheries meeting
39 online since I wasn't able to be there, I was currently
40 out on the trapline so I was still able to attend and
41 listen and I thank you, to those who had attended the
42 Federal Subsistence Board -- or the Federal Fisheries
43 meeting and thank you to Charlie and Eva for your
44 report. The amount of I personally had, and still
45 think that we already lost our fish. So what can we do
46 to help them come back. What can we do to -- can we do
47 as the -- as Don said, make them an invasive species so
48 they can have that protection. I think that's a great
49 idea, Don. And I think from going forward with
50

0030

1 regulations everyone needs to be on the same page and
2 if we're not it affects everybody, not just the
3 subsistence users, but also Alaskans. So I really
4 think everybody who makes decisions on behalf of fish
5 and game needs to take -- needs to have an open mind
6 about everybody's ability to harvest these animals and
7 fish.

8
9 So with that said, the moose numbers
10 are low in the Yukon-Charley, I believe, it's down 30
11 percent, 25A it's down 40 percent. They are basically
12 -- I mean they're getting hit from all different sides,
13 hunting pressure, predator pressure, the environment,
14 so I think those folks who are making decisions on
15 behalf of these animals who are putting proposals in
16 need to think about the amount of numbers that we have
17 now and consider that we are all wanting those same
18 resources and we need to protect them.

19
20 So in regards of the caribou, the
21 Fortymile caribou was -- is now down. The people in my
22 area do not hunt that herd because the safety concerns
23 and the management concerns that they have. I
24 personally have not hunted that herd for the last two
25 or three years, I haven't even seen a caribou for two
26 years and that's sad.

27
28 (Teleconference interference -
29 participants not muted)

30
31 MS. POPE: So I just would like
32 everybody to have an open mind and think about the
33 numbers that we have now.

34
35 There's a lot of tension between the
36 agencies and the local folks and I understand the
37 reasons on both sides but I really think we need to
38 have a clean slate and there's stuff that happened in
39 the past but I think if we all have a good management
40 plan and work together and follow that plan to the T, I
41 think we'll have better luck in trying to help these
42 resources that we have.

43
44 So I'm going to -- I don't have a hat
45 on but I'm going to switch my hats and speak on behalf
46 of myself as a subsistence user.

47
48 I have personally dealt with permit
49 applications through the Federal agencies and it took
50

0031

1 us two years within the National Park Service, Yukon-
2 Charley area to get a permit to use a cabin there
3 within the region and I would like to move to the
4 letter on the current case that my husband and I and my
5 children are all involved. We spend the majority of
6 our time out on the trapline, either on the Yukon River
7 or Birch Creek so we have dealt with the BLM Eastern
8 Interior Field Office for two years now and we put in a
9 cabin use permit. I give this letter to the Board.
10 Don, I have one for you. And Eva and Charlie I have
11 one for you also. And also the remaining Council
12 members here. The reason why I wanted to bring this up
13 because this shows the lack of awareness to subsistence
14 users who basically have to fight for their rights. In
15 order to use a cabin they are saying that I have to --
16 or not just me, me and my family, have to pay roughly
17 \$2,000 to them in order for my application to be
18 processed. Historically people who live in the rural
19 area are in low income and it puts an undue financial
20 hardship on the subsistence users who want to use the
21 area. And I -- some folks had told me while I even
22 dealt with them, why I put in the permit to do it the
23 legal way, I think it personally needs to be fought and
24 it needs to be done. People from my community had
25 asked me that.

26
27 So I just wanted to make the Council
28 members aware of the situation and the case is in
29 appeal right now.

30
31 So thank you for your time and I'm
32 happy to be here today.

33
34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
35 Amanda.

36
37 Andy.

38
39 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Madame Chair.
40 First of all I'd really like to echo the comments made
41 by Charlie Wright and Eva, I think those were extremely
42 well spoken and I really wanted to thank them for their
43 time spent at Area M. There was a large coalition and
44 a large organization of people that spent a lot of time
45 organizing for this meeting, to go down there and try
46 and plead the case of the desperate situation we're in
47 in AYK, and not only AYK but Bristol Bay's being
48 affected by this and Norton Sound. So I do want to
49 echo those words, those concerns. I really want to say
50

0032

1 I thought some of the comments made by Eva are some of
2 the best I've heard sitting at this table in 30 years.
3 I've been bringing up Area M issues and the impacts on
4 AYK at every single meeting for this body for over 15
5 years and it's really disappointing for me -- I was
6 really excited to see that an attempt was going to be
7 made to go down and do something about it and it's
8 really disappointing to see the tremendous failure, and
9 I don't blame that on the people that went down there,
10 I really think that our Governor doesn't give a damn
11 about people who live out in the Bush. That's what
12 it's boiling down to. And I don't think our
13 Commissioner of Fish and Game really cares a lot about
14 the people who live in the Bush because he has the
15 power and he has the ability to do some influencing on
16 there.

17
18 So I'm speaking like that -- I normally
19 would not speak like that but I am very frustrated. It
20 was very blatant the way that Board processed -- went
21 through the process and the decisions that they made
22 going against hard science, going against the Alaska
23 Constitution, and going against the Alaska Sustainable
24 Salmon Initiative. Those were blatant acts against
25 regulatory -- regulations that are in place and the
26 Constitution in my view.

27
28 So very disappointing.

29
30 I think the fight will continue.

31
32 I want to say, you know, Don said maybe
33 we need to put them on an endangered species or a
34 species at risk, what I really think needs to happen is
35 the people who live subsistence in the state of Alaska
36 in the rural areas need to go on the endangered species
37 list because we're having a hard time living and people
38 are being forced out of their homes and people who have
39 lived this culture for thousands of years are being
40 forced off the land because they can't even get the
41 food they need to eat out there. And like Amanda said
42 there's money being demanded for them to use public use
43 cabins, Federally-owned public use cabins. Who owns
44 the Federal government, the public. Who are the people
45 out on the land, the subsistence people, they are the
46 public. So you're asking the public to pay rent to
47 themselves so that they can go use property and cabins;
48 it's ridiculous. And in this region, the Eastern
49 Interior region, there are not that many people out on
50

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1 the land. There's just not that many people. And I'm
2 talking about the people outside the villages, the
3 people like Amanda, the people who want to go out and
4 live that culture and live that lifestyle. So their
5 impacts are minimal. What they can do in a lifetime, a
6 commercial entity could do in a year.

7
8 So I just want to bring that to the
9 attention to the people working in these offices that
10 the people out there are trying to do a little bit of
11 trapping and live out there and teach their kids a
12 certain type of culture, they're not doing anything to
13 harm anything, they just need a little bit of
14 opportunity. And I've always said at every meeting,
15 it's another thing I've said, the only way you can live
16 subsistence is to have reliable, consistent access to
17 the resources. That's the only way it works. It has
18 to be reliable and it has to be consistent.

19
20 Moose populations in our area are
21 dismal. I spend a lot of time all winter long
22 traveling around as much as I can by dog team, by
23 snowmachine, this year is the most barren season I've
24 ever seen in my life in 30 years of living off the
25 land. There are no martin. There's a few lynx because
26 the rabbit populations locally are pretty strong. I've
27 seen maybe four or five moose tracks all year. The
28 caribou have not been around until just recently,
29 they're starting to filter in a little bit. A few
30 people have managed to get caribou in the Eagle area.
31 I don't think -- I don't think more than two moose were
32 taken in the whole community this year. So how do you
33 live subsistence when you have to struggle that hard
34 just to find the food that you need out there.

35
36 Switching back a little bit to the
37 fisheries. I wrote a letter and responded to the
38 letter that OSM turned in to the Area M. In my view
39 that was the worst letter I've ever seen come out of
40 OSM office. There was zero support for the AYK. And I
41 think their position is very poor on this. I think
42 it's -- the reason the Federal Program is in place is
43 to protect subsistence opportunities and subsistence
44 lifestyles on Federally-controlled lands and everything
45 impacts the animals now. They're being impacted by
46 climate change, which is really lessening the amount of
47 numbers. When a fish population is migrating through
48 the area and they're being harvested, of course that's
49 going to affect other areas where those fish are bound
50

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1 for. So to take the position that no impact is going
2 to be made or no improvements are going to be made by
3 some of these proposals that were put in was, in my
4 view, pretty negligent and not very clearly understood
5 as to how animal migrations work and how just basic
6 nature works.

7
8 So I'm really disappointed in that. I
9 really would like to see OSM step to the plate and
10 start really looking at protecting local subsistence
11 populations, whether they be fish or game. I think
12 we're going to have more and more intrusions into
13 remote lands into the future. Populations are going to
14 start growing in Alaska due to climate change and
15 migration, it's well documented by NASA, it's well
16 documented by scientific studies. People are going to
17 start moving north. So the impacts to people living on
18 the land right now is going to get much greater in 10
19 years than it is right now and we need to start
20 thinking and planning for that and we need to start
21 protecting some of these resources for the people who
22 live out on the land right now.

23
24 So I guess there's a lot of
25 disappointment.

26
27 I do -- I am -- I have to say very,
28 very pleased with the way people are pulling together
29 and there's nothing like struggle to pull people
30 together and that's what it's going to take to make
31 these changes. But quite frankly I don't see the State
32 solving our problems for people living out on the land,
33 we don't have the voting power. That's what it boils
34 down to in my view.

35
36 So it's going to be up to the Federal
37 Subsistence Board and OSM to really step up to the
38 plate and try and protect some of these resources out
39 there. And I think one of the things that I would
40 really -- that I've tried to promote for a long time, I
41 think management needs to take very long-term
42 approaches towards management. I think we are caught
43 into a kind of a Catch -22 where we just year to year
44 to year on what comes back but we don't really take a
45 long-term plan of action and I think that's why we're
46 running into some of these problems. I think climate
47 change is throwing a curve ball, I think scientists and
48 managers do as good a job as they can but there's
49 absolutely no way they can quantify and know all the
50

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1 impacts from what climate change is doing. So what has
2 worked in the past is likely not going to work in the
3 future because we just don't know right now what the
4 new impacts are of that.

5
6 So I'm a strong advocate for long-term
7 planning. I always equate it to your bank account,
8 your future, your retirement. You know if you retire
9 at my age at 65 and you never put anything in the bank
10 it's going to be a pretty tough retirement so you got
11 to think about the future. And the reason why I sit at
12 this table is because I care about the future, I care
13 about this lifestyle, I care about the ability for
14 young people to come into this land and enjoy it, learn
15 from it. Some of them will stay, some of them won't
16 but that opportunity needs to be there for the future
17 because, quite frankly in my view, people don't care
18 when they -- when they think of Alaska, they don't
19 think about commercial fishing down in Area M, that's
20 not the image of Alaska, the image of Alaska is dog
21 mushing, is hunting, is living out on the land,
22 trapping, gold mining, some of these things that our
23 state was founded on. That's what the image of Alaska
24 is and for that to happen, it has to have people out on
25 the land. And that's where we're really struggling and
26 so I think that's where we need to make the focus, to
27 protect resources locally, for people locally.

28
29 And I guess that's my rant on that.

30
31 I do want to say the Yukon River had a
32 tremendously bad freeze up this year, pretty much from
33 Circle all the way up to Dawson, maybe even above
34 Dawson. We had a very high freeze up, the water
35 dropped, very rough conditions, it's been very
36 difficult to travel anywhere on the Yukon River without
37 getting a pick axe out and chopping a trail. So I'm
38 expecting a very bad break up this year. The potential
39 is pretty high for a bad break up, which is going to
40 really impact people again that live along the Yukon
41 River.

42
43 I'm getting tired of eating rabbits and
44 muskrats. That's what it boils down to. That's what
45 our diet is getting down to now, is, rabbits and
46 muskrats and, you know, it'd be nice to see some
47 caribou come back, it'd be really nice to see some
48 moose. I don't think we'll ever see moose in high
49 population densities in our area, we live with that,
50

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1 but it's pretty tough to see \$80,000 jet boats going up
2 river past your place with two or three moose heads
3 stuck up on the bow every year.

4

5 That's all I have, thank you, Madame
6 Chair.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
9 Andy. There's a lot of gloom and doom.

10

11 The Eastern Interior is made of the
12 river system in the north and then the road system in
13 the south. And we're very different in a lot of ways.
14 When you talk about getting overrun by people, it's the
15 boats, I guess, and different people coming up the
16 highway to your region but we have the road system and
17 it's people coming from everywhere.

18

19 I think in some ways on the road system
20 there we are fortunate. There is a fair amount of
21 moose but then we recently have had two really, really
22 bad winters, and this year the snowfall came early and
23 made it very difficult to even keep a trapline snow
24 trail out, or keep it open, and I like to go myself, I
25 didn't even get out this year, even people who do trap
26 have had difficulties getting out to keep their lines
27 open.

28

29 And then we had this problem with the
30 low sheep populations, which is really a concern for
31 the people. That's my love, as most members here know,
32 is to get out in the mountains, I still get out, I
33 still am taking kids out for the last two years to go
34 sheep hunting and they absolutely love the mountains.
35 And once they get out there and learn that they can do
36 it it's pretty awesome. And I hope I can keep doing
37 that.

38

39 I notice, too, that -- I do take time
40 to run my black lab, who is not really a black lab,
41 she's more like a sled dog, so I run her eight miles a
42 day and I'm noticing a lot of moose coming down into
43 the low country now and we're seeing a few caribou
44 tracks coming in and that would be the Nelchina Herd.

45

46 And as your representative for the
47 Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission, I
48 attended that meeting. We had three members, this was
49 actually Thursday last week, February 23rd, present,

50

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1 and three online and three absent so it was a very
2 interesting meeting. I ended up getting elected as
3 Chair and Gloria Stickwan is Vice Chair. We spent a
4 lot of time talking about this proposed rule for
5 National Park lands that they want to shut down a lot
6 of things and I think the members that have been on
7 here know that we had something that happened in 2015
8 that closed a bunch of things regarding wolves, bears,
9 coyotes and what they call predator control and then in
10 2020 things were relaxed again in a new proposed rule
11 and now we're looking at another proposed rule to shut
12 things down again. We'll be talking about that at the
13 meeting and I have the comments from our meeting here,
14 plus additional comments of my own that will be passed
15 out when we take it up. But I think that's a -- this
16 is a very critical rule that we really need to spend
17 time on and it'll affect all the Parks in the region
18 and I want everyone to be very -- listen in and that's
19 what's happening in our region that's very important to
20 us, so just be -- ask lots of questions. My thinking
21 is in getting more done is ask lots of questions, get
22 lots of information.

23
24 And I -- man, I just empathize for all
25 the Council members, with this fishing and what you're
26 going through on that and then the government asking
27 for that kind of money for cabin use, for Godssake
28 that's ridiculous. I'm glad you brought it up as an
29 issue even though some people out in these regions,
30 they go the heck with that I'm not going to get a
31 permit, I'm just going and I'm going to do it and
32 that's usually what ends up happening because people
33 get sick of fighting the government. And since I've
34 been in this state, before ANILCA, before Antiquities
35 Act which created ANILCA there was none of this huge
36 amounts more of Federal lands that's managed by all
37 these agencies and the more the government, the more
38 rules and the more regulations and after awhile as a
39 user you're like no wonder they feel like that, let's
40 just go use the cabin, the heck with it, it's just
41 ridiculous because it's just too much regulations and
42 too much BS. So, yeah, after awhile you get pretty
43 frustrated and just want to say the heck with this, I'd
44 rather live on the moon.

45
46 But it's sad it has to be where we're
47 at and I think we do have to have open arms and working
48 together and I pray that we can do that, not just as
49 rural people but as Native and non-Native people,
50

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1 that's been my whole crux of being on this because I
2 live with the people in Mentasta and we love and
3 respect each other very much and that's the way it
4 should be across the state.

5
6 So that is my report.

7
8 Now, let's see if I lost my agenda.
9 Council members, do you want a short break before we go
10 into public and tribal comments on non-agenda items.

11
12 (Council nods affirmatively)

13
14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, let's
15 go for 10 minutes and then we'll come back. 10:30,
16 we'll be back at 10:40.

17
18 (Off record)

19
20 (On record)

21
22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: It's time to
23 start the meeting again. Public and tribal comment on
24 non-agenda items and we got a couple blue cards in the
25 room and then we'll call on anybody that's called in.

26
27 The first one is Virgil Umphenour.

28
29 MR. UMPHENOUR: Good morning, Madame
30 Chair and RAC members. Good to be sitting here with
31 you folks, I spent 17 years up there with you guys.
32 Your Chair and I got on the RAC together in 2001.

33
34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: One.

35
36 MR. UMPHENOUR: Yeah. But anyway I
37 served three terms on the State Board of Fisheries and
38 I just returned -- well, Monday night I got back from
39 the Board of Fish meeting and is Charlie here.

40
41 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: He's
42 listening in.

43
44 MR. BASSICH: Yeah.

45
46 MR. UMPHENOUR: He's listening in.
47 Okay, well, Charlie was there too. I don't know if he
48 gave you a report or not but that's kind of what I'm
49 here to do. That's why I came over here, to give you

50

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1 guys a report of what happened at the Board of Fish
2 meeting. And so.....

3

4 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Well, we did
5 get a report so your short version will be great.

6

7 (Laughter)

8

9 MR. UMPHENOUR: Don't take too long, is
10 that what you're telling me.

11

12 (Laughter)

13

14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah.

15

16 MR. UMPHENOUR: Okay, I'll try not to
17 take too long. I just want to give a quick recap.
18 There were 300 -- or, no, 294 people I believe
19 testified, it took three full days of testimony and
20 they didn't quit at 5:00 o'clock like they normally do.
21 They had to run late, I didn't keep track of how long
22 but I was there for the whole works. Mike Kramer and I
23 represented the Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory
24 Committee and we went up together. The Advisory
25 Committee's get 10 minutes and then each individual
26 gets three minutes, so I gave him the first five
27 minutes of our -- because he had practiced up because
28 what he was going to say and had it timed down pretty
29 good and I would have ran over because I'm too long-
30 winded so he did his five minutes and I did my five
31 minutes, then he -- then I gave my three minutes, he
32 gave his three minutes and really tore into the
33 Department and the Commissioner for wanting to change
34 the escapement goal on the Chignik -- in the Chignik
35 system because it's similar to the Yukon, they have two
36 totally distinct runs of salmon and when I say that I
37 mean genetically they're totally different. And so the
38 Department wants to make that a single escapement goal
39 and that's what happens when you fail to meet
40 management guidelines which is the sustained yield
41 mandate, which means you got to meet your escapement
42 goals -- and lower the escapement goals -- anyway so he
43 chewed him out big time over that and at the end of the
44 three minutes then the Commissioner read, because he
45 got one of these -- they give out four outstanding
46 service awards for people who have been on Advisory
47 Committees for the State and he's been on since 1996 so
48 then the Commissioner had to read the big thing and
49 present him with his award and his plaque and stuff
50

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1 which was kind of humorous in a way.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 MR. UMPHENOUR: So anyway, we failed,
6 we didn't get what we wanted done and it's the same
7 thing that's happened many times before Board. Three
8 people voted for it, the member from Fairbanks, the
9 member from Tanana and the Chair, who's originally from
10 Chignik, and then the other people voted against it. I
11 suspected that three of the other people would vote
12 against it no matter what, the one person I couldn't
13 really read but I am going to say this, I told him
14 what's happening is cultural genocide. I travel --
15 because I go all the way to Huslia every year to hunt
16 and I go by boat and I go by all these fish camps and I
17 don't know how many of you people know this but I own
18 Interior Alaska Fish in Fairbanks, I've been buying
19 fish from people on the Yukon since 1985 and George
20 Atla and I used to work together doing that but he's
21 long since passed away, but anyway most of the fish
22 camps are basically abandoned, they're all grown up the
23 willows are taking over and it's really disheartening
24 and I told him it's cultural genocide. People cannot
25 even go catch one salmon to feed their children. The
26 people in the lower Yukon where there are a few pink
27 salmon down there so they can go fishing with a dipnet
28 and release all other salmon species unharmed, and he
29 says, well, I grew up in Louisiana, I'm a Cajun, and
30 they did the same thing to us, but then he voted -- I
31 cannot believe what he said in final deliberations --
32 what he said is: I've basically got a compromise going
33 and the compromise he was referring to was the big
34 processors from -- two of them from Seattle, one of
35 from Sitka, have made deals with the highliner seiner
36 fishermen from Area M, whose average income just
37 catching fish and over half of that money was migrating
38 fish heading to the AYK region was 702,000 for working,
39 fishing for about six weeks. In addition to that,
40 those fishermen -- and I said this in my testimony --
41 those fishermen have other fisheries they can
42 participate in, and so I'm going to read from one of
43 these papers you got handed -- the one that looks like
44 this with the graphs on it, it's from the Limited Entry
45 Commission which -- who are the people who issue all
46 commercial fishing permits and this is for Chignik and
47 the South Peninsula, both, but Chignik is very small
48 compared to South Peninsula. And I'm just going to
49 read it so the people in the audience can hear it.

50

0041

1 Income from non-salmon fisheries,
2 residents of both Chignik and the Alaska Peninsula
3 participate in several other non-salmon commercial
4 fisheries including longline halibut, pot, dungeness
5 and tanner crab and finfish caught with trawl or pot
6 gear. They have a statewide ground fishery, which I
7 was one of the Board of Fish members that got that for
8 them, and the tanner crab fishery they got, this year,
9 there's very few crab fisheries left operating in the
10 state because of mismanagement and environmental
11 conditions, anyway, but their tanner crab fishery is
12 doing great and a guy named Duncan Fields and I, who's
13 an attorney from Kodiak, and a fisherman, we wrote that
14 management plan together in 1998, and what I did put in
15 it that the fishermen can't jerk their pots up and down
16 like yo-yos to allow the crabs that are sublegal, which
17 are mostly females because they're smaller to escape
18 from the escape mechanisms, that fishery harvested in
19 just a couple of weeks, just last month, got to harvest
20 1.7 million pounds in Area M of tanner crab and got
21 paid \$3 a pound for it, that's not counting-- the
22 702,000 they made -- but let me finish reading this
23 thing -- a greater number of Alaska Peninsula residents
24 own and use permits for these non-salmon fisheries
25 compared to Chignik residents. In 2021 225 Alaska
26 Peninsula residents fished permits for non-salmon
27 species, 225 of them.

28
29 Okay.

30
31 And the other piece of paper I gave you
32 was RC123 at this meeting and it's the allocation
33 criteria for the Board of Fish. This was caused by the
34 big controversy between Area M and Western Alaska and
35 it happened in 1991. You can see that it was signed on
36 November 23, 1991 but they were ordered to do it by the
37 Legislature. And so the things I pointed out there
38 that they are in total violation of, and this is in
39 statute and regulation, both.

40
41 No. 3. The importance of each fishery
42 for providing residents the opportunity to fish for
43 personal and family consumption in the AYK region, or
44 in the Yukon drainage for sure, we cannot fish for
45 salmon to feed anyone, our children or anyone. So
46 we're in total violation of that one. We haven't been
47 able to for two years.

48
49 The second one is No. 4. The
50

0042

1 availability of alternative fishery resources. I just
2 went through what the availability of what those are
3 for their commercial fisheries. And everyone in this
4 room knows the only other resources we have, you can't
5 even catch a grayling in the Fairbanks area and eat it,
6 it's all catch and release. You can go catch a pike or
7 a burbot, that's it around here and in other parts of
8 the Yukon you can catch a sheefish too, and a
9 whitefish, and that's it for us. And those resident
10 species cannot support all the people that live here.

11
12 But, anyway, I wanted to just one other
13 little thing to talk about, is we have a -- that's the
14 allocation criteria. That was caused by this fishery
15 and this issue. At the same time the Board wrote --
16 well, not at the same time then -- what happened is in
17 1991 I was the Chair of the Board for Yukon River
18 Drainage Fisheries Association, and they upped the chum
19 cap because they used to have a chum cap in Area M,
20 when they caught X number of chums they had to shut
21 down their fishery and they couldn't fish anymore. In
22 order to catch the Bristol Bay allocation, because they
23 had an allocation of 8.3 percent of the Bristol Bay
24 forecasted run to be caught in Area M in June and so in
25 order to catch it they figured they would have to catch
26 at least 900,000 chum salmon so they raised the chum
27 cap from 600,000 to 900,000 at that Board meeting.
28 After that happened I submitted a petition, which they
29 rejected, and so then I talked to some of the other
30 people -- I talked to Will Mayo who was President of
31 Tanana Chiefs, Loretta Bollard, who was President of
32 Kawerak in Nome, and I told them, I says, I want to get
33 signatures for my petition and I want to get them to
34 Jack Coghill because he's from Nenana and he knows all
35 about this issue, and so we started getting signatures.
36 I got them in the Gavora Mall because I knew the people
37 who owned the Gavora Mall, the Gavora's and after we
38 got -- I don't remember the exact number, but it was
39 closer to 11,000 than 10,000 signatures, I sent them to
40 Jack Coghill and he ordered the Board to hear us.
41 That's when they -- so when they did that, 88 of us
42 from AYK, a bunch from Tanana Chiefs went to Juneau for
43 the meeting, we spent 8 days there and they wrote the
44 allocation -- not the allocation criteria, the mixed
45 stock policy agreement at that meeting. And the Board,
46 before they passed any proposal, one of the last things
47 they do they got to speak to the mixed stock policy
48 agreement, the allocation criteria, which I just
49 explained two parts of and the Sustainable Salmon
50

0043

1 Policy. And now I'm going to read you what causes
2 Sustainable Salmon Policy.

3
4 This is an excerpt that I'm going to
5 read from deliberations on this same exact issues --
6 excerpts of transcript of Board of Fisheries
7 deliberations on the False Pass June Fishery, 1 through
8 3 March 1995. Board Member Edfelt reads: I'm not
9 willing to take a drastic a step as this proposal asks
10 us to do for dismantling communities on the south side
11 of the Alaska Peninsula for somewhat marginal
12 conservation benefits in distant waters. And I'm not
13 trying to diminish the importance of chum salmon in
14 Norton Sound or in the Aniak River or the villages that
15 depend on these, it's a balancing act and a policy
16 call. And that's the way I view it. So my answer to
17 him and some other stuff he said later on, and that's
18 me, Member Umphenour, I just want to reemphasize one
19 thing, escapement was met in Northern Norton Sound this
20 year, it was met at the expense of a zero directed
21 commercial fishery for an area that used to have a very
22 viable fishery. It was met with subsistence closures.
23 And when I say subsistence closures, I mean people have
24 not fished there for four years. They've not had a
25 sportfishery there. I used to fish in that area. I
26 used to live in that area when I was the Commander of
27 the National Guard and I was in that area for several
28 years. I know these people. To me, it's a travesty,
29 it's criminal to assume that the burden of conservation
30 that those people are bearing is spread equally
31 throughout the migration route of those fish. And that
32 is what the mixed stock policy says they are supposed
33 to do.

34
35 But the same damn thing just got
36 through happening and I'm done and if anyone has any
37 questions I'll be happy to answer them.

38
39 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Good job
40 Virgil. Questions. Donald.

41
42 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Virgil, for
43 your testimony. At our Fish and Game meeting in Eagle
44 it became apparent that Area M caught 1.2 million
45 salmon, I believe it was this last year.

46
47 MR. UMPHENOUR: Yep.

48
49 MR. WOODRUFF: And that 45 to 50

50

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1 percent of those are AYK bound. So why do the Area M
2 fishermen feel that there's no impact or benefit to the
3 AYK if they cut back a little bit, I mean that's a lot
4 of fish.

5
6 MR. UMPHENOUR: There's only one answer
7 to it. Greed over the greenback dollar, and that's the
8 only answer there is. And that is what caused
9 statehood originally was the big processors with their
10 fish traps and their highliner employees that lived in
11 Seattle and that's what caused statehood and we've got
12 the same issue going on right this minute.

13
14 MR. WOODRUFF: Well, my followup
15 question is that do you feel that the government, at
16 the top, being the Governor and Board of Fish don't
17 care if everybody's going hungry?

18
19 MR. UMPHENOUR: I think the Governor
20 does but four of those Board of Fish members don't give
21 a damn. There was a gal from Nenana, and one from
22 Beaver, and I got them to talk to this one Board member
23 that maybe some way he's got a little bit of integrity
24 and sympathy and so they both broke down in tears
25 explaining to him, and I was standing right there with
26 them, how awful it is that they used to be able to go
27 to fish camp and teach their children to fish, and now
28 they bought some -- last summer they bought some fish
29 and had them shipped from Bristol Bay to teach children
30 how to clean a fish, and they were in tears. It didn't
31 budge him a bit. He is the one that went through the
32 phony allocation criteria, the way he interprets it,
33 those three things I just spoke about, and put it on
34 the record that this was the right thing to do, what
35 they just did.

36
37 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

38
39 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy.

40
41 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, adding maybe to
42 Don's question to Virgil, it's my understanding that
43 some of the data was presented to the Board was.....

44
45 MR. UMPHENOUR: I forgot my hearing
46 aide, you need to talk a little louder.

47
48 MR. BASSICH: Sorry Virgil. I'm in the
49 same boat that's why I got headphones on.

50

0045

1 (Laughter)

2

3

4 MR. BASSICH: So it's my understanding
5 at the recent Board of Fish meeting, the WASSIP report
6 that you've referred to that was done -- I can't
7 remember what year it was, 2007 maybe, somewhere around
8 there, it was a three year study that showed that 57
9 percent of their catch was chum salmon from the
10 AYK/Bristol Bay/Norton Sound area. That really wasn't
11 being used at this meeting, that the Department was
12 using a one year study from, I think, 2021, that showed
13 that that component was only 17 percent of the run.
14 So, you know, it's -- in my mind it's one of those
15 situations where you present the information that you
16 want to present, not necessarily all the information
17 that is relevant to the situation and that's part of
18 the travesty of what happened at this recent Board
19 meeting, and I put that on the Commissioner of Fish and
20 Game for not making sure that all of the data was there
21 for the Board to consider.

21

22

Thank you.

23

24

25

I just wanted to add that on the
record.

26

27

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.

28

29

30

MR. UMPHENOUR: You're correct, that
did happen.

31

32

33

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thanks,
Virgil. Appreciate it, it's good to see you.

34

35

MR. UMPHENOUR: Okay.

36

37

MR. BASSICH: We miss you.

38

39

MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you.

40

41

42

43

44

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, I have
another blue card here, Pamela Miller, from Fairbanks,
non-agenda items and then we'll go to the people online
if there's any.

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. MILLER: Hello. My name is Pamela
Miller. Thank you for having this time in the agenda.
I just want to mention that we're in a stage with the
Covid Pandemic where people are back at work, I don't

0046

1 know if they're back in their offices, I haven't tried
2 but I encourage the Fish and Wildlife Service and the
3 BLM to provide ample opportunities for public comment
4 and that for upcoming hearings, public meetings, and
5 open houses on land use plans, EISs and so on, that the
6 meetings be held in public as well as simultaneously on
7 Zoom for those either who don't feel comfortable being
8 in public or who are in the rural areas and couldn't
9 fly in for the meetings.

10

11 But there is a richness of in-person
12 meetings that I think and ability to better understand,
13 both, the public, tribal, other citizen's comments when
14 you hold the in-person meeting.

15

16 So I haven't heard much about that but
17 there are a number of land use plans that will have
18 public comment -- land use or EISs coming up, and I
19 strongly encourage the in-person as well as Zoom
20 meetings.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

25 Any questions.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

30 Okay. Any public comments on non-agenda items, people
31 that are online.

32

33 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair, this is
34 Jack Reakoff.

35

36 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, good
37 morning, Jack, go ahead.

38

39 MR. REAKOFF: Good morning. I would
40 like the -- the Western Interior Advisory Council
41 during our fall meeting was informed that budget
42 reductions for Kanuti and Yukon Flats National Wildlife
43 Refuges, possible complexing, we wrote a letter to the
44 Regional Office, Regional Director regarding that
45 issue. I had my Council Coordinator transmit that over
46 to you. We're concerned about the Staff -- pretty
47 significant Staff reductions for both Refuges and
48 budget cuts. We feel -- we had this happen in Innoko
49 National Wildlife Refuge, they complexed it to
50

0047

1 Koyukuk/Nowitna and Innoko basically hardly gets any
2 support. It's not the complex's fault, it's the amount
3 of funding they have to basically maintain the Refuges.
4 So I wanted to comment that to your Council since we
5 share Yukon Flats Wildlife Refuge and Kanuti may be
6 complexed together and that was the discussion point.
7 So further on when you are speaking with Yukon Flats
8 then I feel you should be aware that we have fairly
9 significant concerns about the number of Staff, the
10 vastly reduced biology Staff and the sharing of the
11 Staff between the two National Wildlife Refuges.

12

13 Thank you, Madame Chair.

14

15 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
16 Jack. Are there any questions.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thanks, Jack.
21 Is there anyone else online that would like to speak to
22 non-agenda items?

23

24 MS. ADAMS: Yes, I would. Can you hear
25 me?

26

27 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes. Yes, go
28 ahead and state your name.

29

30 MS. ADAMS: Yeah, good day, this is
31 Rochelle Adams. I'm a subsistence user from Beaver and
32 Ft. Yukon. My parents are Angela and Peter Mayo and
33 the late Cliff Adams. I just wanted to thank the Board
34 members who shared about the salmon crises.

35

36 Our people are really hurting along the
37 river and not being able to meet our subsistence needs
38 and just even more than that we're just greatly
39 suffering in all areas due to the salmon declines. And
40 after attending the Board of Fish meetings and North
41 Pacific Fisheries Management meetings it just really
42 seems that there are extreme inequities in the system
43 of management and those holding positions of power and
44 privilege that make decisions on our behalf. And after
45 seeing many of the Board members on the Board of Fish
46 meetings that were manipulating the data and really
47 twisting things to really be one-sided and highly
48 prioritizing commercial fishers I'm grateful for the --
49 for the members on the Board of Fish, including the
50

0048

1 Chair, who were advocating heavily for subsistence
2 priority, but overall it resulted in the subsistence
3 users not being heard and even though they do have an
4 obligation for a subsistence priority it did result in
5 all of the people of the AYK and Bristol Bay region
6 walking out of the meeting.

7

8 And that being said, I really want to
9 commend our leaders and all that stood together from
10 the AYK, Bristol Bay and Chignik areas and it was
11 really amazing to see that unity.

12

13 (Teleconference interference -
14 participants not muted)

15

16 MS. ADAMS: Another thing that I'm very
17 concerned about, I saw the update in the meeting book
18 from last year is the Doyon Corp deal for exploring for
19 oil and gas in the Yukon Flats which is a part of the
20 Yukon River watershed and the Yukon River National
21 Wildlife Refuge. With our salmon in such decline and
22 the need for us all to do everything in our power to
23 allow for the salmon to return in health and abundance,
24 and all species of life, including migratory birds,
25 furbearing animals, large game, all species of fish and
26 people in the communities, our health is important, and
27 I'm very concerned about our water quality and
28 quantity. And I also know along with the people of the
29 Yukon Flats, our tribes, our village corps and the
30 Doyon shareholders of the Flats, we were not notified
31 of this deal before it was made. And there's not been
32 any studies done on the potential harms and effects to
33 the land, air, water and I'd also like it to be known
34 that Hilcorp is in the middle of a lawsuit in the city
35 of Valdez versus the Regulatory Commission of Alaska,
36 which is in the Supreme Court regarding Hilcorps hiding
37 their financials and, therefore, not knowing their
38 ability to clean any oil spills.

39

40 So I'm very concerned.

41

42 (Teleconference interference -
43 participants not muted - typing)

44

45 MS. ADAMS: It's hard to hear the
46 reports from the members about our subsistence in
47 decline and us being an endangered species and also
48 with this threat.

49

50

0049

1 I'd just lastly like to say about the
2 comment that was made earlier about our people being
3 endangered, that our language is severely endangered,
4 they're in the category of severely endangered and our
5 language and cultures have been under threat and I do
6 agree with the comment about this being cultural
7 genocide and we are seeing -- but we are seeing a
8 resurgence of language revitalization and hope and I
9 would love to see a resurgence of bring back our
10 subsistence and health and abundance of our salmon
11 relatives. So I just want to thank everyone for this
12 time and hope that we can move towards having our food
13 sovereignty back and bringing our cultures back and
14 being strong peoples together.

15
16 So I just thank everyone.

17
18 Mahsi'choo.

19
20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.
21 Any questions.

22
23 (No comments)

24
25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
26 very much. Anyone else on.....

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:non-
31 agenda.....

32
33 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Can I.....

34
35 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, Eva, do
36 you have a question.

37
38 MS. BURK: I'm going to switch hats
39 right now so I'm going to be the Minto/Nenana AC
40 member.

41
42 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Is that okay, say.

43
44 MS. BURK: Is that okay?

45
46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, I'm sure
47 you represent those people so go ahead.

48
49 MS. BURK: Yes. I just wanted to echo
50

0050

1 some of the cultural loss. As a EIRAC Council member,
2 I stay more to the data, but as a subsistence user and
3 someone from Minto and Nenana, you know, I want to
4 emphasize the ecosystem crises that's going on and that
5 there is increased predation of the moose and caribou
6 by wolves and bears, especially because there's not
7 enough salmon coming up the rivers for them. And that
8 really puts a lot of rural Alaskans in a food insecure
9 position.

10

11 I did have a chance to review some
12 Governor Dunleavy's Food Security Task report and I
13 feel like it's hyper-focused on feeding urban people
14 and it's not considering the fish and game needs of
15 rural Alaskans, all rural Alaskans. And I really see,
16 and I made sure to clear this over with our AC members
17 and I could submit our written testimony to Board of
18 Fish, but really what I see is genderfication and
19 commercialization of our fish and game resources. I
20 believe in when our communities feel that, you know,
21 fisheries in Alaska is the second largest leading
22 industry and the area in question and this just goes to
23 show that even though at the Federal Subsistence Board
24 we're breaking the state into different regions, it
25 just goes to show how all of the ecosystems are
26 connected across regions. So even though we're at the
27 EIRAC meeting here today, things that are happening
28 along the other -- you know the watershed, the Yukon
29 River drainage, that affects all of us up river.
30 What's happening in the Aleutian Islands, it affects us
31 all the way up to Eagle and beyond.

32

33 So what we're seeing is if those fish
34 and game resources were being used by subsistence
35 people and they were meeting their needs, the State of
36 Alaska does not make money off of those fish and game
37 resources, and I think that's a huge problem because
38 there's a couple big reports out by McDowell from 2021,
39 there's the economic impacts of guided hunting, for
40 2022 it's the, you know, the Seafood Industry Economic
41 Impacts for Alaska, and you can really go in and see
42 how the state of Alaska and others are claiming that
43 this is sustainably managed but, really, it's managed
44 to make a profit. And the area in question that our
45 people are advocating about, the Area M, that area, is
46 the fourth highest value fishery in Alaska so that is a
47 huge driver in what decisions are being made.

48

49 For example, that area brings in about

50

0051

1 64 million, that's what those vessels out there are
2 making in the Area M.

3
4 (Cell phone ringing)

5
6 MS. BURK: I was just pulling up some
7 data from the economic impacts of guided hunting, going
8 back to what Amanda said about there's a lot of
9 pressure on our resources from climate change and from
10 the regulations that are allowing -- that aren't
11 accounting for the climate change to productivity and
12 the health of the animals. So, you know, one year
13 they're like we got to go out there, there's too many
14 caribou in Fortymile, and now look where we're at. In
15 the face of climate change nobody should have made that
16 decision. I feel like that was a real miss.

17
18 And so if you look at this McDowell
19 report, 943 of the 3,090, that's about 30 percent of
20 the non-resident hunters, they're hunting in the
21 Interior and Northeast region of Alaska. So our
22 region, the one that, you know, that this EIRAC
23 represents, that's where all of -- not all of but a big
24 portion of the guided non-resident hunters are hunting.
25 Those guided non-resident hunters and their companions
26 bring in \$62.4 million for the state of Alaska annually
27 and out of that these non-resident hunters put \$3.8
28 million into Fish and Game -- Fish and Game's fund.

29
30 So I really see that, and like somebody
31 said, you know, we're sitting here hungry eating
32 muskrats and rabbit, I think Andy, while we see \$80,000
33 boats go by. And the only word in my head that comes
34 to that is gentrification of our lifestyle. It is a
35 recreational opportunity for those but it is a survival
36 need for us. So we really need to look at how are we
37 managing fish and game for the people who have been
38 here for millennia, and people who have been in Alaska
39 for many decades now.

40
41 I think listening to Rochelle with
42 what's going on in the wildlife Refuge, we do need to
43 look at Federal policy because in National Parks and
44 Wildlife Refuges and conservation areas, current
45 national policy does allow for mineral development,
46 even though in this same area, mineral development is
47 supposed to co-exist with wildlife habitat protection
48 and conservation efforts. And I think we're coming to
49 that point in this world where we need to define the
50

0052

1 limit of development. We need to make priorities and
2 policy and management that prioritizes fish and game
3 resources because we're saying here, we're already in
4 decline, so if we're in this situation of decline and
5 scarcity and really actually starvation and genocide of
6 our culture, then we should be taking a heavy look at
7 what those development policies are and why we would
8 consider development when we're in such a tight
9 situation. We should err on the side of caution and we
10 should be protecting the lands and waters, the fish and
11 animals that live there.

12
13 So as an AC member we, we -- our AC, we
14 are the ones that are buying the fish from Bristol Bay
15 and it's very expensive to ship in 2,500 pounds of
16 salmon -- before we pay for the salmon, it's \$7,000 to
17 get 2,500 pounds of fish to Anchorage and then we have
18 to pick it up from there. So I don't -- and I'm not
19 even going to get in to how much the fish cost, right,
20 because we're trying to get fair prices here. And
21 there's no way that our people can afford that and I
22 really am saddened by the lack of oversight and
23 understanding of how our villages are struggling.
24 There's not a lot of grocery stores, not every village
25 has a grocery store. There's also a graphic by ISER,
26 Institute of Social and Economic Research that shows
27 over 50 percent of people in the AYK region and Bristol
28 Bay -- over 50 percent of those people receive
29 assistance, while in the Aleutian Island less than 50
30 percent receive assistance, the same as in the Railbelt
31 Southcentral, less than 50 percent of those people
32 receive assistance. So we're -- I said this, you know,
33 our economies are depressed, our fisheries are
34 depressed and our people are depressed. We don't have
35 alternatives, options, to buy food or the money to
36 afford it and we're having to rely on State assistance.
37 And I'm not sure if you were around this fall but there
38 were thousands of people that did not have Food Stamps
39 and that they probably really needed to have that moose
40 this fall during that crunch time.

41
42 So just pointing out we're getting into
43 these really tough times.

44
45 I talked with some people from
46 Alakanuk, they pay \$22 for a gallon of milk, but their
47 average medium income is \$33,000 a year. That's what
48 the situation of our people, a lot of them are in that
49 situation. And so the need to work together to be
50

0053

1 addressing who are the fish and game resources for in
2 Alaska because according to McDowell they're for the
3 commercialization, they're for big game hunters and
4 they're for commercial fisheries. No mention of
5 subsistence people and their needs.
6

7 So I don't want to spend too much time
8 repeating a lot, but I just want us to think about
9 that.
10

11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, thank
12 you, Eva. Anything else.
13

14 (No comments)
15

16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
17 public comments on non-agenda items.
18

19 (No comments)
20

21 MS. MCDAVID: Just remind them there'll
22 be another opportunity tomorrow.
23

24 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, and
25 just to remind folks there is another opportunity
26 tomorrow morning when we start again on the non-agenda
27 items.
28

29 Okay, moving on to old business, follow
30 up on May 23rd, North American Caribou Workshop and
31 Arctic Ungulate Conference. Tom Plank.
32

33 MR. PLANK: Hello, Madame Chair.
34 Members of the Council. My name is Tom Plank and I'm a
35 Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence
36 Management. And during your fall 2022 meeting you
37 heard about the Caribou and Ungulate Conference taking
38 place in Anchorage this May. All Councils nominated
39 one member to attend the conference and provided input
40 on an Alaska Ungulate Management Symposium. An
41 informational flier about this conference can be found
42 in your meeting books on Page 19. And before I
43 proceed, would any Council member like an overview of
44 the conference.
45

46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Council
47 members.
48

49 (No comments)
50

0054

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone want
2 an overview of the conference.

3
4 MS. EVANS: Sure.

5
6 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.

7
8 MR. PLANK: Alrighty. A joint meeting
9 of the North America Caribou Workshop and the Arctic
10 Ungulate Conference will be held in Anchorage from May
11 8th to the 12th, 2023. The meeting will bring together
12 an international group of managers, researchers and
13 indigenous and local knowledge holders who want to
14 share their knowledge of caribou, muskoxen, dall sheep
15 and moose and reindeer. The theme for the meeting is
16 Crossing Boundaries.

17
18 Arctic ungulates regularly cross
19 landscape boundaries connecting ecological processes
20 between different systems and this necessitates
21 collaboration across geographical boundaries and also
22 calls for crossing boundaries between Western science
23 and local and indigenous knowledge.

24
25 The conference will include preliminary
26 sessions on co-management, the status of caribou
27 globally, integrating Western science and indigenous
28 knowledge and the effects of climate change on caribou.
29 Field trips, workshops, research talks, symposium and a
30 poster session will also be part of the conference.
31 The conference web address is included on your fliers
32 in the meeting books on Page 19. And I encourage you
33 to visit the website for more detailed information.

34
35 Are there any other questions or
36 clarifications about the conference needed?

37
38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Council
39 members, any questions.

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, thank
44 you.

45
46 MR. PLANK: All right.

47
48 MS. POPE: I had a quick question.

49
50

0055

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go ahead,
2 Amanda.

3
4 MS. POPE: I just wanted -- this is
5 Amanda Pope for the record. I was just going to ask
6 who is going to represent EIRAC for that meeting?

7
8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: That's
9 probably the next thing on the agenda.

10
11 MS. POPE: Okay.

12
13 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, Council
14 Coordinator. Just to respond to Amanda if that's okay.
15 At the fall meeting the Council did elect Don Woodruff
16 to go and represent the Council so we've got Don
17 currently registered and I think Andy was the alternate
18 in case Don wasn't able to go.

19
20 MS. POPE: Thank you for that Brooke.
21 I wasn't on the Board because I didn't attend the full
22 meeting last year, so -- last fall.

23
24 Thank you.

25
26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, Andy.

27
28 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. Looking
29 at the dates of this Council meeting, I think I would
30 have to retract from being an alternate because that's
31 usually during our Yukon River break up and my travel
32 out is impossible. So that would open it up for an
33 alternate from this RAC to attend.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: Would the Council like to
36 choose another alternate.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I'm
39 hearing some yeahs and I think I saw a nodding head
40 here. Yeah, so discussion on who would go.

41
42 MR. BASSICH: Who's going to volunteer.

43
44 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, that
45 was the next question, who's going to volunteer.

46
47 MS. POPE: This is Amanda Pope for the
48 record, I'd be interested in being an alternate.

49
50

0056

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. So do
2 you want to -- how are you feeling Don?

3
4 MR. WOODRUFF: I'm good.

5
6 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: You're good
7 to go?

8
9 MR. WOODRUFF: Yep.

10
11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, and
12 she'd be an alternate. All right, sounds good, all
13 right. Do we need a motion.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: (Shakes head negatively)

16
17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: She says not.
18 So we have it covered. Thank you Amanda and Don.

19
20 MR. BASSICH: Send both.

21
22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Is that a
23 possibility?

24
25 MR. PLANK: To be honest with you I
26 have no idea on that.

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: If that's something that
29 the Council would really like to see you can make that
30 known to OSM and we can see what we can do but no
31 promises.

32
33 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I'd just mention to
34 send both simply because caribou is really the only
35 reliable -- somewhat reliable resource we have left in
36 the Eastern Interior, at least in the area of Don,
37 myself and Amanda and even Ft. Yukon, so it's a pretty
38 critical resource, and having a really strong
39 understanding from this Council in making
40 recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board is
41 pretty important for long-term. So if the funding can
42 be put available -- made available to have both persons
43 go I think that would really benefit this Council.

44
45 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I'm having
46 probably somebody from the government wanting to help
47 us out here.

48
49 MR. RASIC: Great introduction, I'm
50

0057

1 from the government.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 MR. RASIC: I'm Jeff Rasic. I work for
6 the Park Service. And the Park Service is playing a
7 lead role in organizing this conference and we have
8 some grant funding available to support travel and I
9 think we could just commit here today to having both
10 representatives from the EIRAC.

11

12 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Well, that
13 sounds fantastic.

14

15 MR. RASIC: Okay.

16

17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

18

19 MR. BASSICH: I love it when things
20 come together.

21

22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy just
23 said he loves it when things come together. So thank
24 you for raising your hand, that's very appreciative,
25 good information. So very good.

26

27 MR. PLANK: Thank you. So to move on,
28 on Page 20 of your meeting books you'll find a summary
29 of all the potential topics suggested by Councils for
30 discussing during the ungulate management in the Alaska
31 symposium. This session is intended to be a neutral
32 forum for Council members, State Fish and Game Advisory
33 Committee members, National Park Service Subsistence
34 Resource Commission members, Federal and State agency
35 Staff and other interested parties to discuss ungulate
36 management in Alaska specifically regarding ungulate
37 regulations.

38

39 During the fall 2022 meeting cycle, all
40 Councils provided input on potential topics to discuss
41 during the symposium and several Councils asked for a
42 followup summary list during these winter meetings.
43 Councils are now being asked to review this list and
44 provide additional feedback for the symposium such as
45 highlighting topics of particular interest or providing
46 clarifications on topics. OSM Staff will then decide
47 which topics will be discussed during the symposium
48 based on feedback from all 10 Councils prioritizing
49 topics that are relevant statewide and applicable to
50

0058

1 regions and Councils.

2

3 So, Madame Chair, now I'll turn the
4 discussion over to you, any additional feedback would
5 be helpful in finalizing discussion topics for the
6 symposium.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
9 Tom. Council members. Don.

10

11 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Madame Chair.
12 I highlighted 10 of the 24 topics. If you would like
13 me to go through them. I'll just go through them by
14 number and not read the whole thing.

15

16 No. 1. No. 5. No. 8. No. 11. No.
17 15. No. 16. No. 17. No. 18. No. 19. No. 22.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 MR. PLANK: Thank you.

22

23 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone else.

24

25 MR. BASSICH: I would add 23.

26

27 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone else.

28

29 MR. BASSICH: Madame Chair, I would add
30 23. And I guess, if I may, I'm not really sure if it's
31 reflected in some of these topics but I think talking
32 about future growth in populations and the impacts on
33 caribou herd in the Eastern Interior region, the region
34 the caribou call their homeland might be an interesting
35 topic. I don't know that there's really a lot of hard
36 data on it. But I think, as I stated earlier in my
37 opening statements, that I have a lot of concerns about
38 population growth and competition for food resources
39 into the future. So we need to open that topic and
40 begin discussing that and what the potential impacts
41 would be for greater population of human beings and
42 their effects on caribou as far as the hunting
43 pressures and State of Alaska ANS and Federal, I don't
44 know what the term is in the Federal Program, I should
45 know that, but for your amounts necessary for
46 subsistence, the equivalent in the Federal Program -- I
47 should know that actually if there is such a thing, and
48 if there isn't we should have that because we're going
49 to need it in the future.

50

0059

1 Thank you.

2

3

4 Final comment. I think this is really,
5 really important and I think I really applaud that this
6 is being addressed now. I think this is something that
7 really affects the long-term future of a lot of people
8 and it goes towards what I was saying about long-term
9 planning and management.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

14 Anyone else.

15

16 Amanda.

17

18 MS. POPE: Hi, this is Amanda Pope. I
19 would like 11, 12 and 14 also to be added and
20 addressed.

21

22 I believe -- if I can add a comment,
23 please, really quick.

24

25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Sure.

26

27 MS. POPE: I feel really strongly --
28 thank you. That with my experience in talking to
29 folks, as the hunger liaison in Circle for the three
30 years I had worked, I spoke to a lot of people from all
31 over, even from outside of Alaska, and I think that
32 there needs to be kind of -- kind of all of this needs
33 to be talked about, but the reason I picked those is
34 because the caribou numbers are low. When -- I believe
35 it was back in the 1900s, the caribou were in the
36 100,000 range in the Fortymile Herd and they used to
37 cross the Yukon River and they used to go into the
38 Canadian -- through the border to Canada and we don't
39 see that anymore. And I think the effects from the
40 road development and -- on caribou, their movements,
41 they're basically being forced to stay in between these
42 two highways. And if they even get close to the
43 highways they get slaughtered. And basically I just --
44 I really think that needs to be addressed, too.

45

46 So thank you for allowing me the time.

47

48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
49 Amanda. You've got the time so don't worry. Yeah.

50

0060

1 Anyone else got anything else on this
2 subject.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I would add
7 predator control. Just as a discussion point. So
8 you're going to minimize this total again, that's a lot
9 of topic things there.

10
11 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madame Chair.
12 The information I have on it is basically after they've
13 talked to all 10 Councils then they'll prioritize the
14 topics from all 10 that are relevant statewide and
15 applicable to all regions and Councils.

16
17 So I guess that's a long way of saying
18 more than likely.

19
20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy.

21
22 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, so are all 10 RACs
23 sending representatives to this, I'm just curious.

24
25 MR. PLANK: (Nods affirmatively.

26
27 MR. BASSICH: Okay, yeah, thank you.

28
29 MR. PLANK: For the record, yes, sir.

30
31 MR. BASSICH: Okay. So this ungulate,
32 it's all about moose and caribou, it's not just about
33 caribou.

34
35 MR. PLANK: Correct. It's a moose,
36 caribou, dall sheep, muskoxen, and reindeer.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
39 questions.

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Thank
44 you very much, Tom.

45
46 Next is Council correspondence update.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madame Chair.
49 Brooke McDavid, Council Coordinator for the record. I
50

0061

1 just wanted to give the Council a quick update on the
2 correspondence that was sent after the fall meeting
3 related to the Council, and copies of four letters were
4 included in your meeting book starting on Page 21, and
5 I'll just quickly mention what they were.

6
7 The first one on Page 21 was a letter
8 from the Federal Subsistence Board to the Secretary of
9 Interior, and that letter forwarded the concerns of
10 this Council and also the Bristol Bay Council who had
11 similar concerns about the Refuge Cruel Trapping Act of
12 2021. And that Bill never advanced and it hasn't been
13 reintroduced that I'm aware of. But I did want you to
14 know that your concerns were forwarded to the Secretary
15 by the Board.

16
17 The second letter is on Page 23 and
18 this is a copy of the Council comments that were
19 provided to the Board of Fisheries on proposals that
20 you all commented on at the fall meeting, there were
21 three proposals; one for AYK region, one for Alaska
22 Peninsula, or Area M region, and one for the statewide
23 region. I will go over the actions that have been taken
24 so far on those proposals in a later agenda item.

25
26 The third letter is on Page 26 of your
27 meeting books and that letter was sent by the Council
28 and you all sent it to the Federal Subsistence Board
29 asking for a youth seat on the Council. And the
30 letter, we decided that it should be called the Young
31 Adults Developmental Seat. Can't ever have any short
32 names.

33
34 (Laughter)

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: But it was sent to the
37 Board and the Board has not yet responded. It will
38 probably be discussed at their summer work session.

39
40 And then the last -- the fourth letter
41 is on Page 28 and that was also sent by the Council to
42 the Board asking the Board to reaffirm their support
43 for the Hunter Ethics Education and Outreach Initiative
44 and asking the Board to discuss possible funding for
45 moving that initiative forward. I did present to the
46 Federal Subsistence Board at their recent meeting and
47 gave an overview of the past work on that initiative
48 and the Board did give their support for that
49 initiative to move forward, and, again we can talk
50

0062

1 about that in the hunter ethics agenda item.

2

3 And, Madame Chair, that does conclude
4 my update on the correspondence that was sent by the
5 Council and I'm happy to answer any questions about
6 those letters and if there are no questions Katya does
7 have an update about the Council correspondence policy.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Are there any
12 questions.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: That was a
17 very good report, thank you. Are there any questions.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I'm just
22 trying to give everybody lots of time.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, hearing
27 no questions, Katya.

28

29 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Madame Chair.
30 Members of the Council. For the record my name is
31 Katya Wessels and I'm Council Coordination Division
32 Supervisor with.....

33

34 (Teleconference interference -
35 participants not muted)

36

37 MS. WESSELS:OSM. And the
38 meeting materials for this agenda item can be found in
39 Tab 1 of your supplemental materials, and this is an
40 action item.

41

42 So the Subsistence Regional Advisory
43 Council correspondence policy. That's the policy
44 that's established by the Federal Subsistence Board.
45 Last time this policy was updated was actually in 2004.
46 So the Board feels that it's time to update this
47 correspondence policy to make it more streamlined,
48 clear and reflective of the current situation and to
49 clarify anything that was not clear in the 2004 version

50

0063

1 of the policy. So hopefully the suggested edits
2 eliminate any unnecessary language or information and
3 clarifies the guidance on the official scope of
4 correspondence, Council correspondence, to whom Council
5 may and may not correspond directly and the process of
6 correspondence. And as you all well know that
7 correspondence is one of the main means of the Council
8 communicating with the Board and with other agencies
9 and entities.

10

11 So the Office of Subsistence Management
12 would like the Council to review and comment on
13 suggested updates to the current correspondence policy.
14 Any new language that was changed in the policy is
15 bolded, it's in the bold font, although you cannot see
16 the proposed removed language, we don't have the copies
17 of -- do we have copies of the old policy?

18

19 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. Under Tab 1 the
20 new policy is the first page and the old policy is
21 directly after it so you can compare the two versions.

22

23 MS. WESSELS: Okay, sorry, because I
24 didn't see that. So I'm just -- while you are
25 reviewing it I'm going to go briefly over the primary
26 changes in the policy.

27

28 As you can see the preamble, the
29 introductory paragraph of the policy was shortened,
30 they were more summarized and condensed. They
31 summarize the intent of the policy and the authorities
32 foundational to the Councils.

33

34 Then Element 1, it uses more clear
35 language to define the content and focus of Council
36 correspondence.

37

38 Then if you move to Element 5, it now
39 combines elements that define the correspondence
40 process.

41

42 And Element 7 of the new draft confirms
43 the Council can submit comments on State regulatory
44 proposals directly to the Board of Fish, Board of Game,
45 without review by OSM ARD, which should streamline the
46 process, make it quicker and easier.

47

48 And then Element No. 9, which is like
49 the biggest change in the new draft, it clarifies that

50

0064

1 the Council may not write directly to Federally-elected
2 or appointed officials due to Hatch Act restrictions.
3 I would like to highlight again Federally-elected,
4 which means that the Council can write directly to
5 State elected officials, for example.

6
7 So I just will pause here for a couple
8 of minutes so you have a chance to look at the newly
9 suggested updated policy, to review the changes and
10 also if you would like to me, I can read the new draft
11 into the record, but it's only if you would like me to.

12
13 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, that's
14 it?

15
16 MS. WESSELS: Would you.

17
18 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I'm going to
19 ask the Council, would you like to have her read it
20 into the record.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone. Don
25 -- Don would like it so go ahead.

26
27 MS. WESSELS: Okay. So Subsistence
28 Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy.

29
30 The intent of the Subsistence Regional
31 Advisory Council Correspondence Policy is to ensure
32 that Councils can correspond appropriately with the
33 Federal Subsistence Board and other entities. In
34 addition, the Correspondence Policy will assist
35 Councils in directing their concerns in an effective
36 manner. The Alaska National Interests Land
37 Conservation Act, Title VIII require the creation of
38 the Councils to serve as advisors to the Secretary of
39 the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to
40 provide meaningful local participation in the
41 management of fish and wildlife resources on Federal
42 public lands. Within the framework of Title VIII and
43 the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Congress assigns
44 specific powers and duties to the Councils. These are
45 also reflected in the Council Charters, and I'm not
46 going to read the reference to all the laws.

47
48 The Secretaries of the Interior and
49 Agriculture created the Board and delegated
50

0065

1 responsibility for implementing the Title VIII rural
2 subsistence priority regarding fish and wildlife
3 resources on Federal public lands and waters. The
4 Board also given the duty of establishing rules and
5 procedures for the operation of the Councils in
6 accordance with the requirements of the Federal
7 Advisory Committee Act. The Office of Subsistence
8 Management was established to facilitate the work of
9 the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

10
11 Policy.

12
13 1. Council correspondence shall be
14 limited to subsistence related matters, including
15 matters related to the operation of the Federal
16 Subsistence Management Program and issues relevant to
17 the subsistence way of life.

18
19 2. Councils may and are encouraged to
20 correspond directly with the Board. The Councils are
21 advisory bodies to the Board.

22
23 3. Councils are urged to make use of
24 the annual report process to bring matters to the
25 Board's attention.

26
27 4. Types of communication encompassed
28 by this policy include, but not limited to the
29 following. Letters of support, resolutions, letters
30 offering comment or recommendation. ANILCA .801
31 comments, subsistence and land use decisions. And any
32 other correspondence to any government agency, or any
33 tribal or private organization or individual.

34
35 5. The correspondence process is as
36 follows: Councils shall discuss and agree upon the
37 content of proposed correspondence during the public
38 meeting. Council Coordinators draft the correspondence
39 in accordance with the Council's position. Council
40 Coordinators will transmit all draft correspondence to
41 the Assistant Regional Director of OSM to review prior
42 to mailing except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8 of this
43 policy. Recognizing that such correspondence is the
44 result of an official Council action and may be urgent,
45 the Assistant Regional Director will complete this
46 review in a timely manner. Modifications identified as
47 necessary by the Assistant Regional Director will be
48 discussed with the Council Chair. Council Chairs have
49 the final authority to approve letters.
50

0066

1 6. Councils may submit notification of
2 appointment directly to Subsistence Resource
3 Commissions under paragraph, .808 without review by the
4 Assistant Regional Director of OSM. Councils may
5 submit comments regarding -- I'm sorry 7.

6
7 7. Councils may submit comments
8 regarding proposed regulatory changes affecting
9 subsistence uses within their region to the Alaska
10 Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Board of Game without
11 review by the Assistant Regional Director of OSM. The
12 comments will be channeled through the appropriate OSM
13 Division Supervisor for review. A copy of comments or
14 proposals will be forwarded to the Assistant Regional
15 Director when the original is submitted.

16
17 8. Administrative correspondence such
18 as letters of appreciation, requests for agency reports
19 at Council meetings and cover letters for meeting
20 agendas will be channeled through the Council
21 Coordinator to the appropriate OSM Division Supervisor
22 for review.

23
24 9. Due to Hatch Act restrictions,
25 Councils may not communicate with elected officials,
26 political appointees and other Federal agencies.
27 Councils, further, may not write Secretaries of Federal
28 agencies or their offices and instead may write to the
29 Board to request that the Board relay correspondence on
30 relevant subject matter of interest to the Secretaries
31 of the Interior and Agriculture or to other Federal
32 agencies at the Secretarial level. This does not
33 prohibit Council members from acting in their capacity
34 as private citizens or through other organizations with
35 which they are affiliated.

36
37 10. Councils will submit copies of all
38 correspondence generated and received by them to OSM to
39 be filed in the OSM record system.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy.

44
45 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, I
46 guess I have a couple of things I need to clarify.
47 Under Point 1 it says Councils correspondence shall be
48 limited to subsistence related matters, included
49 matters related to operations of the Federal
50

0067

1 Subsistence Management Program and issues relevant to
2 the subsistence way of life.

3
4 I think a lot has to do with what the
5 definition is of subsistence related to matters because
6 in my view everything that goes on in your entire life
7 when you live a subsistence lifestyle is related to
8 that lifestyle, it encompasses everything. So having
9 something that says limited to subsistence related
10 matters, to me is a little bit of a red flag because I
11 guess what we need to come to is what is the defini --
12 what is the OSM definition of subsistence related
13 matters. Am I making myself clear.

14
15 MS. WESSELS: (Nods affirmatively)

16
17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. So I
18 just want to bring that up because quite frankly the
19 subsistence way of lifestyle is all encompassing
20 whether from weather to harvest of fish and game to
21 land use to development of land, I mean pretty much
22 everything. I mean I don't know if you really need to
23 respond to that but I am a little bit concerned about
24 the wording in there that says, shall be limited to, I
25 think it would better read, in my view, Council's
26 correspondence to subsistence related matters. So I'd
27 like to point that out.

28
29 And then the other thing under Bullet
30 Point 5, Council's discuss and agree upon the content
31 of the proposals during public meeting, does that mean
32 that we will no longer have committees or volunteers
33 that will work to develop letters? Because the process
34 that we've gone through, rather than taking a lot of
35 time to discuss all the wording in correspondence, we
36 usually had volunteers that work with our Coordinator
37 and our Chair to draft the letters. So is that no
38 longer going to happen?

39
40 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, thank you, Andy.
41 To respond to both of your points. I -- you know, that
42 is exactly what we are looking for like what you said,
43 that you, you know, the word, limited, raised a red
44 flag with you, so we'll bring it back to the
45 InterAgency Staff Committee who worked on updating this
46 policy to the Board so that is not the final wording.
47 So that's what we're looking for from the Councils, you
48 know, what they might want to improve in this kind of
49 wording. And, you know, I think when this wording was
50

0068

1 put in we didn't necessarily -- the InterAgency Staff
2 Committee didn't necessarily mean that that would limit
3 the Council in some ways in communicating regarding
4 subsistence matters. What it means is that they don't
5 want you to write a letter about the situation of the
6 stock market or who was elected in some office or
7 whatever, you know, something completely outside of,
8 you know, subsistence way of life or your day to day
9 living. You know so maybe it's a concern to you but
10 they -- they don't want you to write that.

11

12 And in regards to the other issue that
13 you brought up, no, it's not going to limit by any
14 means your work groups on developing the letters and
15 the wording for the letters. It's always been the
16 case, even if the Council elects that there's going to
17 be a working group developing the language during the
18 break, or in the evening, they're still going to bring
19 it back to the Council to discuss it. It's not going
20 to be that -- the main subject matter of the letter,
21 the main topic, the main points is still discussed by
22 the Council. Maybe not every single word that will be
23 put in the letter that will be discussed on the record.
24 So we can try to make it clear maybe. We don't want
25 this policy to be really long and wordy so it's hard to
26 understand but that's not what that means.

27

28 I hope I answered your questions.

29

30 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you for that
31 clarification. And I concur with most of that. The
32 other concern that I have is something that was brought
33 up in our -- this morning's discussions, I believe Mr.
34 Wright brought it up, and that was the letter from OSM
35 to the Board of Fish. And, quite frankly, a lot of
36 people in the AYK region were pretty shocked and
37 surprised by that letter. So I'm wondering if there
38 isn't some kind of provisions that we could put in
39 there that would communicate the desire for some of
40 these positions to be forwarded to Councils before
41 they're submitted officially to be on the record, so
42 that there's a chance for Council to make comments on
43 official OSM positions. Because I -- quite frankly, I
44 think that that letter hurt our position on Proposal
45 140 pretty dramatically. And I just bring that up
46 because we're not always aware of what OSM's position
47 is on things but sometimes, depending on how the
48 wording is or what the content is there may be some
49 cause for concern by subsistence users and that

50

0069

1 reflecting maybe their interpretation of subsistence or
2 their way of life kind of being marginalized or not --
3 I guess what I'm trying to say is in my view OSM is
4 here to kind of protect the subsistence way of life,
5 that's the primary goal of the Federal Subsistence
6 Board and so when they take action or give formal on
7 the record letters or positions, I think it would be
8 prudent for, at least, there would be some sort of
9 review so that the people that they're representing and
10 trying to protect agree with that position or at least
11 can offer comment to them that might change that
12 position or help them clarify that position.

13

14 So that's just a suggestion to maybe
15 talk about in your office. I don't know how that would
16 happen. I wouldn't want everything that's corresponded
17 to come out but when it goes to a regulating body
18 that's going to take action on something that impacts
19 subsistence living then it's a -- it's a very important
20 topic.

21

22 So I just wanted to bring that up at
23 the meeting because I think that's a classic -- what
24 happened was a very good example of something that
25 maybe wasn't intended to be interpreted a certain way
26 but the way the letter was written it wasn't helpful to
27 people in the AYK.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 That's all I had. Thank you, Katya.

32

33 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, thank you, Andy.
34 You know our Fisheries Division Supervisor and our
35 State Liaison are going to address -- oh, right now --
36 well, they are going to address some of your concerns.
37 We can definitely bring it up to OSM, your suggestion
38 in regards to the Council's review of an OSM position
39 but I'm just going to let the Fisheries Division
40 Supervisor Scott Ayers to -- is it George -- oh, sorry,
41 State -- OSM State Liaison George Pappas is online now
42 with us to address some of your concerns.

43

44 MR. PAPPAS: Madame Chair, George
45 Pappas, can you hear me?

46

47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, we can,
48 go ahead George.

49

50

1 MR. PAPPAS: Good-noonish. Andy thank
2 you for bringing this up. So the Office of Subsistence
3 Management and you'll notice on every cover letter that
4 we sent to the Board of Fish or Board of Game, the
5 Board of Fisheries process the comments are limited to
6 the waters within the CSU, the waters that flow through
7 Federal public lands, waters that are flowing through
8 Refuges, Parks, Forests, what have you and we don't
9 make comments outside of our Federal jurisdiction on
10 the fisheries side, we don't make comments on a fishery
11 a mile away, 10 miles away, 100 miles away, a thousand
12 miles away. And this is specifically what happened at
13 this meeting. We received information that there was
14 grave concerns about OSM saying that any of these
15 proposals that are adopted at this meeting will not
16 impact Federally-qualified subsistence users use of
17 resources. That's not the case.

18
19 Because of the interest, this
20 information came to light like a day or so before the
21 meeting, I retracted the OSM's comments and resubmitted
22 another letter of no comment with more information
23 about jurisdiction. And in the same process, the good
24 news is here it did spur on a lot of discussion at the
25 meeting. I talked to TCC tribal leaders, I talked to
26 Kuskokwim tribal leaders, I talked to even the Chignik
27 tribal leaders and they are all scratching their heads
28 saying, hold on, we know that if you shut down
29 interception fisheries more fish will make it to the
30 spawning grounds. That is a known fact. That is in
31 every letter that's been submitted to the Board of Fish
32 from any of the Yukon, even the Bristol Bay RACs have
33 sent letters to the Board of Fish and Board of Game,
34 they have been very clear with their concerns.

35
36 Now, it has been 10 years since the
37 Office of Subsistence of Management has been reviewed
38 by the Department of Interior and the discussions that
39 took place at the Board meeting is we need tribal
40 consultation and with between the tribes and -- or
41 others -- and/or others will have to figure this out,
42 to the Federal Subsistence Board saying what do you
43 want OSM to comment on, where do you want to draw the
44 line, tell them what you want them to do. And that
45 works for me. If we were told to comment on fisheries
46 of impact, Federally-qualified subsistence users and
47 their resources outside of Federal subsistence
48 jurisdiction that's the way it'll be. We'll have to
49 retool a little bit. You know, Scott, and his
50

0071

1 fisheries team will have to retool a little bit.

2

3 But no shape or form was the intent of
4 that letter that went to OSM -- to the Board of Fish,
5 and I spoke with every single Board of Fish member and
6 most of the leaders in the room, OSM was not going to
7 comment on the intercept out in marine waters because
8 it's outside of our boundaries, it's very clear.

9

10 Understand the point that was driven
11 home very -- very closely -- even -- you know,
12 everybody -- no one's disagreeing with you Andy on
13 this, that there's concerns that it may appear that OSM
14 may not care, that is not the case at all.

15

16 And my assumption is, when we get
17 through this process we will have an evolved set of
18 commenting process, it's time to evolve, I think it's
19 time to review and the seeds have been planted to start
20 this process.

21

22 Madame Chair, that's what I have for
23 you.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Donald
28 has a question. Go ahead, Don.

29

30 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, George. Does
31 OSM think that the ecosystem of the Yukon is an
32 isolated entity and that it's not ocean related because
33 I'm confused about that. I think that the whole
34 ecosystem is interrelated. And 10 years ago up on
35 Tazlin, on the Upper Yukon, they were talking about how
36 their area is going desert, there's no bioenergetics
37 into the system meaning there's no energy coming from
38 the ocean to feed the bears, the eagles, the smolt, and
39 for tree growth, not that the trees won't grow but they
40 won't grow as well if they don't have the energetics
41 from the ocean.

42

43 That's my question.

44

45 MR. PAPPAS: So the question is, does
46 OSM believe that the -- there's anything related to
47 Federal subsistence or subsistence users in-river and
48 the energetics outside the mouth of the Yukon; I don't
49 know what to say, I don't have an answer for you. All
50

0072

1 I know is that jurisdiction is jurisdiction and that's
2 what we've been adhering to. And if we're told
3 otherwise we'll retool it and have more information
4 specifically towards the questions you're posing.

5
6 I am not saying that -- I'll just leave
7 it at that. Bottom line there's a line we comment
8 within and if we want to expand that and get out into
9 the marine fisheries and the other areas, out into the
10 -- direct comments on the, oh, blue water fishers, the
11 draggers, the trawlers, what have you, we will follow
12 instruction but we need that clarity from the Board of
13 where and how far they want us to speak.

14
15 I did not answer your question directly
16 but generally biology would specifically say, yes, you
17 are correct.

18
19 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, George.
20 Thank you.

21
22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy.

23
24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you, Madame
25 Chair. Yeah, thank you, George. I appreciate your
26 comments. I look forward to working with OSM and being
27 a part of maybe developing some future policy on that
28 so take that as an open invitation to contact me for at
29 least my perspective on it, whatever I can do to help.
30 I'm glad we're having this discussion. I think it's
31 going to be really pertinent in years to come and I'm
32 glad that OSM is responding. And I really appreciate
33 that they responded very quickly and involving you to
34 retract the one letter and write the other so kudos.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 MR. PAPPAS: Through the Chair. No
39 problem at all. My boss looked at this closely and
40 say, hey, you know, what is this. Let me give you a
41 short answer in the last 10, 15 years our comments have
42 been becoming shorter and shorter and shorter and some
43 things have been removed over time, maybe even
44 references to Federal jurisdiction in the last 10
45 years. I like the ideas of maps, better maps, not just
46 the ones out of our reg books, I like the idea of
47 better maps, more clear language and I like the idea of
48 a lot more thumb's up from the RACs so thank you very
49 much. And I'm sorry, professionally, it came to this,
50

0073

1 but conversely it had to happen and every one of the
2 law makers -- or excuse me, the decisionmakers were
3 briefed thoroughly on this. And thank you for bringing
4 this to our attention, you know, we've done this so
5 many times that we're blind to that particular
6 interpretation. And if you had not said something this
7 might not have given us a chance to grow.

8
9 So thank you very much.

10
11 Thank you, Madame Chair.

12
13 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, thank
14 you, George. I just want to ask Eva or Charlie, did
15 you.....

16
17 MS. BURK: Madame Chair.

18
19 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:have any
20 other questions. Is that you, Eva, go.....

21
22 MS. BURK: Yes, this is.....

23
24 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:ahead.

25
26 MS. BURK:Eva -- this is me, Eva
27 Burk. I absolutely want us to review -- Department of
28 Interior to review OSM so that they can step in and say
29 what they need to say. And also the ecosystem and the
30 watersheds, we understand land ownership, we understand
31 that the boundaries are drawn but these fish and game
32 know no boundaries and we need to be not managing one
33 species at a time. A lot of conversation was around
34 chum salmon and the king salmon were even mentioned and
35 the reality is we need to be managing both of those
36 species together and it's an ecosystem management
37 approach which would mean that OSM and, you know, the
38 EIRAC can't just look at what's happening in its own
39 boundaries because the entire ecosystem, the entire
40 river drainage is connected, all of the watersheds are
41 connected, and they -- the migratory path of the salmon
42 is 1,800 plus miles. So as far as I'm concerned the
43 salmon that spawn way up, you know, past Eagle, they
44 are -- OSM and every regulatory body should be
45 considering how are they managed from their headwaters
46 all the way out to their rearing grounds and back, you
47 know, up.

48
49 So I'm of the mindset that we
50

0074

1 absolutely shouldn't be thinking of what's in our
2 jurisdiction, that is not even -- that doesn't even
3 make sense to me at all. So I would really hope that
4 we get the conversation going and that we really think
5 of an ecosystem approach, not just thinking about what
6 boundary we're working in.

7

8 MR. WRIGHT: This is Charlie.

9

10 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go ahead,
11 Charlie.

12

13 MR. WRIGHT: I just have a short
14 comment that I think it was perfectly clear, the
15 recommendations of all the RACs that supported 140,
16 Proposal 140, I don't think it was very hard to
17 understand for anybody so I think that we really need
18 to try harder to do better in the future to take the
19 RACs recommendations. That's going against the whole
20 process when that kind of thing happens, whether it be
21 unintended or not.

22

23 So I like what Andy said I think this
24 needs to go both ways. OSM needs to be working really
25 close with us going into the future, that would be very
26 much appreciated.

27

28 Thank you, Madame Chair. That's all I
29 have.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Anyone
32 else, Council members.

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All right,
37 thank you all. And thank you, George.

38

39 MR. PAPPAS: You're welcome and thank
40 you for sending a Staff to the meeting, they did well.
41 They were really imbedded and everybody did well, so
42 thank you.

43

44 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.
45 Well, let's break for lunch, one hour, do you think,
46 everyone.

47

48 (Council nods affirmatively)

49

50

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1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. 12:15
2 -- I mean it's 12:12, we'll come back at 1:15. Thank
3 you.

4
5 (Off record)

6
7 (On record)

8
9 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I'll call the
10 meeting back to order. We need an hour and 15 for
11 lunch. Okay, the next thing on the agenda is the
12 hunter ethics education outreach initiative update.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madame Chair.
15 Brooke McDavid for the record. As I mentioned earlier
16 in the correspondence update, I presented about the
17 history of the hunter ethics education and outreach
18 initiative to the Federal Subsistence Board about a
19 month ago. And a copy of that presentation can be
20 found in your supplemental materials in Tab 2 and
21 really just included this for your reference, for your
22 information, especially for newer Council members who
23 might be as familiar with the initiative. I won't go
24 through the whole thing unless you want me to.
25 Basically let the Board know about the two pilot
26 projects that were initiated here in the Eastern
27 Interior region and that was the hunter liaison
28 positions and the Hunt Like an Alaskan outreach
29 initiative and that was going to be aimed primarily at
30 conducting outreach with -- on the military bases in
31 the Fairbanks area.

32
33 And the Board did give their support
34 for the initiative to move forward and, you know,
35 focusing on the continuation of those two programs,
36 maybe expanding the hunter liaison programs to other
37 regions and the Board wasn't able to discuss funding,
38 it's outside of their jurisdiction but several of the
39 agencies represented on the Board were enthusiastic
40 about supporting the initiative and come this winter
41 meeting cycle is over for all the Councils, OSM is
42 hoping to renege all the stakeholders that were
43 involved in that prior to Covid and start moving the
44 ball forward again on that. So hopefully at the fall
45 meeting we'll have an update about, you know, maybe
46 getting together this summer and discussing those
47 projects.

48
49 There also was a lot of interest at the
50

0076

1 Board from people at the Board meeting from subsistence
2 users in other regions saying that they would really
3 like to see something similar from where they're from
4 and so I think the Board heard that and really wants to
5 support this Council and this region taking the
6 initiative to kind of move -- to develop some of those
7 outreach materials that can be used in other regions
8 across the state.

9
10 So I did want to thank both Andy and
11 Amanda for calling in to the Federal Subsistence Board
12 meeting and providing testimony and comments about the
13 initiative and their support for the initiative and
14 also thank you to the agency Staff who helped me
15 prepare for that presentation.

16
17 And, yeah, that's basically all I had
18 about that.

19
20 There were two hunter liaisons this
21 past fall and Sonja Fields was the one that was
22 stationed in Circle last year and she did provide a
23 written report of how her fall season went and that's
24 on Page 31 of your meeting books. I'm not sure if
25 Sonja was able to call in. I did hear Fred Roberts on
26 the line earlier this morning and he was the liaison
27 based out of Ft. Yukon and if you all would like to see
28 if he's still on the line and provide an update I think
29 he'd be willing to give that.

30
31 Thank you.

32
33 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thanks,
34 Brooke. Yes. What's his name?

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Fred Roberts.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Is Fred
39 Roberts online and like to give a report in addition?

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: He might not
44 be back yet from lunch, yeah. Well we'll give an
45 opportunity then for.....

46
47 MR. BASSICH: What about Sonja.

48
49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Is Sonja on,
50

0077

1 Sonja Fields.

2

3

(No comments)

4

5

6

MR. BASSICH: Can we have some Council discussion on this.

7

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9

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11

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Andy is suggesting we have some Council discussion right now and then call on them after. So discussion. Andy.

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MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you, Madame Chair. Yeah, I'm really encouraged to see the Federal Board support this and listening in to the meeting, hearing that there were so many other entities that find that this might be something that's important to them in the future. And, again, thank Amanda, she was one of the first people to really get this off the ground and like everything in this world if you have a really good start it really helps keep the momentum going so thank you for the excellent job you did.

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MS. POPE: Thanks.

MR. BASSICH: And will continue to do, I'm sure.

I guess from my perspective, like so many things in this world it's all about money. And what's going to be really important is, I think, in the next step is identifying some clear goals and then trying to find entities willing to contribute to that, other agencies, non-profits. You know I think in the past the Wild Sheep Foundation donated some money, I think, to help with some of these meetings, so pulling together the coalition of all user groups and then trying to develop a plan for getting some funding to further these.

In my estimation I think the hunter liaison project is probably one of the most effective and cheap -- most cost effective programs. At our AC meeting I suggested that we try and initiate a hunter liaison position on the Taylor Highway, I mentioned that also -- I participated at one of the Fortymile AC meetings and made that suggestion and then there was no real definite feedback but I think there is some interest so maybe, you know, a short-term goal for us to further this would be to try to develop a hunter

0078

1 liaison on the Taylor Highway at some point. And I'm
2 not sure -- I think working with the Tok AC will be
3 pretty important to get that support and then maybe
4 also with the Gateway School District there, that might
5 be another avenue to get some participation.

6
7 So those are some early thoughts on how
8 we can begin to jump start this. We're kind of -- we
9 got a good start and then we had our feet cut out from
10 under us with Covid but I think if we can start to
11 build some kind of some relatively cost effective easy
12 programs then we can then move into things like the
13 Hunt Alaska which will be a much bigger discussion and
14 a lot more involved.

15
16 And I've been thinking about this a lot
17 during Covid, one of the things that I'd really like to
18 present to that the coalition of people working is I
19 really think an easy way to begin to expand this is to
20 work with news media. I think, you know, as hunting
21 season progresses, working with some of the Alaska
22 State news agencies, whether it be TV or radio or
23 newspapers to partner in and hopefully maybe they could
24 give us some time, free, as a public service type of a
25 thing.

26
27 So those are just some of the areas
28 that I'm thinking about.

29
30 Yeah, I'd like to hear some comments
31 from other Council members and I really hope we can
32 continue to get this moving, I think it's gong to be
33 really important into the future.

34
35 That's all, Madame Chair, thank you.

36
37 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, Linda.

38
39 MS. EVANS: This is Linda Evans.

40
41 REPORTER: Linda, your microphone.
42 Please. Thank you.

43
44 MS. EVANS: I always forget about the
45 mic. I was thinking about the Rampart area, the Yukon
46 River bridge is where a lot of -- a lot of people put
47 in, you know, to go down river. I think that might be
48 a good spot to try to figure out how to initiate this
49 hunter education somehow. I know the people at the --
50

0079

1 that have that little cafe there are really open to
2 community input, you know, so you might be able to talk
3 with them about it.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: That's a good
6 suggestion, thank you. Council members -- Amanda.

7

8 MS. POPE: Hello everyone. My name is
9 Amanda Pope for the record. So I have a lot to say but
10 I'll just start at an AC training that I attended, that
11 the Tanana Chiefs Conference had put on last year, or
12 early this year, it was just a few months ago, they had
13 done an AC training to help the AC's in their region to
14 have a better understanding of how ACs work and the
15 process of it all and I heard a lot of feedback from
16 those people saying that they would like a community
17 representative in their village, or town to help the
18 agencies document the fish and wildlife and also the
19 plants and whatever's going on in their community and
20 around their community, they would like to have a
21 better say on that.

22

23 Let me go back to the Federal
24 subsistence meeting. I'm glad they supported and as a
25 newly appointed Board member I'd like to hopefully see
26 that program expand to other communities because are
27 asking for that type of thing.

28

29 I'm going to switch hats and go to my
30 job. I'm currently a consultant for the Alaska
31 Conservation District. And they are -- I'm working
32 with the Northern Boreal Partnership under the Alaska
33 Conservation District and they had hired me to help
34 build this program up called Eyes in the Bush. And
35 that program is in partnership with the Yukon Flats
36 National Wildlife Refuge, Jimmy Fox is here, and with
37 the Council of Athabascan Tribal Government in Ft.
38 Yukon. And my job is to help recruit people for five
39 villages, which is Circle, Beaver, Ft. Yukon, Venetie
40 and Chalkyitsik, so those villages are right now hoping
41 to get them more involved with the program. And under
42 this -- so I'm kind of going ahead of myself. So these
43 people that are -- the job is open for in those
44 communities, their position is called the Community
45 Sentinels and they basically document Mother Nature,
46 they document when the river freezes, when it thaws,
47 migratory birds arrival and departure, bee sampling,
48 green up, moose tick survey and sampling and they also
49 do soil sampling and snow measurements in late fall to
50

0080

1 early spring. So another part of the Eyes in the Bush
2 Project -- or Program, that CATG has in Ft. Yukon is
3 what the hunter ethics is under and they hire the
4 hunter liaisons. Right now they had, as the Chair and
5 Brooke had said, there was two people working last
6 year, Circle and in Ft. Yukon. They would interview
7 hunters as they come in to their communities and get a
8 basic idea of who's coming through, what sort of
9 animals they are hunting, if they are successful, if
10 they are able to donate meat and that person can then
11 take that meat and spread it out to the community. And
12 the hunter liaison, as from my experience working the
13 job in the past, I had went to the State of Alaska and
14 asked for the State and Federal regs, I passed them
15 out, I went to the regional corporation and had gotten
16 maps to pass out of the local lands in the area. I
17 also got the Federal -- or not, Federal, the State
18 requirement harvest information pamphlet that they have
19 and I also had passed that out. I worked with ADF&G
20 about signs to be put up on the Steese Highway.

21
22 So the Eyes in the Bush Program that
23 CATG has, the hunter liaison and the Community
24 Sentinel, wouldn't it be great to have both of them
25 together, and allowing that person to help the State or
26 the Federal agencies do surveys. They could be trained
27 to help them and they could do community surveys within
28 their village or surrounding villages.

29
30 My goal is to get these two entities
31 together so they can help the region and the agencies
32 and the people more to where it would be each person
33 from each village doing this sort of work. So I would
34 like to help the people of Alaska and hopefully at --
35 at the meeting that we are planning at the end of the
36 month in Fairbanks, will be a very good start to
37 speaking together about what kind of goals they would
38 like to work towards and who would like to be involved.
39 Right now we are in the process, my boss and I are in
40 the process of setting this meeting up and inviting
41 folks of all different areas within Alaska and I am
42 looking forward to it but I just wanted to kind of give
43 everybody the update about that and if Jimmy or if
44 Bruce Thomas is online, if they wanted to chime in on
45 that you guys are more than welcome to.

46
47 But that's all I had, thank you.

48
49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
50

0081

1 Amanda. That's good information and I think you would
2 be good -- if the group meets again you would be great
3 to represent us.

4

5 Donald.

6

7 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Madame Chair.

8 Amanda, I think you're doing a really great job and
9 other Council members, if you look on our Council
10 responsibilities in the back of the book it says that
11 we are supposed to help to empower other people in fish
12 and wildlife management so that qualifies Amanda as
13 fulfilling that responsibility quite well.

14

15 Thank you.

16

17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, thank
18 you, Donald. Eva or Charlie, did you have anything.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Sometimes
23 they need to be called on because -- the star, six
24 thing is messing them up.

25

26 MR. WRIGHT: Hello, this is Charlie.

27

28 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go for it
29 Charlie.

30

31 MR. WRIGHT: Hello. Yeah, really good
32 report, thank you for that Amanda. I think I was at
33 that training with you with TCC. We brought up a lot of
34 good ideas. One of the things that was most important
35 to me was the wanton waste, not intentional but for
36 instance when I drive into the Novi River to go hunting
37 there'll be a moose hanging there and it gets really
38 hot in the afternoons in early September and I hunt for
39 a few days, five days, sometimes a week and I get lucky
40 and get a moose and I'm leaving and that moose is still
41 hanging there. That hunter is part of a group of four
42 or five people and they all want to get a moose before
43 they leave so after those hot afternoons up to 70
44 degrees, a lot of time that meat's no good. So we
45 talked about limiting -- limit on time for hunters when
46 they have to go to process their meat, get it out of
47 the field. That was a really big one.

48

49 And putting the collection boxes and a

50

0082

1 gas hub like Tanana, Galena, Circle probably where the
2 road hits the river, the main places, would be a really
3 good idea for unwanted meat. I think even the check
4 point at Novi would be a good place at the Koyukuk
5 River for somewhere where there's a village really
6 close where they could go and check, or they could be
7 relayed a message or SAT phone nowadays, it's not very
8 uncommon.

9
10 But I commend Amanda and their efforts
11 on the hunter liaison and I don't mind being a part of
12 that in any way and I'd like to help out in any way I
13 can going forward. I think she's doing really good
14 work.

15
16 I don't know if Eva has anything she
17 wants to add.

18
19 MS. BURK: No.

20
21 MR. WRIGHT: All right, thank you,
22 Madame Chair.

23
24 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
25 Charlie. Yes, now, we don't have an action, these are
26 reports, yeah. Go ahead.

27
28 MS. POPE: Hello everyone, my name is
29 Amanda Pope for the record. Thanks for giving me
30 another chance to speak.

31
32 I actually -- the last year I worked
33 the hunter liaison position I came up with the idea of
34 doing a brochure. And I went to the Yukon Flats Refuge
35 with the idea, with my rough draft and got a lot of
36 feedback from the folks in that office and from Jimmy.
37 I would like to do a brochure and I don't know if this
38 is something the Council would like to help with but I
39 would like to do a brochure about the State's required
40 meat that they have to take out, you know, like the
41 front quarters, hind quarters, and ribs, all of the --
42 all of their information that's required to be
43 processed from an animal, and include the cultural
44 aspect of an Alaskan hunting an animal because it's not
45 only just going out there and harvesting an animal,
46 it's -- it's more of a connection with the animal. And
47 the way Charlie had mentioned wanton waste, I would
48 like to see something on there, on a brochure that
49 shows like show respect for the animal the way you want
50

0083

1 to be respected, possibly. But have more of a cultural
2 significance to the brochure but also have the State's
3 required information on there, to have that co-joint
4 brochure to let people know that, I mean it's not only
5 the State that's saying like this is what's being
6 required, but maybe possibly add in some other stuff
7 that are really common sense, in my opinion, that would
8 possibly prevent wanton waste or trespassing on private
9 land or harvesting edible -- other edible meat even if
10 they don't want to harvest it, maybe it's possible they
11 could bring it to the next community or if they see
12 some locals who are not successful and -- and they
13 hunt, maybe like the heart can be donated to them or
14 whatever meat that they don't want.

15

16 I don't know I just would like to see a
17 brochure made and I don't know what the Council, if it
18 would like to have any feedback on that, or I would be
19 open to anything.

20

21 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy and then
22 Linda.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I guess -- yeah,
25 thank you for those comments. I think all of that is
26 topics that would be discussed once we start pulling
27 this coalition together and those would be action items
28 that we would discuss but, you know, I think your
29 foundational ideas are good topics for us to bring up
30 and expand in the program.

31

32 So that would be my comment.

33

34 And before I give up the floor here I
35 would just like, if we can, at the end of this
36 discussion, just to have a brief summary of what our
37 next step is. I think that's going to be really
38 important to be clear on the record.....

39

40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Uh-huh.

41

42 MR. BASSICH:for the OSM office
43 and how we're going to proceed to organize our next
44 meeting.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Linda.

47

48 MS. EVANS: Well, speaking.....

49

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0084

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Your mic.

2

3 MS. EVANS: In the brochure they could
4 -- another topic would be pollution, you know, taking
5 care of the land, making sure you pick up your trash,
6 take it with you, not to leave it there, that kind of
7 thing. Because I see a lot of -- you see a lot of
8 garbage on the beach now days and that shouldn't be
9 there.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: These are all
12 good topics and we really appreciate it. And like Andy
13 said, we probably do need a report because these are
14 the kinds of things that will be developed during this
15 initiative as they meet again. So they've met twice
16 now and they'll have another meeting. So do you have a
17 little more information on that?

18

19 MS. MCDAVID: Well, I can just follow
20 up and let you guys know that when we presented to the
21 Board we did get a little more specific about the next
22 steps that are needed and kind of provided them with a
23 breakdown of what that might cost to, you know, have a
24 meeting to reconvene the project stakeholders to
25 develop the outreach materials to actually get the
26 outreach materials published and then to go out and
27 actually distribute them, like we started to break that
28 down into actionable steps and so I guess, yeah, I just
29 wanted to say that there is plans to move forward.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So is that
32 something you wanted to hand out to us?

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: I can. We included -- so
35 in the letter you all sent to the Board we did include
36 an enclosure that had a break down of those different
37 things and I am happy to share that with you all if you
38 would like to see it.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I think we
41 would. Yes. And then someone needs to slip it under
42 the door for Charlie and Eva. So anything else on
43 this.

44

45 So I did have a time certain, I want to
46 maybe make sure -- I don't think we get to you, the
47 Fortymile Caribou Herd by the end of the day because
48 we got a few more reports here. I'm looking at this
49 agenda, and I okay'd this and now I'm starting to see

50

0085

1 why it came at the end. I remember when I first got on
2 the Council it was Craig Fleener that said all of these
3 reports take all the time and then we have no time left
4 for action items so we'll just have to be careful here.
5 I think it's very important to do the Fortymile
6 Caribou, but right now there's two reports up before we
7 hit new business. I don't think they would take that
8 long, and, actually I want to ask the Council members,
9 in our book, Tab 3 and Tab 4 is an update on the
10 Federal Subsistence Board actions and then there's
11 another update on the Alaska Board of Fisheries
12 actions; would you like to have that report or do you
13 feel comfortable with what's in our supplemental
14 material.

15

16 MR. BASSICH: I'm fine with reading it.

17

18 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, is
19 anyone not fine with reading it or does Brooke feel
20 strongly there is, a short report.

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Madame Chair. There's
23 just one thing on the Federal Subsistence Board actions
24 that wasn't included on the handout that's in your --
25 on Tab 3 that I'd like to let you know about and that's
26 -- actually there's two. Really quick.

27

28 The Board -- in addition to the
29 proposals listed there that they took action on, they
30 did support the proposal was submitted by the Native
31 Village of Chevak to update the customary and
32 traditional use determination for the Yukon to include
33 those communities for all species of salmon.

34

35 And the second thing was the RFR, the
36 request for reconsideration that was submitted by Ahtna
37 Incorporated, about FP21-10, the Board did decide to
38 move forward with a threshold analysis for that and so
39 OSM will be revisiting that and presenting it to you
40 all in the future.

41

42 So I just wanted to make you aware of
43 that.

44

45 Thank you.

46

47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any
48 questions, Council members.

49

50

0086

1 (No comments)

2

3

4 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So if I don't
5 hear any objection to read what's in your tabs for
6 those two items we will move along. And I am getting a
7 time certain for the Fortymile Caribou Herd report with
8 Jim HERRIGES and Jeff Gross and I'm going to call on
9 them right now. And then the next, these reports -- as
10 they're coming up, Council members, this did get
11 rearranged and it was a good suggestion at the time but
12 now when I look at it I'm thinking, oohh, we need to
13 look at this and make sure what you want to see because
14 it was for developing any wildlife proposals, to have
15 it first, and I just remember Craig saying, oh, my gosh,
16 it just gets too many questions and then all of a
17 sudden we don't have any time left for the things we
18 need to do. So just something to think about.

18

19 (Pause)

20

21 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I'm going to
22 call on Andy, he had a good suggestion here.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you, Madame
25 Chair. I think given the time constraints that we have
26 and the concerns that you just voiced, when we take up
27 the wildlife proposals, I would suggest that we call
28 upon the different agencies, Yukon Flats, whatever they
29 it might be that would have pertinent information in
30 regards to that proposal, to come up and address those
31 concerns, specifically to that proposal, rather than
32 giving their full report of their perspective agency.

33

34 So that might help streamline it. And
35 then if we have time at the end of the meeting, if
36 there's additional information from these different
37 wildlife Refuges or whatever, then they could fill in
38 those blanks.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Asking
41 the Council members, is that okay?

42

43 (No comments)

44

45 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any
46 objections.

47

48 (No objections)

49

50

0087

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, thank
2 you for that. All right, now, Jim and.....

3
4 MR. HERRIGES: Good afternoon, Madame
5 Chair and Board members. I will give a brief overview
6 of the -- our Eastern Interior Field Office report
7 which will include some on Fortymile Caribou and then,
8 Jeff, when he gets set up.....

9
10 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Can you pull
11 the microphone closer.

12
13 MR. HERRIGES: Sure. Will take it from
14 there. First of all I wanted to mention our moose
15 study in the Draanjik River drainage and Little Black
16 River with Staff of Yukon-Charley and Arctic National
17 Wildlife Refuge, we are continuing to monitor moose
18 there, movement for production, calf survival and we
19 are preparing a little flier that we can put together
20 to distribute to make that more widely known about
21 that. And I just talk a little bit in the report about
22 the monitoring reproduction and survival, 89 percent
23 calving rate, 35 percent of those twins, but only 35
24 percent of the calves survived until fall. And then I
25 also describe some general movement patterns and put in
26 a map in there so you could take a look at that.

27
28 And then moving on to Fortymile
29 caribou, I'll describe the -- just kind of run through
30 the season this winter so far. Both seasons opened on
31 October 27th and will close on December -- I'm sorry,
32 on March 31st. They both had a harvest limit of one
33 caribou for State and Federal seasons and caribou were
34 accessible in the Steese Highway area during the early
35 portion of the season and the State hunt closed on the
36 Steese Highway Zones 1 and 4 after December 2nd, but
37 all the areas have remained open for Federal
38 subsistence harvest.

39
40 About that time BLM had received input
41 about poor moose harvest in the Upper Tanana
42 communities, in that area, and high needs for
43 subsistence resources and so the Federal harvest limit
44 was changed to two caribou on December 3rd. The total
45 harvest so far this winter is 332 caribou, about half
46 and half cows and bulls and the quota is 415 caribou.
47 315 of those were in Zones 1 and 4. And since December
48 2nd, harvest has been slow, only nine caribou have been
49 reported harvested. With 766 harvested in the fall
50

0088

1 hunt, the total Alaska harvest for the regulatory year
2 so far is about 1,100 and it looks like cow harvest is
3 going to be probably the lowest since about 2013/14.
4

5 A bit on movement. Caribou were
6 accessible in the Steese Highway area during the early
7 portion of the season and the radio collars indicated
8 that the herd moved back and forth between there and
9 the Alaska/Yukon border before finally settling down in
10 January with the majority present in the Eastern
11 portion of the range as far as Dawson and a minority of
12 radio collared animals remained in Birch Creek and
13 Charley River during the winter.
14

15 I wanted to say that BLM will continue
16 to do our best to make appropriate Federal subsistence
17 decisions in consultation with Department of Fish and
18 Game, Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service and
19 the Eastern Interior RAC Chair. Those decisions have
20 typically involved season dates and individual harvest
21 limits, including sex and working those within kind of
22 what the outline of the State season, and as harvest
23 becomes more restricted, providing for subsistence
24 needs while limiting harvest may be getting a little
25 more challenging and I wanted to say that we welcome
26 input from the Eastern Interior RAC on things like
27 season dates, either sex seasons or bulls only and
28 harvest limits because those are the things that we
29 have to weigh every year.
30

31 And I'm going to mention, just briefly,
32 some of the study results that have been coming out of
33 some of our cooperative Fortymile Caribou Herd studies.
34 We had a pretty big multi-agency collaboration with the
35 University of Montana that was funded through our
36 cooperative agreement by BLM and that has supported
37 three PhD students in studying the Fortymile Herd and
38 some others and their publications used data funded and
39 collected by Fish and Game, BLM, Yukon government and
40 were supported by Park Service, NASA and others and
41 I've made a list of the publications and the things
42 that are in -- being prepared. And I'd be happy to
43 make paper copies of any of those if people want them.
44 And you can -- I -- I just gave a brief description of
45 some of the pertinent findings, which are brief, so
46 they may not be entirely accurate, for each of those
47 that you can look through. And I thought I would
48 mention just a couple that were -- that I think are
49 pertinent to kind of our discussion about herd
50

0089

1 population dynamics. The first one was radio collar --
2 or, I'm sorry, our video camera collar study that
3 looked at food habitats and documented that --
4 documented the reliance of caribou on willow in the
5 mid-summer as the main source of body rebuilding
6 protein in the diet and then lichens are the next most
7 utilized in the summer diet and are the dominant forage
8 and still in May and September the shoulder seasons as
9 they are all winter. And that -- that provides some
10 clarity and maybe feeds into expectations of range
11 recovery because lichen is not a fast recovering
12 vegetation type. And then the -- that kind of ties
13 into a paper that's still being prepared and so this is
14 preliminary but it documented a continued concentration
15 by caribou from 1992 to 2020 in a relatively small core
16 portion of the herd's total range during the calving
17 and post-calving season. And densities of caribou
18 increased through time as the population increased and
19 they found that disjunct shrub cover which is mostly
20 dwarf birch in that area has increased over the
21 decades, yet the willow component which is the
22 important food source has declined and those declines
23 -- and also the lichen cover has declined pretty
24 markedly in those high density areas. So that kind of
25 documents the impact and lends support to those calving
26 and post-calving habitats being somewhat limiting. And
27 basically supports the conclusions of the report, the
28 technical report that ADF&G did by Aborche and others
29 that the high densities of caribou in this core range
30 are leading to -- or are a factor in lower nutritional
31 nutrition of caribou.

32
33 And lastly I just wanted to mention the
34 cabin permit issue and say that I'm sorry that that's
35 been so much trouble. I definitely sympathize. I'm
36 not fully aware of that situation. I've talked with
37 our manager just briefly and I'm like, wow, that's
38 actually kind of complex and he's going to be here
39 tomorrow afternoon so if you'd like to have him talk at
40 all about that and some of the constraints that BLM is
41 under because, you know, we don't necessarily like
42 having to do the regulations that we're required to
43 follow, he can speak then.

44
45 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any questions
46 of Jim.

47
48 MS. POPE: I just had a quick question.

49
50

0090

1 MR. WRIGHT: This is Charlie.

2

3 MS. POPE: Oh, go ahead.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go ahead,
6 Charlie.

7

8 MR. WRIGHT: I got a question for you
9 on the Fortymile Herd. I know that they dropped a lot
10 of numbers last year and after all the uncertainties
11 with climate and problems and it just bothers me that
12 they're still hunting. I'm kind of curious, how about
13 any tribal consultation going on with your management
14 strategies; do you know anything about that? Can you
15 answer me that question.

16

17 MR. HERRIGES: We -- BLM hasn't done
18 any formal tribal consultation on management of the
19 Fortymile Herd. We, you know, primarily consult with
20 the RAC members, but the -- and we don't necessarily
21 have management authority to like effect overall
22 population management. The -- like I said, we normally
23 kind of work within the harvest quotas and the outline
24 that is set by Fish and Game. So that's about all I
25 can say on that. Sorry.

26

27 MR. WRIGHT: Could you -- okay, I'm --
28 I'm happy with that and I heard you say that you look
29 to the RAC members. I don't live up in there but I've
30 hunted up there a couple times and with low numbers
31 it's real important to go to bull only hunting, I'd say
32 to try to protect those cows with uncertainty going on
33 in that herd and its numbers and what could happen over
34 a winter again and with any hardship that's going on --
35 I know we haven't had that much rain this year but
36 still, the uncertainty is still there.

37

38 And I also heard you say something
39 about PhD students working on something with the
40 caribou, could you explain that a little bit more to
41 me, please?

42

43 MR. HERRIGES: Oh, yeah, sorry. The --
44 basically we financially supported, or supported
45 through providing access to the field and field
46 support, three students that were using -- that were
47 gathering data on habitat and food habits, et cetera,
48 and then combining that typically with data from Fish
49 and Game including radio collar locations to, you know,
50

0091

1 make inferences, see what's going on, what's driving
2 habitat selection behavior, et cetera. And so, I'm
3 sorry, you don't have the list, I can try and get it to
4 you, you can take a look at those, some of them are
5 fairly technical and so -- so I'll -- but you can
6 certainly ask questions if you want any of it.....

7

8 MR. WRIGHT: Okay.

9

10 MR. HERRIGES:kind of explained.

11

12 MR. WRIGHT: Okay, I kind of got my
13 questions backwards there. I'm sorry to interrupt you.
14 I was wanting to say that some tribal consultation
15 mixed in with a little bit of that and the Department
16 of Fish and Game would be a really good mix. I think
17 it's very critical that tribal consultation and the
18 people on the ground, even if it be RAC members who
19 live in that area who have a lot of knowledge from
20 years and years and years of being on the RAC and
21 living in that country, I think it would be a really
22 good mix in going forward to include them, they've got
23 so much knowledge. The people that live on the ground,
24 whether it be locals, RAC members, local Natives, those
25 are the real PhDs of the land and what those caribou
26 do. And I just like to say that that would be a
27 perfect mix and I really appreciate that, thank you.

28

29 MR. HERRIGES: Yeah, I like that
30 phrase, PhD's of the land. And, yeah, I'd be happy to
31 talk with you more about ideas of how to go about that.

32

33 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Charlie,
34 there's some.....

35

36 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you.

37

38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:reports
39 coming under your door so, sorry, it didn't get to you
40 sooner.

41

42 MR. BASSICH: Tell him the second page
43 answers a lot.

44

45 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy's my
46 little helper here, he said the second page answers a
47 lot of that. So, all right, anybody else.

48

49 Oh, Amanda, you had a question.

50

0092

1 MS. POPE: Yeah. Hello everyone.
2 Amanda Pope here. I was just curious if BLM would be
3 interested in reaching out to the locals around the
4 area kind of what Charlie was saying, having tribal
5 consultations, but also speaking about like the way,
6 like how to -- I guess like cabin use permits for
7 instance, how can the locals around the area of BLM
8 help BLM and the locals -- how can that process be made
9 and if BLM is willing to reach out to the locals to see
10 how they would like a permit application to be done.

11
12 Because -- I'm just going to speak on
13 behalf of myself now.

14
15 It would have been nice to learn more
16 about the whole permit application process and to have
17 paper applications available and to have the
18 willingness to work with us on my permit, in specific,
19 but it -- it would just be nice for the locals to have
20 a better voice on like regulations that BLM has
21 regarding permit use applications, land use
22 applications. I know that the Eastern Interior, BLM
23 had reached out and made a committee, I believe, of the
24 local area -- I don't know if you can elaborate on that
25 but I think Hammond (PH) was trying to do like a
26 committee -- forming one. So I'm not sure if you know
27 anything about that.

28
29 MR. HERRIGES: I'm not aware of what
30 you're talking about, no. No. But, yeah, I think
31 that's something we could look at as trying to do some
32 outreach in terms of applying for permits and
33 strategies and so forth. I'll pass that on to our
34 manager for sure.

35
36 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

37
38 Andy.

39
40 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. And
41 just quick comment, maybe to help with some of your
42 questions, Amanda. I think from my experience with
43 working a lot of the different Federal agencies through
44 this body here, what I've come to learn is that often
45 times a lot of these regulations that are -- that they
46 have to follow are regulations that are probably more
47 applicable down in the Lower 48 and don't necessarily
48 apply to the Alaskan lifestyle or the situations that
49 we have in Alaska, however they're still mandated to
50

0093

1 under -- to operate under those regulations and
2 procedures and I think that's where we're having a bit
3 of disconnect on some -- on this particular topic,
4 possibly. So I'm not trying to make excuses for
5 anything. It'd be nice to be able to have some maybe
6 modified procedural ways of doing things in Alaska as
7 opposed to say Montana, Colorado or Arizona, but I
8 don't know that the Federal level really works like
9 that. But that's what we're kind of up against and I
10 think that's sometimes where the frustration is. You
11 know, we, as Alaskans, live a certain way that most
12 people in the rest of the country don't so.

13

14 MR. WRIGHT: Hello, this is Charlie.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, go
17 ahead, Charlie.

18

19 MR. WRIGHT: I just have one more
20 comment. My concerns really come out of the big
21 trouble that we are in with our fisheries right now.
22 It is very concerning that we're going to -- that the
23 moose and caribou populations are going to get whittled
24 down to nothing and we're going to be in the same place
25 with those, that's why I'm so concerned about the
26 management of the caribou and how careful we have to be
27 to make sure that the people in -- where these herds
28 roam and live, and have their young ones, that those
29 people have that opportunity going into the future. So
30 I'm going to be watching close and trying to work with
31 organizations that manage these resources really close
32 so that's why I asked about tribal consultation, and
33 just try to involve everybody that can be involved to
34 try to do the best we can to manage these resources
35 going forward.

36

37 Thank you, Madame Chair.

38

39 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
40 Charlie. Brooke has something, go ahead.

41

42 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Madame Chair. I
43 just wanted to follow up with Charlie, Charlie when you
44 brought up tribal consultations with BLM, I'm not an
45 expert on this by any means, but I know that Federally-
46 recognized tribes can request government to government
47 consultations from Federal agencies and that is
48 something you could -- your tribe or any of the
49 Federally-recognized tribes could request that from
50

0094

1 BLM.

2

3

Thank you.

4

5

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And there is
6 -- going to the Federal Board meetings, there's always
7 -- and our meetings, they have a process for the tribes
8 to -- they have consultations and there isn't any --
9 not many reports come back so I don't know if you are
10 -- if the tribes are used up, and here's another place
11 that they don't have time for but that avenue exists
12 and it was created quite awhile ago. So just beware
13 that that's out there. Uh-huh, Orville Lind is the one
14 that runs it from OSM.

15

16

17

Okay. Anything else before we go to
Jeff.

18

19

(No comments)

20

21

22

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: It's your
turn Jeff Gross, Biologist from Tok.

23

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MR. GROSS: Thank you, Madame Chair.
For the record my name is Jeff Gross, I'm the Area
Biologist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
based out of Tok. I'm also the management biologist
for the Fortymile Caribou Herd. In the audience is
also Torsen Benson, our Caribou Research Biologist for
Region 3. I'm going to go ahead and provide some
information on the Fortymile Caribou Herd. I'll try to
move through it as quick as I can. Please excuse a
little bit of the rough edges with it. I just found
out about this recently, a few days ago and really put
this together yesterday. But afterwards, myself and
Torsen, if need be, can answer any questions too.

But I know there are some concerns,
there's been a lot concerns voiced about the Fortymile
Caribou Herd and the decline in the herd and the high
harvest in recent years and probably a lot of
questions, as well, as to why certain things happen the
way that they did. So anyway this presentation will
give a little bit of background information and up to
current times on population dynamics and harvest
management information for the herd. I'm primarily
concentrating back to the 1990s when we started looking
at -- or we started a real research push on the herd,
this continues through today. Let's see, yeah, through

0095

1 today and through the beginning of this decline.

2

3 So anyway go to the next slide please.

4

5 Kind of to begin with, we often -- when
6 we talk about the Fortymile Herd we often talk about --
7 or hear about the big historic highs -- my computer is
8 not going here, I don't know what it's doing -- there
9 it goes.

10

11 And the recent growth phase and the
12 success of the herd recovery. For years and years it's
13 been grow, grow, grow and everything's been good but
14 one thing to really emphasize is that larger caribou
15 populations across North America, across the world,
16 fluctuate, have large population fluctuations and the
17 Fortymile Caribou Herd is one of those herds. This
18 figure shows information back to the 1920s when there
19 was kind of a belief that the herd could have been as
20 large as a half a million caribou. A lot of the
21 information we've been able to put together since the
22 '50s and '60s kind of indicates that that was probably
23 pretty unlikely. And if you look at the peaks here.
24 If I can kind of draw your attention to the peaks in
25 the 1950s, 1960s that cluster of dots, that is around
26 50,000 caribou and with the lack of some of our modern
27 counting techniques, likely that was in the range of,
28 you know, 70,000 or so caribou, maybe 80,000 but pretty
29 unlikely that it was as high as 100,000. In the 1920s
30 it's important to point out there was no aircraft,
31 there was no radio collars, there's really no way to
32 tell the difference between -- from, you know, if you
33 see a caribou what herd they're associated with,
34 Nelchina, Fortymile, Porcupine, and there really were
35 no good techniques for counting caribou then, it was
36 really in the 1950s and '60s that they started
37 developing some of this when they had aircraft. And it
38 wasn't until the 1970s that we had radio collars and
39 some of our population estimates started to become more
40 accurate.

41

42 Go to the next slide, please.

43

44 So this most recent recovery began in
45 the 1970s when the herd reached a low of about five to
46 7,000. And in the mid-90s there was a grassroot effort
47 that started off by stakeholders in both Alaska and
48 Canada to put together a herd management plan, kind of
49 a publicly driven herd management plan to restore the
50

0096

1 herd and restore it not only in size but also to its
2 historic range. And during the late '90s Alaska
3 harvest was actually restricted to only 150 bulls
4 annually. There was a non-lethal predator control
5 program in the late 1990s. And then in 2001 a group of
6 Advisory Committees in the herd's range, kind of
7 surrounding herd's range Eagle, Central, Fairbanks,
8 Delta and the Upper Tanana and Tok, along with
9 representatives of the Eastern Interior RAC and folks
10 in Canada as well, came together and developed the
11 first harvest management plan for the herd and this was
12 a publicly driven effort and there were several
13 iterations of this through the most current iteration
14 that was redone in 2019 -- for the 2019/2023 period.
15 When we talk about public involvement, you know, and
16 communicating with folks on the ground, this is a
17 primary avenue we've used to engage with the public,
18 this and then the Board of Game process. From about
19 2006 to 2018 there was a lethal wolf control program as
20 well for the herd and it did -- it was a real concerted
21 effort to try to create a situation or try to make
22 progress towards population and harvest objectives for
23 the herd.

24
25 I'd point out that on the harvest
26 management coalition as well, over time, Sue
27 Entsminger, Andy Bassich, Don Woodruff and Bill Glanz
28 have all been involved in that working group that
29 worked on the Fortymile Herd. I may be missing
30 somebody, I'm not sure. But, anyway I just wanted to
31 point that out. We don't often talk about who all is
32 involved. I like to put blame on other people.

33
34 (Laughter)

35
36 MR. GROSS: No, I'm just kidding.

37
38 Okay, next slide please.

39
40 So since 2001, the first harvest
41 management plan, the primary goal for the herd has been
42 meant to grow the herd and bring it back to its
43 historic range and for increased harvest, but also
44 doing this only to the extent possible within
45 sustainable limits of the herd. And the most recent
46 iteration of the harvest plan 2019/2023 harvest plan,
47 while retaining the goals for continued increase in the
48 herd it put more emphasis on managing the herd based on
49 nutrition because of a lot of our research and
50

0097

1 nutritional concerns that we brought to the committee
2 and then talking about with the Board of Game and
3 others. And it laid out some specific strategy
4 management strategies related to nutrition of the herd
5 rather than harvest strategy based solely on herd
6 numbers.

7

8 If you can go to the next slide,
9 please.

10

11 Under the current plan, level of
12 harvest of the herd was set at appropriate levels to
13 achieve desired population trend really based on
14 nutritional status of the herd. And specifically the
15 three alternatives were No. 1, the first one called for
16 slow growth when nutritional data indicated the herd
17 could sustain a higher population level. The second
18 one was for stabilization if nutritional data indicated
19 the herd was likely close to the kind of maximum herd
20 size or carrying capacity of the habitat to sustain the
21 herd at a current size. And the third was for
22 reduction of the herd if nutritional data indicated the
23 population size was likely above sustainable levels or
24 the herd was beginning to decline because of nutrition.

25

26

27 If you can go to the next slide,
28 please.

29

30 Management and research efforts focus
31 on nutritional status of the herd have been ongoing
32 since 1990 so this has been over a 30 year effort with
33 millions of dollars put into it. Information from
34 annual surveys, capture projects, and an ongoing
35 mortality study have all been used to better understand
36 nutritional shortfalls the herd is experiencing and to
37 evaluate long-term goals and objectives for the herd,
38 distribution and harvest management strategies.

39

40 Next slide, please.

41

42 Assessing nutritional status of the
43 increasing Fortymile Herd was discussed in a technical
44 bulletin that was authored by a previous caribou
45 research biologist who is now retired from the
46 Department back in 2012. In that bulleting, that
47 technical bulletin, birth dates and fall calf weights
48 were identified as two key indices to monitor to assess
49 nutritional status of the herd. In addition he spoke a

50

0098

1 lot to -- or looked at seasonal herd movements and
2 range expansion.....

3

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Excuse me, I don't
5 know if you can hear me or not, but I'm being cut off,
6 on and off, and I'm having technical difficulties with
7 this thing. I can't hear you.

8

9 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Jeff, could
10 you pull your mic in closer. I think that might be the
11 problem.

12

13 MR. GROSS: Sure. Can you hear me
14 there.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Can you hear
17 him now?

18

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I was told to call
20 in today but nothing's working. I'll just sign off for
21 now, thank you.

22

23 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, who was
24 that -- she already signed out.

25

26 (Pause)

27

28 MR. GROSS: Okay, go on to the next
29 slide, please.

30

31 So I'll go through some of the data on
32 the herd now. Some of the important demographics of
33 the herd. Age at first reproduction for the Fortymile
34 Herd is 36 months, so cows that are three years old
35 generally give birth to their first calf, or are able
36 to give birth to their first calf. Usually two year
37 olds and younger don't give birth. So birth rates
38 amongst 36 year old -- or 36 month old cows have been
39 identified in the literature and by Borchhi as a
40 sensitive indicator of herd nutrition more sensitive
41 than birth rates of older adult cows. So this plot
42 shows the annual birth rates over time of three year
43 old cows in red and cows that are four years of age or
44 older in blue; it's a pretty stark difference. Birth
45 rates have declined over the past 10 to 15 years since
46 the herd approached and exceeded about 50,000 caribou,
47 especially among the younger three year old cows.

48

49 Next slide, please.

50

0099

1 So in the technical bulletin Borch
2 wrote in 2012 he made a suggestion that a five year
3 moving average of the three year old birth rates can be
4 used as an indicator, an index to guide Fortymile Herd
5 management decisions. How this works is based on this
6 five year moving average, if the average is above 60
7 percent it likely indicates that herd nutrition is
8 sufficient for the current population level or can
9 sustain a higher level. An average of 55 to 60 percent
10 he said should be viewed as a cautionary signal and
11 nutritional indicators should be closely monitored.
12 And an average below 55 percent should be viewed as an
13 indicator that nutritional condition of the herd may be
14 compromised.

15
16 Next slide, please.

17
18 This may seem very specific but we look
19 back at this now and it's extraordinary looking at the
20 historic data how accurate his prediction was.

21
22 The reason, why do we use a five year
23 running average, because we only have about 15 to 25
24 three year old cows collared that we can monitor each
25 spring, by adding the data together and averaging over
26 five year periods, it allows for a larger sample size
27 for us to remove some of the annual variation because
28 there is a fair amount of variation in any given year
29 in birth rates amongst three year olds, but this kind
30 of helps it level out as you can see here, you don't
31 see a lot of up and down. The five year moving average
32 of three year old birth rates for the Fortymile Herd
33 fell to 51 percent in 2018 and has remained below that
34 level since 2018 including a record low of 33 percent
35 this past spring. But if you notice about in 2010/2011
36 is where it first hit that 55 percent cautionary
37 threshold and that's when we hit about 50,000 caribou.
38 And then it continued -- the herd continued to increase
39 over time and then finally it really dropped off when
40 we started seeing the decline in about 2018.

41
42 Next slide, please.

43
44 Weights of newborn calves is also
45 another indicator of condition of the herd. As you can
46 see from this graph, the weights have declined
47 significantly likely due to the nutritional condition
48 of the cows in recent years. There's really two
49 periods when we looked at this, one was in the 1990s
50

0100

1 and early 2000s when the herd's nutritional condition
2 was considered to be very high and then this most
3 recent effort began kind of when the herd was still in
4 pretty decent nutritional condition and has extended
5 through the beginning of the decline. And, of course,
6 calves born under weight have a lower likelihood of
7 surviving to one year of age and likely adulthood as
8 well.

9

10 Next slide, please.

11

12 MR. BASSICH: I have a question.

13

14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: There's a
15 question.

16

17 MR. BASSICH: Yeah.

18

19 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy.

20

21 MR. GROSS: Okay.

22

23 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Jeff.

24

25 MR. GROSS: Sure.

26

27 MR. BASSICH: Is there any relationship
28 between the weight of calves and the age of the mother?
29 I guess what I'm trying to ask is do younger mothers
30 produce smaller calves than older more mature mothers?

31

32 MR. GROSS: We've kind of knocked that
33 around a little bit. I don't know if Torsen has
34 anything better to say. You know there is some unknown
35 things here in recent years because we have had smaller
36 calves which has resulted in smaller cows in the herd
37 probably in recent years but I don't know.

38

39 Do you have an answer to that?

40

41 MR. BENSON: I don't think we really
42 know. I don't think -- yeah, Andy, I don't think we've
43 looked at that question specifically. On average
44 they're all lighter now but.....

45

46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: You might
47 need to come up.

48

49 MR. BENSON:as far as age.....

50

0101

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah.

2

3 MR. BENSON: Andy asked if older calves

4 -- I mean younger cows have lighter cows and I said we

5 really don't know the answer to that question, we

6 haven't addressed that specifically. We do know that

7 on average all the calves are lighter.

8

9 MR. BASSICH: Okay. I guess just to

10 help you with my line of thinking, I see kind of a

11 correlation between this and king salmon, we're losing

12 the large females and our fish are getting smaller and

13 if we're hunting both sexes, and people tend to always

14 shoot the biggest caribou they see, then we may be also

15 hunting out the more productive females out of the herd

16 as we're doing this decline, this controlled decline of

17 the herd, too. So just food for thought.

18

19 If you had really hard data that would

20 be really interesting to know. But that's just my line

21 of thinking, whether it's right or wrong, it's just

22 kind of one of those common sense that when you live

23 out there those are the things you notice.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 MR. GROSS: Yeah, I think

28 proportionally, you know, we try to -- we recollar cows

29 and we try to keep a pretty good representation of the

30 age structure in the sample size. I mean we'd have to

31 look at it real closely, scrutinize it to really see if

32 our average age of the cows we've been monitoring has

33 declined.....

34

35 MS. BURK: This is Eva, can you speak

36 up please.

37

38 MR. GROSS: Okay. But we -- yeah, like

39 Torsen said we haven't done that so.

40

41 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So just a

42 quick question from that last slide. Am I reading that

43 properly that the female, there's less females being

44 born?

45

46 MR. GROSS: No, that's just weights.

47

48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Those are

49 weights, okay.

50

0102

1 MR. GROSS: Yeah. So the red is.....

2

3 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, sorry.

4 Sorry.

5

6 MR. GROSS: So the red is.....

7

8 MR. BENSON: Females are always a

9 little bit lighter than males.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Okay,

12 go ahead.

13

14 MR. GROSS: Okay, go to the next slide.

15

16 MS. POPE: I'm sorry, I'm just going to

17 have a quick question.

18

19 MR. GROSS: Sure.

20

21 MS. POPE: Really quick. I've heard

22 some folks say that the Fortymile Herd kind of mixed in

23 with the Nelchina Herd, is that something that you guys

24 have seen?

25

26 MR. GROSS: There is some mixing during

27 the winter but we look at exchange between herds, or we

28 evaluate that based on how many radio collared animals

29 switch between herds and we haven't seen any kind of

30 change in that. It happens occasionally but at a very

31 low percentage. I mean, you know, it's kind of a

32 natural way for genetic.....

33

34 MR. BENSON: Diversity.

35

36 MR. GROSS:diversity and

37 interchange so it does occur to some level.

38

39 MS. POPE: Uh-huh.

40

41 MR. GROSS: But not in -- it really

42 doesn't affect numbers.

43

44 MS. POPE: Okay. So the reason I'm

45 asking is because I think that I've -- like from the

46 stuff that I've read, the Nelchina Herd Caribou are

47 smaller than the Fortymile Herd so that's why I was

48 asking.

49

50

0103

1 MR. GROSS: I don't believe they are
2 but.....

3
4 MR. BENSON: Was it a question about
5 the number of Nelchina Caribou versus Fortymile or
6 their body sizes?

7
8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Well,
9 probably the size.

10
11 MS. POPE: Well, the -- yeah, the size.

12
13 MR. WRIGHT: The body size.

14
15 MS. POPE: That's why I was asking that
16 question, so thank you.

17
18 MR. BENSON: Yeah, the Fortymile are
19 not bigger than the Nelchina Herd, I think that they're
20 probably pretty similar.

21
22 MR. GROSS: So in this slide we're
23 looking at fall calf weights of female calves so fall
24 weights of calves in the Fortymile Herd which is
25 approximately four months of age have also declined
26 over time. In recent years this is, in part, due to
27 lower birth rates but it's also due to reduce nutrition
28 -- or likely due to reduced nutrition of the calves
29 that provide milk to the calves and reduced range
30 quality on the calving -- post-calving range --
31 especially the post-calving range and summer range
32 that's -- that's reduced -- likely reducing quality and
33 hasn't allowed the calves to put on the body mass that
34 they've had in previous years. And of course calves
35 that are lighter in the fall likely have a lower
36 survival rate over the -- over a harsh winter. So,
37 again, another piece of the puzzle.

38
39 Next slide, please.

40
41 MR. GROSS: So this figure shows calf
42 survival to one year of age, a significant decline in
43 recent years. I mean really biology is pretty simple.
44 You have animals that are born and you have animals
45 that die. And generally younger animals are more
46 susceptible to dying than older animals. But you need
47 enough younger animals to replace all the other animals
48 that die. So this is the first piece of the puzzle,
49 the young animals, there's definitely been a decline.
50

0104

1 And meaning fewer caribou making it to adulthood and
2 replacing adults that are dying. So bottom line, when
3 there's fewer calves to replace the adults that die
4 each year, at some point the population will likely
5 stabilize or begin to decline depending on how much of
6 a shortfall there is.

7

8 Next slide, please.

9

10 So more significantly in recent years
11 and this is where we tend to start seeing a decline in
12 caribou populations, the adults have -- specifically
13 the adult cows have had lower than average survival
14 rates in recent years. And when the calves and adults
15 have reduced survival rates -- and we also looked at
16 our female yearlings, which have also declined, or have
17 also experienced higher survival rates, when these
18 various age classes all have lower survival rates it's
19 a compounding effect and this is when a precipitous
20 decline in a caribou herd can occur, which is what
21 we've been seeing in the Fortymile Herd.

22

23 Next slide, please.

24

25 We also look at sex and age composition
26 of the herd. In the fall we do composition surveys and
27 one of the things we look at is the bull/cow ratios and
28 if you look at the red and green lines here you can
29 kind of see they remain fairly, fairly stable over time
30 and all this indicates is that our current management
31 strategies for harvesting bulls and cows has allowed us
32 to maintain a bull to cow ratio at or above the 35
33 bulls per 100 cows which is the management object --
34 one of the management objectives for the herd.

35

36 Next slide, please.

37

38 So to kind of summarize, the trend of
39 the herd here, the herd likely peaked in about 2017
40 which we got a photo census that year and likely peaked
41 a little over 80,000. The models that continued to be
42 developed through 2020 indicated that the herd began a
43 decline in about 2018, likely due to reduced
44 nutritional condition from overgrazing of the herd's
45 range. And this past summer, June of 2022, we did
46 complete another photo census and we feel it was a good
47 quality photo census that supports our conclusion that
48 the herd has experienced a precipitous decline and was
49 at about 40,000 caribou this last June, down from a
50

0105

1 little over 80,000 in 2017.

2

3 Next slide, please.

4

5 So in 2020, after determining the herd
6 was likely experiencing a precipitous decline it was
7 determined that the best management strategy for the
8 herd and this was based on consultations with all our
9 caribou biologists, caribou biologists across different
10 agencies and even in Canada, the best strategy for the
11 herd was to quickly reduce the herd to the level where
12 we first started seeing, you know, some pretty
13 significant effects of nutritional limitation which was
14 about 50,000 caribou to minimize the likelihood of
15 additional damage to the herd's range and bring the
16 herd size down to a more sustainable level. So in 2020
17 and 2021 the harvest quota was set at 10,000 and 5,000
18 caribou respectively, those are annual quotas, spread
19 over the fall/winter seasons to accomplish this
20 reduction in herd size. During these years, in 2020
21 about 7,300 caribou were harvested and in 2021 about
22 4,500 caribou were harvested. Following the 2022
23 census where we found about 40,000 caribou in the herd,
24 which is below our goal of 50,000 or below 50,000 we
25 pulled back the reins on harvest and reduced it to a
26 level to prevent the harvest from causing any further
27 -- or adding to any further reduction in herd size,
28 mainly limiting it to bulls, in 2022 the quota was set
29 at 1,200 with no more than 200 cows. This allowed the
30 harvest of some of the surplus bulls in the herd and
31 limited compensatory harvest of cows.

32

33 So what's going to happen next is a
34 question I get a lot. In 2023 the annual quota will
35 likely be reduced further. This isn't a decision that
36 only I make, it's going to involve a lot of folks above
37 me, but it's likely going to be between 400 and 1,200
38 caribou, honestly more around 600, 700 maybe or maybe a
39 little less, and it'll depend on our final survival
40 rates for this year. We'll see where we fall out with
41 survival through the spring with the animals that are
42 out there now and this next spring's birth rate and
43 hopefully another photo census this coming June if we
44 can possibly complete one.

45

46 Next slide, please.

47

48 Well, actually if you could go back to
49 that slide for a second.

50

0106

1 You can see on the right hand side
2 there kind of where the harvest quotas were so you can
3 see for a long time we were at about 850 to 1,000 as
4 the herd was increasing and about 2018, and '19 is when
5 we determined that the herd had achieved a pretty high
6 population level so we were able to adjust those quotas
7 up a fair bit and then we detected the decline. So it
8 all happened honestly fairly quickly.

9

10 Next slide, please.

11

12 So what do we do now.

13

14 For now we're kind of in a holding
15 pattern because we don't know where the bottom is going
16 to be or where the herd may stabilize. We're
17 continuing to watch nutritional condition of the
18 animals and conduct our surveys and there will be a
19 point where the population will begin to -- or
20 nutritional will begin to improve and the population
21 should stabilize, so at this point we're not planning
22 on using harvest to try to affect the herd anymore,
23 we're just going to continue to monitor it and once it
24 does begin to stabilize and some of our indices improve
25 we can start talking about strategies for recovery,
26 revised population and harvest objectives. We're
27 likely not going to be managing this herd for, you
28 know, 50 to 100,000 in the future, it's probably going
29 to be lower than that. The best guess number I've
30 thrown around a little bit looking at our data is
31 probably going to be somewhere under 50,000, anywhere
32 30 to 45,000 in hopes that -- and we have hopes that
33 we'll be able to use harvest to maintain it at a more
34 sustainable level and maybe allow it to increase slowly
35 over time to kind of optimize, you know, nutritional
36 condition and harvest rates in the herd.

37

38 So future harvest will really depend on
39 what the caribou tell us from our monitoring efforts.

40

41 Go to the next slide.

42

43 And we can answer any questions.

44

45 MR. WRIGHT: Say it again.

46

47 MS. BURK: This is Eva.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Eva, go

50

0107

1 ahead.

2

3

4 MS. BURK: I have a question just about
5 like management decisions that were made and not to
6 like, you know, with all due respect for this but I
7 think like I appreciate the effort to, you know,
8 realize that, of course, managing the herd based on
9 nutrition, that is exactly how our people have done it
10 for a long time, that's why we were nomadic, we moved
11 around because we realized an area needed to regenerate
12 to provide the amount of nutrition so -- so when a
13 decision is made to say, oh, hey, we're -- we don't
14 have the right great birthing rates, nutrition is not
15 looking good, we need to do a controlled decline I
16 think is what I heard, what the term was, and I think
17 that I really want to emphasize and I also heard that
18 the biologist only used -- and I might not have heard
19 this right so correct me if I'm wrong, that the
20 biologists rely on the EIRAC and Fish and Game for
21 public process and maybe for public input and I would
22 just say if -- you definitely need to be looking at
23 doing tribal consultation and -- and just as much as
24 tribes can reach out to the Federal Subsistence Board,
25 and we're working on that, from a tribal member's
26 perspective, and, you know, now I'm going to switch
27 hats and think about what it's like to be a
28 Minto/Nenana AC, sometimes we don't realize the tools
29 that we have, sometimes it'd be nice if people were
30 coming to us and presenting information directly to us.

31

32 And so there's two -- there's a couple
33 instances where, you know, if you need someone to come
34 in and do a controlled decline, given the situation
35 with our subsistence resources, ungulates, fish that
36 the Native people and the tribes be given the first
37 right to go in and help with that controlled decline
38 and do it respectfully. Because when you guys -- well,
39 not you guys, sorry, but when the Fortymile hunt --
40 everybody was out there ripping up the land and further
41 reducing the nutritional carrying capacity of the
42 land, right, but also, you know, I had my elder
43 friends, you know, go out to the dump and pull out four
44 whole caribou and salvage them, out of a dumpster. We
45 were able to take many pictures of wanton waste and
46 just, you know, ripping up the environment, so next
47 time if there is a time, looking on your numbers for
48 quota, it's looking really not that great, you know,
49 that this was a rushed decision and that this would
50 have been a time that you go in to the communities and

50

0108

1 get the traditional knowledge because there's more
2 insight on what historical populations, you know, data
3 wasn't always available to us but having observation of
4 an area over many, many years, plus an oral account of
5 the area for generations and generations, you really
6 have an understanding of what was there.

7

8 Like what we're talking about with the
9 salmon right now, people are counting these little bits
10 of chum and king, you know, oh, these are the
11 historical averages -- and, no, there are not, because
12 there used to be eight pulses of king salmon in the
13 Yukon River. There used to be king salmon coming up
14 the river all the way up into October 14th, I have a
15 picture of my grandma getting king salmon, I think they
16 said eight come -- October 14th, 1945 and what's
17 significant about that is that the water was actually
18 open in that picture, there wasn't a lot of ice, so,
19 you know, we've had warm periods before where
20 everything didn't massively, you know, seeing the
21 impacts that we're seeing on the scale that we're
22 seeing them now.

23

24 And then this is another issue over in
25 Denali Park, right, there's a bunch of beavers. And we
26 were asked, Charlie and I, personally, to go in and
27 shoot beavers in the summer, and that is not the way
28 that you do it, especially when people are facing food
29 insecurities. Those beavers are an excellent source of
30 food and fur but they need to be trapped and taken
31 respectfully at the time of the year, right now would
32 be a great time, and so that we're respecting those
33 animals the way they should be.

34

35 So my point is, let's think about when
36 we have these situations, how to engage local people,
37 rural people, tribal people, and have them help when
38 there is an over abundance of something because in this
39 day and age, that might just be a very, very temporary
40 thing, because we're swinging from one extreme to the
41 next, you know, we do not know what's coming down.

42

43 So I just wanted to really emphasize
44 that, that inclusion of traditional knowledge.

45

46 Thank you.

47

48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
49 questions. Amanda.

50

0109

1 MS. POPE: Yes, hello, thank you,
2 Madame Chair. I guess my question is, what is the
3 ratio of Alaskans applying to hunt this herd than
4 outside people, like non-Alaskans, would you happen to
5 know that ratio?

6
7 MR. GROSS: Through the Chair. Member
8 Pope. I don't have those numbers exactly, but non-
9 residents make up a very small percentage of the
10 harvest, less than five percent.

11
12 MS. POPE: Okay. I guess my concern is
13 if the herd is going to be maintained at a healthy
14 level, that you think is healthy, or the -- the -- or,
15 not you personally but the management team, then I
16 think Alaskans, especially rural Alaska should have
17 priority to be able to harvest those animals first than
18 outside folks. I just think in going ahead with
19 management that the option for the people who live in
20 Alaska have priority.

21
22 Thank you.

23
24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. Thank
25 you for that, Amanda. You know, I think the Fortymile
26 Herd Coalition makes a lot of recommendations on how
27 the hunts are going to take place, dates, that sort of
28 thing, and then speaking to what your concerns are,
29 that has been met in the past -- or addressed in the
30 past, I should say, by the Federal regulations, which
31 will allow Federal-qualified hunters to hunt earlier in
32 the season so they get basically the first crack at the
33 animals in some situations. So those are the areas
34 within the current framework of how decisions are made,
35 or recommendations are made for the harvest plan; those
36 are some of the ways that that is addressed, is by
37 opening it up to a Federal -- opening up an area to
38 Federally-qualified users on Federal lands at an
39 earlier date than what the State would be.

40
41 So, you know, I think a lot of these
42 questions and everything, a lot of the future plans for
43 harvest and quotas and all that will be addressed and
44 can be addressed through the Fortymile Coalition, which
45 I think does a really good job of making
46 recommendations. I think we're going through some
47 pretty tough times but I think there's a lot of room to
48 improve that process.

49
50

0110

1 And I guess from my own personal
2 perspective, I understand the tribal consultation
3 aspect of it but I guess, from my own personal
4 perspective most of the people that live on the land
5 are also able to participate in the local ACs as well
6 and those ACs and this body here, the Federal body, the
7 Eastern RAC have seats on the Coalition, so the ability
8 to be represented, in my view, is pretty darn good. If
9 you're interested and you want to be a part of it then
10 the opportunity is there and I don't really see -- my
11 personal feeling is I don't really see a need to start
12 opening it up. I think one of the things that makes
13 that coalition so effective is that it is a good
14 representation of the area that the caribou live in by
15 the people who live in those areas and that's always
16 been a really strong point about that coalition, it's
17 the users and the people who live in that region that
18 are helping to make those decisions, those management
19 decisions, those recommendations. So I don't think
20 anybody's really being left out unless you want to be
21 left out. I think if you want to be a part of it, it's
22 pretty easy to be a part of under the current plan.

23

24 That's my perspective on it anyway.

25

26 I just needed to kind of make some of
27 those clarifying points because.....

28

29 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes.

30

31 MR. BASSICH:I think it's
32 important. Thank you.

33

34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, and I
35 might add that we've had as many as four RAC members on
36 the coalition because of the AC members that.....

37

38 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, Bill Glanz.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Bill,
41 Don, yourself, and then we had a representative from
42 the Council too, so it would end up like being four
43 from the Council.

44

45 Don.

46

47 MR. WOODRUFF: The Delta
48 representative, Will Koehler, Mike Koehler, they were
49 both participating in the coalition.

50

0111

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, and one
2 of them was a member of it, yeah, so, yeah. Okay. Are
3 there any other questions.

4
5 (No comments)

6
7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So we can
8 talk about who's going to be representing us in the
9 future, yeah. Is that something you want to do now --
10 okay, so now we want to pick a Council member, and
11 who's on ACs and is actually going to be a
12 representative from their AC; do you know if you would
13 be you guys?

14
15 MR. BASSICH: Madame Chair, I've been
16 representing the Eagle AC at the coalition. Don has
17 been representing the Eastern RAC.

18
19 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. And
20 then we had Bill and then we had -- I think it was
21 Michael Koehler from here.

22
23 MR. BASSICH: Right.

24
25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah.
26 So.....

27
28 MR. BASSICH: And I guess maybe what I
29 would ask is what would be the process to add, say, a
30 representative from Circle or for Ft. Yukon to that
31 coalition, what's the process for.....

32
33 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yukon Flats.

34
35 MR. BASSICH: Yukon Flats, I'm sorry.
36 Yukon Flats. What's the.....

37
38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Is that your
39 AC? Go ahead, Brooke, do you have -- well, that's all
40 the AC's, you know, which is the State, so, we, as a
41 Council we need to think about who would be
42 representing their AC and anybody that's on an AC, I'd
43 highly recommend you get the appointment to represent
44 your AC and.....

45
46 MR. GROSS: Madame Chair, we talked a
47 about this a little bit on the break, but it's -- yeah,
48 I don't think members from ACs that have stepped
49 forward and asked to be included, I don't know that
50

0112

1 they've ever been turned away. So it's a matter of --
2 we haven't gone out and tried to solicit AC's that are
3 outside the herd's range but as far as I know they've
4 never been turned away. So it's just a matter making
5 it clear and I can pass that along.

6
7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go ahead,
8 Amanda.

9
10 MS. POPE: Thank you, Madame Chair. If
11 there's an option to add the Yukon Flats AC to have a
12 rep come from there then I could bring it to the next
13 AC meeting and then that body will delegate whoever
14 they want. But I mean if you guys are okay I could ask
15 them that at the next meeting.

16
17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.
18 Absolutely. I highly recommend it for every RAC member
19 that's on an AC. Yeah. And, Charlie, you're on one
20 too, right.

21
22 MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I am.

23
24 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.

25
26 MR. WRIGHT: I'm taking Stanley's spot
27 and Eva is also on her Minto/Nenana one also.

28
29 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Oh, well, I
30 see. Well, these are all options, as you all know, so
31 what we need to do is choose somebody from this RAC to
32 represent the coalition and Donald was it.

33
34 MS. BURK: I'm -- I was -- yeah, I
35 think somebody that lives closer to the area, you know,
36 we might hunt up there once in awhile but we're not
37 from there.

38
39 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I
40 understand Eva and Donald was the represen.....

41
42 MS. BURK: So I wouldn't.....

43
44 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:was the
45 represen -- go ahead, Charlie. Was that you Charlie.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, so we
50

0113

1 need a motion to.....

2

3 MR. BASSICH: You want a motion or.....

4

5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Well, Donald,
6 are you still willing?

7

8 MR. WOODRUFF: Yeah.

9

10 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.
11 Donald's still willing, do we need a motion, probably.

12

13 MS. MCDAVID: It would be good to have
14 a motion and perhaps the Council could talk about
15 adding an alternate or if you want to say if another
16 Council member is representing an AC, and already
17 attending, maybe they could wear two hats if, you know,
18 the elected rep isn't able to go for some reason.

19

20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Motion.

21

22 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Madame Chair.
23 I'd like to make a motion to have Donald Woodruff
24 represent the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory
25 Council as the representative on the Fortymile
26 Coalition.

27

28 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Is there a
29 second.

30

31 MS. POPE: I'll second.

32

33 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.
34 Any other discussion. Donald.

35

36 MR. WOODRUFF: I'd like to point out
37 that the Canadians, tribes and the government are very
38 active with this coalition and they may have diverse
39 views but they're well respected to the coalition so
40 it's a good dialogue that we have even though it can be
41 contentious at times.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And I might
46 be interested as an alternate to you for Donald.

47

48 MR. BASSICH: We probably ought to do
49 the first one first, vote on the motion.

50

0114

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Well,
2 the suggestion is let's vote on the motion first. So
3 I'm going to ask for a unanimous consent for Donald to
4 be the rep for our Council. Is there any objection.

5
6 (No objections)

7
8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, hearing
9 none then Donald is the rep. And I was just going to
10 volunteer to be an alternate to Donald, yeah, does that
11 need a motion also.

12
13 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, please.

14
15 MR. BASSICH: How about a motion of I'd
16 like to make a motion that the Eastern Interior
17 Advisory Council provide for an alternate for Donald
18 Woodruff and that that alternate be chosen as needed.
19 Madame Chair.

20
21 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: A second.

22
23 MR. WOODRUFF: I second that.

24
25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any
26 discussion.

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And, again,
31 I'm going to ask for unanimous consent. Is there any
32 objection.

33
34 (No objections)

35
36 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, hearing
37 none. Next on the agenda. I'm trying to look at this
38 agenda, I'm glad that you guys are flexible. But we do
39 have a time certain at 3:00 p.m., North Pacific
40 Fisheries Management Council, salmon bycatch update.
41 So I guess we'll change places here -- are you done?

42
43 MR. GROSS: And thank you, Madame
44 Chair, for allowing us to come up.

45
46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
47 guys. Thank you, very much.

48
49 MR. BASSICH: Thanks Jeff.

50

0115

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thanks for
2 coming.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Dr. Stram, this is Brooke
5 McDavid. I just wanted to confirm that you're on the
6 line with us and let you know that we are getting your
7 presentation loaded here and we'll let you know as soon
8 as it's ready.

9
10 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

11
12 DR. STRAM: Hi, Brooke. This is Diana,
13 hopefully you guys can hear me okay.

14
15 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, we can.

16
17 DR. STRAM: Okay, great. Yeah, let me
18 know. I sent Brooke a shortened version to try to
19 speed things up but I'm obviously happy to answer any
20 questions and go into any more detail but I was going
21 to try to give you a more abbreviated version given
22 where you were in your agenda. But just let me know
23 when you have it up and I'm happy to walk through it.

24
25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, go
26 ahead. We have the report in front of us.

27
28 DR. STRAM: Okay, great. So I'm on
29 Slide 2 right now. I just wanted to keep perspective
30 on what we manage from the North Pacific Fishery
31 Management Council. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act
32 there is eight fishery management councils, we manage
33 the waters three to 200 miles off shore. We're the
34 North Pacific region. There are seven other regions
35 that manage other aspects. We are the -- the Council
36 members.....

37
38 You can go to Slide 3.

39
40 The Council and the National Marine
41 Fisheries Service manage the fisheries in the Federal
42 waters. We make management -- the Council makes
43 management recommendations to the Secretary of
44 Commerce, the Secretary of Commerce then have to
45 approve those recommendations. We work in tandem with
46 the National Marine Fisheries Service. They're more
47 the on the grounds people. The Council does the policy
48 recommendations while the National Marine Fisheries
49 Service does all of the in-season management and
50

0116

1 implements the regulations. We do work with the Alaska
2 Department of Fish and Game, but we primarily manage
3 crab and groundfish in the North Pacific.

4

5 I'm on Slide 4 right now. I'm not
6 sure, hopefully you guys are on the same page.

7

8 Just a little bit of a back drop of
9 what we are. We do meet five times annually and all of
10 our meetings are open to the public. We have advisory
11 bodies to the council. We have a science and
12 statistical committee and an advisory panel and they
13 provide input to the Council at every Council meeting.
14 We also have different advisory body committees that
15 are sometimes tasked individually. Of interest to you
16 all is the fact that we have a salmon bycatch committee
17 that's newly appointed, I'll get into that in a little
18 bit in terms of where we're at with dealing with salmon
19 bycatch issues.

20

21 So we -- we -- obviously the Alaska
22 Department of Fish and Game is who manages how salmon
23 are -- the escapement and salmon in general, the only
24 part of it that the Council deals with is in the three
25 to 200 mile zone when salmon are caught as bycatch and
26 so salmon are caught as bycatch, chum and chinook only,
27 in primarily the pollock fishery. And so that's
28 usually what we're addressing.

29

30 So just Slide 5 in terms of our general
31 regions.

32

33 The Arctic, the Bering Sea, Aleutian
34 Islands and the Gulf of Alaska. What I'm talking about
35 today is really focused on the Bering Sea and will
36 focus mostly on the Bering Sea pollock fishery.

37

38 So Slide 6 then, what is bycatch.

39

40 There is a legal definition of bycatch
41 but there's also prohibitive species catch so I'll try
42 to kind of fast forward through some of this but
43 basically salmon, as it -- is a prohibited species
44 under our fisheries management plan and so it's
45 something that cannot be sold or kept for personal use
46 and so it has to be discarded unless it can be donated
47 in a food donation program. And so the National Marine
48 Fisheries Service works with SeaShare, who provides the
49 food donation program for salmon that are caught as

50

0117

1 bycatch and can be food grade donated.

2

3

I'm on Slide 7 now.

4

5

6 And just to provide the -- there's
7 obviously more species of salmon than we're talking
8 about here but the majority -- the way that we manage
9 it in the Federal fishery, we manage them as a non-
10 chinook category and the chinook category and so we
11 have different regulations for chinook that I'll go
12 over, but when we talk about chum, it's 99 percent or
13 more, the non-chinook category is 99 percent or more of
14 chum so really the fishery does not catch sockeye,
15 coho, pinks so we don't really address those at all
16 because it's extremely nominal, it is just chum and
17 just chinook.

17

18

On Slide 8.

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I'm on Slide 10 now.

42 And so just to walk through kind of how
43 we -- how the Council has managed things previously.
44 So throughout the '90s the Council has always been
45 managing to minimize bycatch of salmon species, for a
46 very long time throughout the '90s and the early 2000s.
47 We had very large scale time and area closures in the
48 Bering Sea. These were area closures that were based
49 on the historic bycatch amounts that were encountered

0118

1 by the fleet and they had a trigger limit and so when
2 those trigger limits were reached, those areas were
3 closed to the pollock fleet and they had to move out of
4 them. And so they were called salmon savings area,
5 there were different ones for chinook and for chum and
6 that was how things were managed for the most part
7 throughout the mid-90s and into the 2000s.

8

9 On to the next slide then, hopefully on
10 Slide 11 if you guys can see that.

11

12 What happened is that what we started
13 to see is between 2002 and 2004 is that those salmon
14 savings areas and we find this in a lot of ways in
15 fisheries management static area closures aren't always
16 the best way to manage things and we were finding that
17 those areas seem to be exacerbating bycatch because the
18 fleet that could fish inside the area was encountering
19 more bycatch rates than the fleet that was fishing
20 outside of them. So the Council at that time, and it
21 was also at the time that we -- the pollock fishery hit
22 a very high level of chum bycatch in 2005, the highest
23 historical level, the Council immediately developed a
24 measure to exempt the fleet from those closure areas
25 while they developed additional measures and basically
26 looked to the fleet to manage their closures on -- the
27 fleet is able to do measures that we can't necessarily
28 do on a regulatory aspect, and so they can do short-
29 term, three to seven day closures to move the fleet
30 around a lot more strategically than the Federal
31 government can.

32

33 I'm on Slide 12 now -- actually, sorry,
34 I'm on Slide 13 now.

35

36 While that was occurring, the -- we ran
37 into 2007 and then the focus shifted from chum to
38 chinook because the chinook stocks in Western Alaska
39 were in extreme decline and the bycatch had been high.
40 So the Council held multiple bycatch workshops and
41 started a bycatch committee and looked at developing
42 cap levels, so we had never had a -- we had had a
43 trigger cap level but never a cap level that actually
44 shuts down the fishery so there's a difference between
45 a trigger cap that shuts the fleet out of an area and a
46 hard cap that shuts the fleet down entirely.

47

48 So moving on to Slide 14 then.

49

50

0119

1 We developed Amendment 91 and
2 participated in extensive outreach to Western Alaska
3 communities, the Council tried very hard to participate
4 with all of your RAC meetings since in 2009 in order to
5 try to explain and work with folks to understand the
6 kind of measures that are being developed for salmon
7 bycatch. So Amendment 91 was put into place in 2009,
8 it was final action in 2009, but it actually went into
9 place in 2011.

10

11 I'm on Slide 15 now.

12

13 Immediately following that, the Council
14 went back to look at measures for chum, so Amendment 91
15 only dealt with chinook, putting a hard cap in place by
16 sector in the pollock fishery for chinook. The Council
17 then went back to look at to look at chum measures and
18 developed several different measures, time/area
19 closures, different cap levels for chum, but Amendment
20 91 went into place in 2011 and in 2012 the Council
21 tabled the consideration of those chum measures based
22 on all the indications at the time, the fear being that
23 the chinook is the priority for bycatch avoidance and a
24 lot of the measures that the Council was looking into
25 for the fleet looked like they might make the chinook
26 bycatch worse.

27

28 So I am on Slide 16 now.

29

30 In reference to continued low -- low
31 chinook declines in Western Alaska and with some
32 indication in the first year of implementation that
33 perhaps the measures put in place in Amendment 91
34 weren't equivalently being considered across all
35 vessels, so the idea of putting a hard cap on the
36 pollock fishery by sector -- so there's four sectors in
37 the pollock fishery -- the idea was to put in place
38 measures that would encourage the fleet to avoid
39 bycatch at all levels and encounters so whether they
40 have low encounters or high encounters the intent was
41 to encourage them to incentives themselves to avoid
42 bycatch at all times and so we did a lot of analysis
43 and realized that not all vessels were behaving as much
44 as they could and so part of that led to the
45 development of Amendment 110, and that was implemented
46 -- with final action in 2015 and implemented in 2016.
47 And part of that aspect was to put additional vessel
48 level incentives and incentives on avoiding chinook in
49 September and October when the fleet would run into

50

0120

1 more chinook bycatch as well as to put into place the
2 lower cap on the fleet in times of low chinook --
3 Western Alaska chinook abundance, which we developed a
4 three river index.

5

6 So I'm on the next slide that hopefully
7 you guys can see that shows you the regulatory
8 measures.

9

10 And so with Amendment 100, again, which
11 went into place in 2016, there's a three river index
12 where Kuskokwim, the Unalakleet, and the Upper Yukon,
13 when that run size comes in in October, if it is below
14 250,000 fish, then the entire fleet goes down to a
15 lower cap level. So in the most recent years, the
16 fleet has been under that lower cap level. There's
17 also industry measures under their incentive program.
18 So the fleet has incentive programs under which they
19 operate and those are in regulation but they are also
20 fleet level management measures and so those include
21 closures that they can institute, again, on short-term
22 hot spot closures. They include salmon escape panels,
23 and, again, they're require -- the requirement to
24 donate to food banks.

25

26 On to the next slide.

27

28 Just to explain, kind of explain,
29 salmon excluders. So this is something that's in --
30 every single vessel uses a salmon excluder now. And
31 they've been developing these for about 20 years. They
32 are very good for chinook. These diagrams that I'm
33 showing just show you the different designs, they have
34 worked on various designs but all of them include just
35 the general nature of, there's a hole in the net and
36 that causes a lead in the -- in the hydrodynamics of
37 the water so the chinook are able to get out of the net
38 where the pollock can't swim as fast and they fall
39 back. So it's just a design that allows the salmon to
40 escape the pollock trawl net. There's various designs
41 of them. They've been developed over multiple decades.
42 But the most recent test show up to 39 percent
43 escapement with -- with variable lower pollock loss.
44 And, again, that's -- it varies by vessel and by
45 horsepower.

46

47 I'm on to the next slide that hopefully
48 you can see that just to show you kind of where the
49 fishery operates. It just shows you the A Season of

50

0121

1 2019, 2020 and 2021. Again, you see the pollock
2 fishery very much off shore, very much north of Unimak
3 Pass and around the Pribilofs and the A Season
4 restricted.

5

6 The next slide then shows you that the
7 B Season distribution also extremely off shore, right
8 along the Shelf edge and up very, very close to the 200
9 nautical mile EEZ boundary with Russia.

10

11 Just a brief summary of genetics then.

12

13 I'm on Slide 22 now.

14

15 So to the left is chinook so that gives
16 you the trends in the bycatch and then the pie chart
17 shows you the genetic overview. One of the things that
18 we have had in place since 2011 is systematic genetic
19 sampling so we have extremely precise genetic sampling
20 of the stock of origin of the chinook caught as bycatch
21 -- chinook and chum. What we're restricted by is the
22 ability of the geneticist to aggregate the grouping.
23 So we're -- we cannot break down the Coastal Western
24 Alaska grouping, we can break out the upper Yukon for
25 both chum and chinook but not within that grouping, so
26 we can't give you information on what fish would have
27 returned to the Yukon -- to the Yukon, specifically to
28 the Kuskokwim, but we can tell you an aggregate of
29 Coastal Western Alaska grouping. So just on a broad
30 brush, the chinook tend to be -- the chinook bycatch
31 tend to be more primarily Coastal Western Alaska but
32 when you come to chum it gets a lot more convoluted.
33 There's a very low proportion to Western Alaska and
34 it's really dominated by Asian hatchery fish.

35

36 Just to kind of recap.

37

38 In terms of when the Council's taking
39 action. In June of 2022 we received a lot of different
40 salmon reports and the Council created a salmon bycatch
41 committee. So that committee was tasked with reviewing
42 the State of Alaska Bycatch TaskForce recommendations
43 which also included the Western Alaska subcommittee
44 recommendations. The committee was tasked with
45 reviewing a Staff discussion paper on chum salmon
46 bycatch. The Council is returning to looking at
47 whether or not there should be additional restrictions
48 or management measures on chum salmon bycatch. And
49 then reviewing current information including local
50

0122

1 traditional subsistence knowledge. In December of 2023
2 then the committee was tasked to provide
3 recommendations to the Council on a range of management
4 measures so the committee met and -- sorry, I think
5 that should be December 2022 -- anyway -- the committee
6 met first in November and then, again, just now in
7 January and is -- is about to meet again in about two
8 weeks, in March, and the idea -- the task from the
9 Council was to provide the Council with recommendations
10 on alternatives for management measures for chum. So
11 specifically focusing on chum because the Council has
12 taken multiple actions on chinook and so the committee
13 is in the middle of having these discussions.

14
15 So I'm on, I think, my last slide, as
16 to what's next.

17
18 Our meeting for the salmon bycatch
19 committee in Anchorage and the committee is charged
20 with providing recommendations to the Council on both
21 the purpose and need for an analysis as well as
22 conceptual alternatives and the Council specifically
23 asked the committee to consider both scientifically
24 based chum cap as well as possible changes within the
25 IPAs to better manage chum salmon bycatch. The Council
26 will then take up those recommendations in April and at
27 that time the Council will decide which direction that
28 they decide to go in in terms of an analysis of
29 additional management measures.

30
31 I think -- oh, I just have a few more
32 slides, Madame Chair.

33
34 Just to review where we are in the
35 process in terms of how long our process takes and I'm
36 going to move forward to the next slide that has a
37 little red round thing around the review and analysis.

38
39 So this is where we are in our Council
40 process of developing management measures for chum
41 salmon.

42
43 It takes -- our process is not fast,
44 but we are in the review and analysis phase so right
45 now we're in the part where the Council is developing a
46 problem statement and developing alternatives. That's
47 what we anticipate will come out of the committee March
48 20th and 21st and be recommended to the Council so the
49 Council can consider alternative management measures
50

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1 for chum in April. And from there, if the Council
2 initiates an analysis with a problem statement and
3 alternatives then the Staff, primarily Council Staff in
4 conjunction with NMF will then develop and then -- an
5 analysis that at a minimum needs two different
6 refinements by the Council so there'll be an initial
7 review stage of it and then there'll be a final action
8 of it and sometimes it takes a little longer than that.
9 But I think it's important in terms of setting
10 expectations to realize that our process is a little
11 bit lengthy. But that is where we are right now in
12 terms of the Council action on this.

13

14 I think that's my last slide and my
15 last slide just has some additional resources but I'm
16 happy to answer any questions.

17

18 Thank you, Madame Chair.

19

20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you for
21 the report. Are there any questions, Council.

22

23 Andy.

24

25 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. Thank
26 you, Diana, for that. It's been a long time since
27 we've -- I've been a part of any of these meetings.
28 Can you educate me a little bit about the food program
29 that the industry is complying with? How does that
30 work and who bears the brunt of transportation costs
31 when those fish are distributed? Is that processors on
32 the land or is that -- how is that coordinated and
33 where does the cost of that distribution go to?

34

35 DR. STRAM: Sure, I'm happy to. And,
36 Andy, it's nice to hear from you, I haven't talked to
37 you in awhile. I'm sorry that I can't be there with
38 you guys in person.

39

40 So it's SeaShare. So there could be
41 multiple but there are only one that is authorized at
42 this point. So SeaShare is based out of the Puget
43 Sound area but since 2011 has been working to
44 redistribute the bycaught food, and not all of it is
45 bycatch, there's also -- I guess I should start by
46 saying that the -- it's entirely funded by the fishing
47 industry. So it is entirely a food donation program in
48 which the cost of processing the fish and donating it
49 and getting it to a distribution site is all funded by
50

0124

1 the industry. So SeaShare is the donation program.
2 They have -- there are requirements that they have in
3 terms of where the distribution centers need to be and
4 kind of the food requirements of what those
5 distribution centers have to be. So they've actually
6 done an extraordinary job, I'd have to say, and Jim
7 Harmon, the executive director of SeaShare, presents a
8 report to us every April of what -- how much they have
9 donated and where. And so the initial problem of
10 trying to get it back to Alaska, because of the
11 requirements of the distribution, but they have -- they
12 have founded locations, and I can provide you guys more
13 information from their report, but they have worked
14 with local organizations as well so if they can get the
15 fish to a distribution center, they can get it out to
16 additional communities.

17
18 I'm not sure, Andy, did that answer
19 your question.
20

21 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. I
22 appreciate that. I think the main point I was trying
23 to find out was this an industry funded or were there
24 State or Federal dollars involved. It's encouraging
25 for me to hear that I think the program that you're
26 involved in there, the North Pacific Management
27 Council, has done, in my view, a very good job of
28 working with other Alaskans on these bycatch issues,
29 coming up with solutions that are meaningful solutions,
30 such as the rolling hot spots and the excluder nets. I
31 think this is a really good example of how if industry
32 takes responsibility for their actions and they work
33 with the public, that they can do the best they can to
34 try and mitigate or reduce their impacts to other areas
35 in the state, and that's the point I just wanted to
36 make here at this meeting. And I think these programs
37 have done a very good job of that. It doesn't mean
38 that we can't do better and I'm sure we'll always be
39 trying to make improvements and trying to come up with
40 new processes but from my perspective I've been very
41 impressed with how the organizations have pulled
42 together and taken responsibility.
43

44 Thank you, very much.
45

46 DR. STRAM: Yeah, thanks very much for
47 that. We've -- I really credit all of you guys a lot
48 because there's been so much attention on it that, you
49 know, they've realized sort of, especially as it
50

0125

1 relates to SeaShare how best they can do better and it
2 is all entirely industry funded and they really have
3 been working extremely hard to expand their
4 distribution, understanding that doesn't mitigate the
5 problem, it just is trying to bring the fish that's
6 bycaught back to Alaska as well as the fish that's
7 donated from other processors.

8
9 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
10 questions.

11
12 Donald.

13
14 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Madame Chair.
15 This is Don Woodruff. On Slide 25 and 26 and 27, it
16 seems in the last few years that you guys are
17 remarkably good at -- or the sea captains are
18 remarkably good at avoiding bycatch or that fish aren't
19 there, which we're seeing, they're not coming up the
20 Yukon. What do you think?

21
22 DR. STRAM: Yeah, I mean I guess it's a
23 guessing, you know, I think it's -- it's -- the point
24 of the management programs is to reduce to -- to have
25 the incentive to reduce encounters at all levels of
26 encounter on the ocean, so whether it's a high
27 encounter year or a low encounter year, the important
28 part is to try to put the incentive program in place
29 that keeps that focus on it and I think that given the
30 last couple years in terms of chum bycatch, that's why
31 the Council's readdressing this. I think that whether
32 it's due to declines or better incentives, the chinook
33 bycatch has dramatically reduced. And it's not -- we
34 don't really have a way to say why other than that
35 we're cracking down on all of the levels of management
36 but I think that the Council's current focus on chums
37 is due to the fact that, okay, we just saw an increase
38 in chum bycatch, is that due to more hatchery fish in
39 Asia, we don't know, but we know that it's a concern,
40 and we know that Western Alaska stocks are in decline
41 and so now is the time to look at that.

42
43 So I don't know how best to answer your
44 question, I don't think we can say exactly whether
45 it's -- the program's working or there's less fish
46 encounters but I think that the point of it is to make
47 sure that there's an incentive program in place that
48 all of the captains are thinking about it all of the
49 time.
50

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, I agree.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone else.

4

5 (No comments)

6

7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Charlie or

8 Eva.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. I'm
13 not hearing anyone else so -- I did the opposite, I
14 turned it off and not on -- yeah, so I'm wondering do
15 we -- and thank you, Diana. And do you guys want a
16 five minute break.

17

18 MR. BASSICH: Sure.

19

20 (Council nods affirmatively)

21

22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, let's
23 have a five minute break, let's try to do it. We have
24 a lot ahead of us.

25

26 DR. STRAM: Okay, thanks you guys.

27

28 (Off record)

29

30 (On record)

31

32 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And as you're
33 getting back to your seats there's been some time
34 certain changes, or not changes, but they've been
35 announced and it's on the agenda and so we're going to
36 try to do -- so should I start.

37

38 (Banging)

39

40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Quiet. I
41 don't like being forceful but I guess I better. Now,
42 I'm looking at this, the Wood Bison is time certain
43 tomorrow at 10:30 in the morning. And then the other
44 one is the wildlife closure for Arctic Closure Sheep
45 Management Area is also time certain at 9:00 in the
46 morning. So the next thing we would like to do on the
47 agenda is -- is there any reports you'd like -- it
48 looks to me like maybe the Wrangell-St.Elias biologist
49 could give a report on the caribou as we take up the
50

0127

1 next two wildlife closure reviews in Unit 12.

2

3 MS. CELLARIUS: Kyle should be on the
4 phone.

5

6 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And he should
7 be on the phone. Are you on, Kyle.

8

9 MR. CUNNING: Yes. Yes.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.
12 Well.....

13

14 MR. CUNNING: Hello, Madame Chair and
15 Council members. My name is Kyle Cunning. I'm the new
16 Wildlife Biologist for Wrangell-St.Elias National Park
17 and Preserve. I've created an abbreviated version of
18 my wildlife talk per the Council members request. So I
19 will focus on the Mentasta and Chisana Caribou Herds
20 for my update today.

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Kyle.....

23

24 MR. CUNNING: First I'm going to start
25 with -- yes.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Kyle, sorry to interrupt.
28 I just wanted to let Council members know that Kyle's
29 full report is in your supplemental.....

30

31 MR. CUNNING: Okay.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID:materials on Tab 5
34 if you want to refer to that while he's speaking.
35 Thanks, Kyle, go ahead.

36

37 MR. CUNNING: Yeah. Yeah, thank you
38 for the clarification. As the Mentasta Caribou Herd is
39 a small herd occurring on the Southwestern portion of
40 Unit 12 and the northern portion of Unit 11 within
41 Wrangell-St.Elias National Park and Preserve, the
42 Mentasta Herd range overlaps the Chisana and the
43 Nelchina Caribou Herds during portions of the year.
44 During winter some of the individuals from the Mentasta
45 disperses across Unit 12 while others remain
46 stationary. Their summer range is located on the north
47 and west side of Mt. Wrangell in the northern portion
48 of Unit 12 and the southwest portion of Unit -- the
49 northern portion of Unit 11 and the southwest portion
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0128

1 of Unit 12.

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Since the mid-1990s there's been no open season for Mentasta caribou for any users to protect the herd following a population decline in the late '80s.

So to give an update of activities over the past year, we deployed 10 GPS collars on female Mentasta caribou in September of last fall. This brings the total number of GPS collars in the herd to 13. Data from GPS collared caribou will be used to assist in population size estimates and to inform the in-season management of hunts that target the Nelchina Herd. GPS collared data will also be used to inform a winter hunt that occurs north of the Wrangell-St.Elias border in Unit 12.

Our goal over the next two years is to increase the number of GPS collared caribou to improve the amount and quality of information that can be used for in-season management of hunts targeting the Nelchina Herd and to avoid incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou. Of the 10 GPS collars deployed last fall, nine currently remain on winter ranges in Alaska while one individual migrated to Yukon. Their range -- their distance migrated is variable with some individuals traveling 33 miles, while other individuals traveling over 300 miles.

For the future plans, this coming June we'll conduct a post-calving population census. The last Mentasta caribou census was conducted in 2021 resulting in a population estimate of 672 individuals, which is similar to the previous four year average of 622 individuals. Currently we're exploring opportunities for collaboration with local partners centered on the role of ecological and subsistence factors, on movement, habitat, and adult survival.

Next, I will shift to the Chisana Caribou Herd. The Chisana Caribou Herd is a small international herd occurring in Alaska, in the Yukon, on the Klutin[sic] Plateau and near the headwaters of the White River. The herd spends most of its time in Wrangell-St.Elias National Preserve. Because of its small herd size it has never supported a large harvest. Aerial surveys were flown in Alaska and Yukon this past fall to conduct a population census for the first time

0129

1 since 2013. Biologists from Alaska Department of Fish
2 and Game, some in the room today, and the Yukon
3 Department of Environment conducted the surveys and
4 partnership with Wrangell-St.Elias and Gates of the
5 Arctic. The resulting estimates for total population
6 size was 582 individuals compared to the estimate of
7 701 caribou in 2013. Although the 2022, last fall's
8 estimate is lower than the 2013 estimate, the ranges of
9 uncertainty around these estimates overlap indicating
10 that the population size is likely stable and has not
11 changed significantly since 2013. Currently 17 GPS
12 collars and 40 VHF collared individuals are currently
13 marked in the herd. Our goal for the Chisana Caribou
14 Herd over the next three years is to increase the
15 number of GPS collars to maintain enough collars to
16 conduct surveys and monitor movements of the herd.
17 Currently 14 of the 17 GPS collared caribou are
18 currently in Yukon and the fall to winter migration
19 distances are much less than the Mentasta ranging from
20 six to nearly 50 miles. The three year rolling average
21 of past recruitment is 16.7 calves per 100 cows. And
22 the three year average adult sex ratio is 46 bulls to
23 100 cows. And with the most recent survey, the three
24 year average for calf recruitment is above the
25 threshold set forward in the Chisana Caribou Management
26 Plan.

27
28 Currently there's a working group that
29 is actively updating the Chisana Caribou Management
30 Plan. Recently an international working group met in
31 Tok for a two day meeting and are currently updating
32 that plan. The group may provide opportunity for
33 comment on the proposed revisions in the near future.

34
35 So that concludes my abridged version
36 of my wildlife report and I'd be happy to answer
37 questions people may have.

38
39 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, Andy.

40
41 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you for that.
42 I'm just kind of curious, you know, these herds are
43 very small herds, they don't move very far, there's not
44 much hunting pressure on them, how come they don't
45 grow?

46
47 MR. CUNNING: Well, there's a variety
48 of factors that regulate the population growth. These
49 herds occur in areas with high amounts of snow, and
50

0130

1 predation has also been a contributing factor for some
2 of the declines, historically. That's a great
3 question, Andy.

4
5 MR. BASSICH: Okay. I'd like to follow
6 that up with another question then and that is, are you
7 seeing parturition rates low there due to deficiency in
8 the habitats? So if these herds aren't moving very far
9 they're living in their area, given some of the
10 testimony by the Department of Fish and Game on the
11 Fortymile Herd, I would think that they're basically
12 grazing their range to the support where it can't
13 support very much. Are you seeing that much there?

14
15 MR. CUNNING: Calf/cow ratios have
16 remained relatively stable in recent times. And to my
17 knowledge this herd forages more on herbacious material
18 than lichens. Eeeh.

19
20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: You know,
21 this is Sue, the Chair, if I might add here. I know
22 you're brand new at it Kyle. I've served on the.....

23
24 MR. CUNNING: Yeah.

25
26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:
27Subsistence Resource Commission, I think it's 16
28 plus years, and these -- you know I lived in the area
29 before there was a Park and there was a lot more
30 caribou there and a lot less predators have been taken
31 and I think the locals would say that it's become a
32 predator pit, and the -- yeah, I mean it's really made
33 a big difference because like the Mentasta caribou are
34 in mostly the Hard Park -- we call it the Hard Park,
35 and the amount of -- ability to go trapping and doing
36 the things that was done before is limited so it's --
37 and people aren't shooting the grizzly bears like they
38 used to, so they think it's a predator pit. This is
39 local information for you, and that's what I'd have to
40 say, after all the years of living there and watching
41 what's going on. I actually hunted those animals
42 before it was a Park and there was a lot of animals
43 then and then it just kind of slowly (makes sound) went
44 down. Yeah.

45
46 MR. BASSICH: Okay. Thanks for
47 answering the question.

48
49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, uh-huh.
50

0131

1 Okay. Any other questions. Donald.

2

3 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Madame Chair.

4 This is Don Woodruff. Mentasta Herd on the 2020
5 estimate of population size it's 11,050 and then 2021
6 it's 672 and I see you have a foot note that there may
7 -- could be Nelchina caribou in that census but could
8 there be 100 percent more?

9

10 MR. CUNNING: Yeah, there is recent
11 information from GPS collared individuals that there is
12 inter-mixing that occurs so -- that we have seen over
13 the last couple of years. So for instance one
14 individual that we captured last fall migrated
15 northwest into the range of the Nelchina and currently
16 is north -- northeast -- in the northern parts of 12
17 and even into Yukon. Yeah, and so in that -- when that
18 survey was done in 2020 there were Nelchina individuals
19 collared within the Mentasta Herd. I -- I -- to my
20 knowledge, the rage of mixing that you -- that you
21 alluded to, I believe, is unknown. But there is
22 accounts of some mixing occurring. To my knowledge
23 it's not 100 percent, it's much less than that.

24

25 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

26

27 MR. CUNNING: You're welcome.

28

29 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I just
30 wanted to give a quick report. The working group had
31 met in Tok and I was asked to call in to be a
32 representative but I couldn't represent the RAC, I
33 could only represent myself, but I was there to -- I
34 called in and spoke to it. I couldn't be there the
35 whole time, my husband and I are on a big project that
36 has to get done. So -- but I did call in and talk and
37 listen for awhile So they're trying -- they talked
38 about all of this stuff, what we're talking about, and
39 -- and there was talk about continuing the status quo
40 on the .804 hunt that was -- that was closed last year
41 but they want to keep it open this year.

42

43 Okay.

44

45 Do you want to ask that, is that a
46 question?

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: I was just speaking with
49 the Chair to ask if -- and perhaps, Kyle, you could

50

0132

1 weigh in on this, if it would be appropriate for the
2 RAC to officially nominate someone to represent the
3 Council on that working group.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I don't think
8 they've met much, right?

9

10 MR. CUNNING: No. They're -- we -- the
11 group has met for two days recently in Tok and
12 currently are providing some updates to the 2012 plan
13 and then to my knowledge will likely provide
14 opportunity for -- for comment. But I would be happy
15 to look into the possibility of nominating a RAC member
16 as a member of that working group.

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, thanks, Kyle. We
19 could talk about it on the record tomorrow at the
20 meeting if that's something you were able to find out.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I think
25 Barbara's going to enlighten us.

26

27 MR. CUNNING: You bet, I'll.....

28

29 MS. CELLARIUS: For the record I'm
30 Barbara Cellarius. I'm the Cultural Anthropologist and
31 Subsistence Coordinator for Wrangell-St.Elias National
32 Park and Preserve and I was also at the Chisana Caribou
33 Herd meeting. And the members of -- or the folks who
34 were at that meeting, it was essentially a meeting of
35 the bodies that have management authority over the
36 herd. It didn't include -- there was an opportunity
37 for a couple of -- like the AC Chair was there and
38 provided some input, but the -- the composition of the
39 group is the agencies and -- essentially the
40 governments with authority over the herd. But there is
41 -- we did have a discussion of making sure that the
42 advisory groups have a chance to provide some input.

43

44 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, thank
45 you. Next would be taking up WCR24-35. Portion of the
46 Unit 12 closed to caribou hunting by non-Federally-
47 qualified for the Chisana.

48

49 (Off record comments - no microphones)

50

0133

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, it's
2 been clarified this is just information. And do you
3 want to tell us that again.
4

5 MS. MCDAVID: Sure. So it's on the
6 record I was just talking to Sue, Madame Chair, that
7 the closure reviews will be presented, and Tom will
8 probably talk about this, as informational items at
9 this meeting in case there might be associated
10 proposals that you would be interested in developing,
11 but you won't vote on the closure reviews until the
12 fall meeting.
13

14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.
15

16 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madame Chair.
17 I'm actually prepared to clear that up for you.
18

19 (Laughter)
20

21 MR. PLANK: So, thank you, Madame
22 Chair. Members of the Council. For the record my name
23 is Tom Plank and I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the
24 Office of Subsistence Management. And so before we get
25 into the closure review analysis, I want to provide an
26 overview of the process for these reviews.
27

28 In August 2020 the Board approved a
29 revised closure policy which stipulated all closures
30 will be reviewed every four years. The policy also
31 specified that closures, similar to regulatory
32 proposals, will be presented to the Councils for a
33 recommendation and then to the Board for a final
34 decision. However, regulatory actions on closure
35 reviews are limited to retaining, rescinding or
36 modifying the closure. Actions such as changing the
37 season, harvest limits or delegated authority to in-
38 season managers are outside the scope of closure
39 reviews. To this end closure review analysis are being
40 presented to the Councils now during the call for
41 wildlife proposals to inform their decisions on whether
42 or not to submit a proposal addressing the closures
43 that would be outside the scope of the closure review.
44

45 And like Brooke said, this is not an
46 action item. It is just informational. However, if
47 Councils do decide to submit a proposal to address the
48 closures, a motion and vote is needed. The Councils
49 will make a formal recommendation on the closure
50

0134

1 reviews during the fall 2023 meetings and the Federal
2 Subsistence Board will take final action on these
3 closure reviews in April 2024.

4

5 So before I proceed to the next
6 analysis, are there any questions on the closure review
7 process?

8

9 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: No, but are
10 you going to go through the analysis of what we'll take
11 up in the fall meeting?

12

13 MR. PLANK: (Nods affirmatively)

14

15 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So I'm going
16 to ask the Council, we have a lot on our plate and
17 we're going to hear this whole thing in the fall, so do
18 you want to hear it twice or.....

19

20 MR. BASSICH: Let's move on.

21

22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, thank
23 you. My brain was thinking we were taking it up, I'm
24 so sorry.

25

26 MS. WESSELS: Can I address this?

27

28 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Uh-huh.

29

30 MS. WESSELS: So I just want to clarify
31 to the Council -- for the record, Katya Wessels, that
32 these closure reviews information are presented to you
33 in case you want to put a proposal in that will, you
34 know, counter the closure. So I think the presentation
35 that Tom prepared is pretty short so you might want to
36 listen to it now. I know that you want to move on, I'm
37 just saying it's up to the Council, but in case you
38 want to put a proposal that will be related to this
39 closure, you will need to put it in now, otherwise you
40 will need to wait for two years.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andy.

43

44 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I guess I can't
45 speak for the other Council members but given the
46 report we just got on the two different herds and the
47 fact that they're not growing and there's no hunting
48 pressure and it's maybe primarily due to predation, I'm
49 quite comfortable with waiting until -- I don't want to
50

0135

1 say anything that -- I'm personally not going to
2 counter these closures given the report that we had
3 previous to this.

4
5 I'll just say it that way.

6
7 Thank you, Madame Chair.

8
9 But other Council members might feel
10 differently.

11
12 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So other
13 Council members. Do you want to go through it and see
14 if we have a proposal or not -- Amanda.

15
16 MS. POPE: Hello everyone, this is
17 Amanda Pope for the record. I disagree -- I agree with
18 Andy just because the numbers are low and I'd like to
19 take the conservative route to where if the numbers are
20 low, for whatever reason, that would allow the
21 biologists to have time to study them. So, yeah.

22
23 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah. And
24 I'm going by memory. We just had the SRC meeting last
25 week and we did vote with the closures, the SRC did, so
26 that's with -- and they're the Wrangell-St.Elias
27 Subsistence Resource Commission. So I would have
28 to.....

29
30 MR. WRIGHT: Madame Chair, this is
31 Charlie.

32
33 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:agree
34 with -- Charlie, go ahead.

35
36 MR. WRIGHT: I concur with Andy and
37 Amanda, I will -- I'm okay with the closures.

38
39 MS. BURK: Me too.

40
41 MR. WRIGHT: And Eva also.

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All right.

44
45 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you.....

46
47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
48 both of you.

49
50

0136

1 MR. WRIGHT:Madame Chair.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes.

4

5 MR. BASSICH: So let's move on.

6

7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, we'll
8 just move on. Yeah, I know we have a full plate here
9 so I appreciate it.

10

11 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Tom.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, thanks
14 so much.

15

16 (Off record comments - no microphones)

17

18 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Council
19 members we're going to ask the question; there's -- you
20 know we had these reports, the wildlife reports, they
21 might could be shortened, but usually it's a 15 minute,
22 and that's an hour and a half, and that's an hour and
23 15 minutes of reports, do you want to go through them
24 before we talk about any Federal proposals?

25

26 MR. WOODRUFF: Yep.

27

28 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. We
29 will start with -- and if we could keep it to the
30 wildlife that would help.

31

32 (Off record comments - no microphones)

33

34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Oh, and the
35 suggestion is have Arctic go tomorrow when we talk
36 about the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area and then
37 we could go to the Yukon Flats. Jimmy Fox, uh-huh, for
38 the wildlife report.

39

40 MR. FOX: Right now?

41

42 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes.

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry we put you on the
47 spot.

48

49 (Laughter)

50

0137

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And then it's
2 Tetlin after that and then it's Yukon-Charley and then
3 Denali.

4
5 MR. BASSICH: Johnny on the Spot.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: And for Council members,
8 Yukon Flats provided a report and it's in your meeting
9 books on Page 125.

10
11 MR. FOX: Thank you, Madame Chair, can
12 you hear me okay?

13
14 REPORTER: You need to push the button.

15
16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Your mic.

17
18 MR. FOX: Can you hear me now?

19
20 (Council nods affirmatively)

21
22 MR. FOX: Good. Jimmy Fox, Refuge
23 Manager, Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Thanks
24 for the opportunity to speak before you.

25
26 The first item of business I'd like to
27 bring up is the -- mentioned earlier today about the
28 merger of Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge and Yukon
29 Flats National Wildlife Refuge. In the report that was
30 submitted last fall there was a mention of that and
31 unfortunately I was not able to speak to you all last
32 fall but I'm here now and can talk a little bit about
33 that. There is a letter that is going to the Western
34 Interior Regional Advisory Council and to you all, I'm
35 not sure exactly when that will be going out, if it
36 hasn't already. I can read you, if you don't mind,
37 just a few bullet points to give you a little bit of
38 background and to catch you up a little bit.

39
40 Over the past decade the Refuge system
41 across the United States has faced declining budgets
42 and of course costs continue to rise, which puts a
43 squeeze on operations, and the Fish and Wildlife
44 Service considered various steps to keep operations
45 within budget limits over that past decade and we've
46 left positions unfilled in Alaska Refuges. We've
47 consolidated Refuge operations and centralized some
48 functions such as law enforcement and aviation. So we
49 have personnel that are now working across multiple
50

0138

1 Refuges. Most recently the Refuge Program in Alaska
2 made the difficult decision to merge operations of
3 Kanuti and Yukon Flats, a process that will take
4 several years. We're just in the early stages of this.
5 As we move forward we want to hear from you all and the
6 Western Interior Regional Advisory Council and what
7 questions you have about this proposal and what
8 information or needs you have that we should consider.
9 This could include what service is currently provided
10 by these Refuges are most critical to you so that we
11 can ensure your needs are met as future positions,
12 projects and activities are prioritized.

13
14 Our plan for merging operations is
15 informed by lessons learned from the past budget saving
16 measures including the closure of the McGrath office
17 for the Innoko Refuge several years ago.

18
19 Currently the plan is for both Kanuti
20 and Yukon Flats to retain the Refuge Manager positions.
21 They will remain the primary points of contact for the
22 tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, other
23 organizations, Regional Advisory Councils, partners, et
24 cetera. Operations for both Refuges will continue to
25 be based out of our office here in Fairbanks, however,
26 the percentage of resources allocated to these Refuges
27 as a proportion of the overall Refuge Program budget
28 will decrease. So basically the funds that are pulled
29 from these two stations will be redistributed to other
30 Refuges around the state. This change requires us to
31 identify highest needs and priorities for both Refuges.
32 Refuge Staff have extended the opportunity for tribes,
33 and Alaska Native Corporations to consult regarding
34 this implementation, the merger, and the Service
35 welcomes the opportunity to provide more information
36 and answer questions on this merger at your fall
37 meeting. This invitation is extended to the Western.
38 Interior Regional Advisory Council as well.

39
40 And as we move forward, the Regional
41 Director for the Fish and Wildlife Service and the
42 Assistant Regional Director for Refuges would like to
43 hear what services currently provided by these Refuges
44 are most critical to you all and subsistence users so
45 that we can ensure your needs are met as future
46 positions, projects and activities are prioritized.

47
48 Just a few things on the report that
49 you have in your packet.

50

0139

1 The moose survey was not completed last
2 fall and hopefully it will be completed in two weeks.
3 We had weather delays, lack of snow, et cetera, that
4 prevented us from getting a moose survey done last
5 fall.

6
7 The Eyes in the Bush Project that
8 Amanda Pope spoke to earlier, that continues to go
9 strong and we hope that it will grow as she talked
10 about. We continue to have an annual funding agreement
11 with the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments. The
12 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director directed some
13 additional funds to that annual funding agreement after
14 learning about the great work that the Council of
15 Athabascan Tribal Governments is doing. CATG will
16 expand the number of cultural and science camps for
17 youth across Yukon Flats with those additional funds.

18
19 And I noticed that that was a high
20 priority for the Council in your draft report.

21
22 Also in the report that I shared with
23 you all there's a mention of compatibility
24 determinations that were in process and those are
25 basically a process that we go through to make sure
26 that activities that are occurring on Refuges are
27 compatible with the purposes of the Refuge. Those
28 compatibility determinations are being finalized right
29 now and the last draft that we have that's continuing
30 to be discussed is whether or not oil and gas
31 exploration is compatible on Yukon Flats National
32 Wildlife Refuge. We are in consultation with tribes
33 and Alaska Native Corporations and the State of Alaska,
34 there would be a public comment period if we went
35 forward with that compatibility determination.

36
37 Also some news since the fall. We have
38 selected the next big game guides for the Refuge and it
39 will maintain the status quo with the two existing
40 guides that we currently have for the five year period
41 so we'll have these two guides, continue basically the
42 same operations that have been taking place on the
43 Refuge for the past 10 years or longer.

44
45 Also we are making progress on cleaning
46 up quite a contaminated site in the village of Beaver.
47 Ultimately -- there's an old BIA school there and
48 ultimately the hope is that we'll get that site cleaned
49 up and do a land exchange with the Beaver Corporation
50

0140

1 so they can then own those lands in the village.

2

3

4 The last thing I'll mention is we've
5 been engaging with tribes and others around the amount
6 of change on the Refuge and the amount of fire that has
7 increased over the past 30-plus years. The number of
8 acres burned has quadrupled, more than quadrupled over
9 the past three decades. We have initiated a pilot
10 project with the Alaska Fire Service to limit the
11 acreage of fires burning on the Yukon Flats Refuge up
12 in the hills and the hope is that we'll learn whether
13 or not it's a feasible attempt to limit fires on the
14 landscape to protect habitat diversity and limit carbon
15 emissions also and protect a -- there's a really deep
16 type of permafrost called yetima* on the Refuge and
17 we're really trying to prevent that permafrost from
18 thawing. When that permafrost thaws you can get huge
19 thaw slumps, maybe you've heard about the hillsides
20 collapsing so we're concerned about that and so we're
21 initiating a pilot project with Alaska Fire Services on
22 that.

22

23 Yeah, so that ends my report, be happy
24 to take any questions.

25

26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any
27 questions.

28

29 Amanda.

30

31 MS. POPE: Hello, this is Amanda Pope
32 for the record. I just had a quick question. I wanted
33 to see if the compatibility regulations that you guys
34 were working on, will those be the same after you final
35 it, when you merge with the other Refuge?

36

37 MR. FOX: Through the Chair. Yes,
38 great question. And the proposed determinations were
39 to maintain all the current activities as compatible,
40 hunting, fishing, cabin use and all that stuff, and,
41 yeah, so the plan is that those will be considered
42 compatible as they have been in the past, so, yes.

43

44 MS. POPE: Okay, thank you.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Donald.

47

48 MR. WOODRUFF: I would like to say that
49 climate change for the Interior -- Eastern Interior is

50

0141

1 one of the biggest driving factors of wildlife changes
2 and fish habitat changes and I want to thank Jimmy Fox
3 for his really detailed and explicit reports. Up in
4 Eagle we're seeing the same thing as the Yukon Flats
5 are seeing as far as climate change and I applaud him
6 for that because it really is good information for us
7 up on the upper river.

8
9 Thank you.

10
11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
12 questions.

13
14 MR. BASSICH: Just a quick one.

15
16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Uh-huh.

17
18 MR. BASSICH: A quick request. Once
19 you get your priorities -- when you merge the two, you
20 were asking for services and the different priorities,
21 I think it would be really good if you could bring that
22 back to this body. I think, you know, that survey and
23 that identification of those items, those topics would
24 be really pertinent to our discussions into the future.

25
26 Thanks.

27
28 MR. FOX: Absolutely.

29
30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
31 questions.

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

36
37 MR. FOX: Thank you.

38
39 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Now, yeah,
40 Tetlin Refuge, I don't see anyone here, is anyone
41 online?

42
43 (No comments)

44
45 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And I see
46 their report is in the book on Page 144. I think
47 they're out during surveys for lynx, I was told, so
48 that might be why no one's on, and lynx -- that whole
49 lynx thing they're doing with trapping.

50

0142

1 One more time, anyone on from Tetlin
2 Refuge.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So next is
7 the Yukon-Charley River National Preserve wildlife
8 report.

9
10 Go ahead.

11
12 MS. OKADA: My name is Marcy Okada.
13 I'm the Subsistence Coordinator for Yukon-Charley
14 Rivers National Preserve. And I'll just provide a
15 quick update on the Eagle Subsistence Working Group
16 meeting that we had. It was actually delayed until
17 February 6th because we couldn't fly in because of
18 weather.

19
20 These working group meetings continue
21 to be an opportunity for Preserve Staff to provide
22 updates on wildlife surveys and other management
23 occurrences within the Preserve. And we also.....

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: Marcy, sorry. I just --
26 sorry to interrupt. Council members the Yukon-Charley
27 report is on Tab 6 of your supplemental materials.

28
29 MS. OKADA: Sorry about that. And then
30 we also have a new Superintendent so that was a nice
31 chance for local people to meet our new Superintendent.

32
33 For the rest of our update we'll just
34 focus on wildlife reports.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 MR. SORUM: So I'll just introduce
39 myself. I'm Matt Sorum, I'm a Wildlife Biologist.
40 We're going to have Jordan Pruzinski, who's been
41 working with us for the last five years, she helped
42 managed the moose survey we conducted in November, this
43 last November, and she'll be giving the update.

44
45 MS. PRUZINSKI: Hello. I'm Jordan
46 Pruzinski. I'm a Wildlife Technician with the Yukon-
47 Charley Rivers Preserves and like Matt said I'm going
48 to be giving the fall 2022 moose survey update.

49
50

0143

1 The moose survey was conducted in early
2 to mid-November. This is the ninth survey using the
3 GSPE in this study area. All in all the survey went
4 really well. We, of course, had the classic problems
5 with weather because it always seems to be windy in
6 Eagle but it was a successful survey. In total we
7 observed 183 moose. And that entailed 101 cows, 21
8 calves and 61 bulls. The population estimate did go
9 down from 2019, which was our last survey. The
10 population estimate in 2019 was 873 and this year we
11 found that it was 738 moose, so that is a decrease.

12

13 As far as the bull to cow and yearling
14 to cow ratios, those are very similar across all of our
15 year -- all of the surveys it's been very similar. The
16 cow to calf ratio did go -- or the calf to cow ratio
17 did go down slightly but it's still within the range
18 that we would -- it's still within our average across
19 years but we are wondering if that is something that is
20 impacted by the harsh winters that these moose have had
21 to endure these past couple of years so moving forward
22 that's definitely something we need to continue to look
23 at.

24

25 The next survey will take place in
26 about three years.

27

28 So thank you.

29

30 MR. CAMERON: Thanks Jordan. I'm Matt
31 Cameron, Wildlife Biologist with Yukon-Charley. And I
32 have an update on our FPS collar moose project. This
33 will be our fourth year of this project. We started in
34 2020.

35

36 We have 28 GPS collars on adult females
37 that we're monitoring. And this is in collaboration
38 with BLM and Jim Herriges talked about his study
39 earlier as well as Arctic Refuge. And we're collecting
40 the same data across our study areas. We're monitoring
41 moose movements and adult survival of the females and
42 we're also measuring calf production and calf survival
43 in that first year. And this is nice, it dovetails
44 with the survey because we can see some of these
45 patterns that we're picking up in the survey.

46

47 In the summer of 202 -- so last year,
48 spring of 2022 we had 71 percent of our collared
49 females gave birth within Yukon-Charley and we can tell

50

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1 that from the GPS collar data. So in comparison of
2 2021, it was higher than in 2021, but still lower than
3 in 2020; so kind of right in the middle of our three
4 year so far. For twinning, half of our females that
5 gave birth that we saw on the aerial survey had twins,
6 which was higher than the previous two years. For our
7 calving timing, we can tell when they have calves. It
8 was a little bit later last spring than the two years
9 before, our average calving date was May 22nd. So
10 we're following them -- we follow up on them in the
11 fall and see how many survived and half of our calves
12 survived the summer which was the highest of the three
13 years yet but they've all been pretty comparable, 42
14 percent in 2020, 41 percent in 2021 and now 50 percent
15 this last summer. So we'll be following them up in the
16 -- later this month and seeing how many survived over
17 the winter.

18
19 And for adult mortality, you know, last
20 winter was really hard and we saw it in adult
21 mortality. It was the highest mortality we've seen in
22 the study so far. We had three females die in the
23 spring and then three again in the summer. And then we
24 just lost our first one this winter last month.

25
26 So I think that really speaks to what
27 we saw in the survey, that we had high mortality from
28 last winter and that seemed to show up in the lower
29 population number and a bit lower calf production.

30
31 Did I miss anything?

32
33 MR. SORUM: That's great.

34
35 MR. CAMERON: Okay.

36
37 MR. SORUM: Okay. And then I will give
38 the wolf monitoring program update for Yukon-Charley.

39
40 We're currently monitoring five packs
41 within the Preserve. Four of those packs denned this
42 last summer and produced pups. We have a bit larger
43 packs than the long-term average at about 8.6 wolves
44 but we also have a bit fewer packs than we've normally
45 had in the past so overall our wolf numbers are a
46 little down.

47
48 Over the last year we've been
49 monitoring 25 GPS collared wolves using GPS collars and
50

0145

1 actually that number is 22 because we put -- well, I'll
2 get to this but we put three video collars out last
3 year and I'll talk a bit about that, but of those 22
4 wolves that we monitored since denning season five have
5 died and one has dispersed so about 25 percent -- a
6 little over 25 percent, or about 25 percent mortality
7 which is about on par for what we would expect right
8 now.

9

10 And then the thing that I wanted to
11 talk about is we started a pilot project where we put
12 out video collars on wolves. We put three collars out
13 and put them on different packs and our goal was to
14 estimate predation rate and to look at prey selection.
15 It's been a goal of ours for a long time and it's
16 really hard to tackle that question with airplanes and
17 bad weather and all those things, so we retrieved the
18 collars last summer and started reviewing them and
19 we're really excited to see the data that came in and
20 so over like a one month period, for example, we had a
21 30 day winter period and we identified six kills and
22 felt really strongly that we didn't miss any kills with
23 that pack of nine wolves, so four moose and two caribou
24 and so we're going to try to take this project -- going
25 forward we're going to put three more out this year and
26 then we put in a little proposal to get eight more
27 collars and then our goal would be to put at least one
28 collar per pack and maybe a couple with two and then
29 we'd be able to finally achieve this goal of kind of
30 assessing prey -- or prey kill rate and selection and
31 just see how that varies with, you know, caribou
32 populations and weather conditions, snow patterns and
33 stuff like that.

34

35 So we're really excited about that.

36

37 One other thing that's really cool is
38 also you can assess behavior, just 24 hours a day, and
39 I should highlight and explain the video collars real
40 quick.

41

42 They turn on 30 second clips every hour
43 of the daylight hour. And so in the winter we get --
44 you know, March, April we get 16 to 18 hours of data,
45 you know, we get 16 hours of the day where we get a 30
46 second clip every hour and then during the summer we
47 get that 24 hours a day, which is great because then
48 you're not missing. Then you don't know -- then you
49 know what's happening at night -- or when it's night
50

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1 for other people, I guess.

2

3 But -- so that's that -- and then I
4 guess we'll just give a quick update on dall sheep
5 surveys.

6

7 Last year we really wanted to do it, we
8 weren't able to achieve that. We weren't able to
9 secure funding for that. But this year, with the help
10 of Marcy and the Subsistence Division they are helping
11 to foot the bill for that so we are going to for sure
12 get it done this year. We got a vendor lined up to do
13 the flight. And with that we are going to actually
14 include some surveys, we want to do interviews with
15 local subsistence users and understand the importance
16 of sheep to them and how things have maybe changed over
17 the last, you know, multiple decades and what
18 challenges they face towards going sheep hunting.

19

20 So that's a little plug. So if anybody
21 would like to talk about their sheep hunting experience
22 we would love to talk to them.

23

24 I think that's it.

25

26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go ahead.

27

28 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. Yeah, a
29 couple of different questions. Since we ended with
30 wolf, we'll start with wolf.

31

32 On those video collars, are you seeing
33 -- are you gaining much insider information on non-
34 ungulate predation or food, so other species, what are
35 they eating and to what extent?

36

37 MR. SORUM: Yeah, that's a great
38 question. Small game is really hard to tackle with
39 those and what works so well in the winter with the
40 large mammals is that they'll sit at a kill for five
41 days, at a moose kill, or a caribou kill for four days
42 or something. So we get multiple looks at the kill and
43 try to assess what it is, oh, that's a big leg bone,
44 okay, that must be a moose, or this is this type of
45 hair. So small game, they're only there for a little
46 bit. So the summer is when we were seeing them using
47 smaller game and also -- when I say smaller game, like
48 neonates are included, would be small prey -- small
49 prey items. And they don't spend much time there.

50

0147

1 They visit a lot of old kills in the summer and they
2 travel by themselves a lot during the summer and so I
3 think one wolf can visit an old moose kill and get
4 something out of it but if nine wolves visited an old
5 moose kill they wouldn't get much. So it seems like --
6 and the other thing we saw a lot was caching of meat
7 that I didn't really -- I don't think I understood that
8 ecology as well and so what was happening in the
9 summers is the wolves were visiting these kills and
10 then traveling to, you know, within two to four miles
11 away from the kill and caching. So we have videos of
12 the wolves digging up a hole, throwing up meat into the
13 hole and then using their nose to cover the hole back
14 up and we were measuring the distance away from these
15 kills that they were doing that and it was like one to
16 four miles away, or half a mile to four miles away.
17 And so within these videos we were seeing the wolves
18 eating red meat, you know, traveling, because we could
19 compare it to their GPS movements in the video so for
20 every video there's a GPS location and then the next
21 video has a -- the next video has a GPS location
22 associated with it. So you could kind of see that no
23 clusters had been created. They hadn't really
24 necessarily made a kill but they were eating red meat
25 and I was wondering if they had visited an old cache
26 site.

27
28 But anyway we're just exploring, I'm
29 speculating a lot here, but it's just really
30 interesting information you can gather a lot from right
31 now so.

32
33 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you for that.
34 The other question I had, on the moose surveys, where
35 were you surveying, where was your survey plots in the
36 Preserve?

37
38 MR. SORUM: Yeah, great.

39
40 MR. BASSICH: And then the other
41 question tied to that is I was saying your moose
42 population densities were .24 per square mile, if you
43 could give me any kind of data that would indicate how
44 that stands with a lot of other areas in the state.

45
46 MR. SORUM: Sure. So the moose survey
47 area is pretty much a large corridor over the Yukon
48 River and then extends over the Charley, the Nation,
49 and the Kanvik are the primary and the -- and then --
50

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1 well, anyway we have a survey report and we can provide
2 that to you.

3

4 MR. BASSICH: Just a map would be
5 useful.

6

7 MR. SORUM: Great. And then the second
8 question.

9

10 MR. BASSICH: Population densities.

11

12 MR. SORUM: Oh, yeah, comparison. So a
13 good comparison was Taylor Highway is 1.24, 1.25 moose
14 per square mile, so it's about five times greater on
15 the Taylor Highway than it is along the Yukon.

16

17 MR. BASSICH: And then what about other
18 parts of the state, other Game Units, that would be
19 interesting information to have in comparison to.

20

21 MR. SORUM: Sure. So like Yukon Flats
22 is similar. And I can speak mostly to the northern
23 Interior. But like Yukon Flats would be a bit more
24 similar to Yukon-Charley, Gates -- you know, Gates of
25 the Arctic where we do a lot of other moose survey
26 work, Kanuti is a bit lower than Yukon-Charley so.

27

28 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

29

30 MR. SORUM: Uh-huh.

31

32 MR. BASSICH: One follow up, just a
33 comment.

34

35 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Uh-huh.

36

37 MR. BASSICH: If you ever have any of
38 these video collars and you see us in it.....

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 MR. BASSICH:you know Don or any
43 of us from Eagle, don't -- you know, just kind of.....

44

45 (Laughter)

46

47 MR. WOODRUFF: I might like to point
48 out that .24 moose per square mile has been the mean
49 for 20 or 30 years in Yukon-Charley and I was surprised

50

0149

1 that it went up to .28 and then it went right back down
2 again.

3

4 MR. SORUM: Yeah, you know, we had a
5 bump there 2009 to 2015 where it raised up 35, 40
6 percent of that number and then -- so we published a
7 paper in the last year that kind of pointed to large
8 fires that happened in 1999 and 2004 that helped
9 improve the moose habitat. The recent declines, we
10 haven't analyzed that so I don't want to get too over
11 our skis but there's been some really harsh winters and
12 so we were wondering if that has to do with it and we
13 are hoping, what you can do is that -- you know if we
14 have some better winters that those moose will be able
15 to -- population will be able to increase to --
16 considering that -- that there appears to be better
17 habitat in Yukon-Charley than there was, say, 20 years
18 ago.

19

20 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. We're hoping
21 for bigger populations of moose and salmon.

22

23 (Laughter)

24

25 MR. SORUM: And caribou.

26

27 MS. POPE: I just had a quick question.
28 This is Amanda Pope for the record. I was wondering
29 how far do the cows that are collared wander. Are they
30 traveling out of the Preserve or staying in certain
31 mileage?

32

33 MR. CAMERON: Thanks, Amanda. For the
34 record, Matt Cameron. Great question. One thing
35 that's been really interesting about this is that we're
36 seeing a huge variety of ways moose are -- some -- some
37 are staying in really small areas and don't cover a lot
38 of ground. Some other ones have -- are migrating in
39 the summer. We've had two that migr -- two or three
40 that migrate out of the Preserve to the north and into
41 the Little Black River and then come back in in the
42 winter. I don't have any numbers for you yet because
43 that's something we're planning on looking at as we get
44 more data but I'll write that down.

45

46 MS. POPE: Okay, thank you for the
47 time. Whenever you get that data do you mind sharing
48 it with everybody?

49

50

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1 MR. CAMERON: Sure, I'll have that for
2 our next meeting.

3
4 MS. POPE: Thank you. Okay.

5
6 MR. CAMERON: One thing I'll add on, if
7 you look at the handout from Jim HERRIGES he talked
8 about earlier, as well as Arctic's handout, they have a
9 map showing the tracks of the last year from all of the
10 moose from our three study areas and so you can see the
11 range of movements from them and there's some long
12 distance movers in there, it's really impressive. But
13 you'll see Yukon-Charley moose in the bottom.

14
15 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any more
16 questions.

17
18 Andy.

19
20 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, just maybe more
21 information. One of the observations that I've been
22 noticing the last two years with heavy snowfall, which
23 is probably a no-brainer, but what I'm seeing when I do
24 see moose, they're all yarded up together. I don't
25 know if it's for protection or what it is, but when
26 they are discovered by the wolves they're going to sit
27 there for quite awhile because they're going to have
28 quite a bit to eat. So that's just an observation that
29 I've been seeing and it just seems like, they're kind
30 of struggling. They're having a hard time and when
31 they do find hard trails anywhere, they're not getting
32 off of them. They're staying on them. Which tells me
33 they're pretty fearful right now given the situations,
34 you know, with the heavy snowfall so that's going to be
35 the norm in the future from what the projections are.
36 So for whatever it's worth.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All right,
39 are there any other questions.

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Eva, or
44 Charlie.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All right,
49 thank you very much, uh-huh. Next would be -- I've got
50

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1 so many scribbles here -- the Denali.

2

3 MS. OWEN: Yes, good afternoon, Madame
4 Chair. Members of the Council. This is Pat Owen, I'm
5 a Wildlife Biologist with Denali National Park. And I
6 believe you probably received a copy of our written
7 report, maybe just now or in the last couple of minutes
8 but I'll make this as brief as I can. I'm not sure of
9 what's in that report has not changed a whole lot since
10 I addressed the Council last fall but I will give you
11 just a couple updates so I won't go through this word
12 for word.

13

14 I'll start out with bear monitoring.

15

16 The study that we've had going in the
17 northeast corner of the Park for many years is really
18 wound down now. The last of the four radio collars
19 that we had on bears came off, they had automatic
20 release mechanisms. They came off in September of last
21 year and were retrieved. We will continue to work on
22 analyzing the data and getting a final report out for
23 that study.

24

25 Probably the big news for us on
26 something we thought we were going to get off the
27 ground last spring but didn't happen was a bear study
28 in relation to what's going on with the Park Road
29 currently because of the land slide at Mile 45 that
30 basically has the road closed beyond that point, so
31 basically about half the length of the Park Road is not
32 accessible to traffic and we decided that we really
33 needed to take advantage of that condition to look at
34 how bears are affected by traffic on the road. We are
35 going to get this project started this year and we
36 have, sort of modified our approach just a little bit.
37 We will be catching probably six or eight bears on the
38 east side of the road closure, which means the area
39 where there is still traffic on the road. This we're
40 doing as sort of a back up plan in the event that the
41 scheduling for the opening of the road to traffic does
42 not go as planned. It's just sort of our insurance to
43 make sure that we get some bears that are in an area
44 that is affected by traffic so that we can look at
45 movement and behavior in that area. So we'll be
46 catching a handful of bears in May and then in June
47 we'll do another capture and catch probably between
48 eight and 10 bears on the west side where the road is
49 actually closed. Right now, just recently actually,

50

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1 the contract for the bridge work that's going to bridge
2 the gap there at the landslide was awarded and the
3 schedule is that the road will reopen in the spring of
4 2025. So our plan is to have bears collared on the
5 west side of the closure for the '23 and '24 season
6 when there is no traffic out there, and then we will
7 recollar those bears and keep them collared for two
8 additional years once the traffic resumes in 2025. And
9 like I said, just in the off chance that the
10 construction does not go as scheduled we will have, not
11 the best comparison, but we will have something to
12 compare it to with some of those bears that are
13 collared on the east side and we'll be able to use
14 those data. What that means for the public visiting
15 the Park, is that, in May we will have a side gate
16 closure beyond the Teklanika River to basically the
17 Polychrome area, the area where the slide is, while
18 we're catching bears and three post capture of the last
19 bear. This is for safety concerns both for people and
20 for the bears. And then we'll do the same thing but
21 it'll be a much larger closure basically from Pretty
22 Rocks, or the Polychrome area to just short of Wonder
23 Lake in June when we catch bears on the west side and,
24 again, back country units will be closed as well as the
25 road being closed to pedestrians and bicyclists, again,
26 for safety reasons for both people and the bears since
27 we're going to have bears on the landscape out there.

28
29 So that's our plan to get started this
30 spring.

31
32 In terms of bear management, I'll let
33 you guys look at the numbers there in the report about
34 bear/human interactions last year. Nothing really out
35 of the ordinary there for us, probably the biggest
36 challenge for us last year was that we had basically a
37 new turnaround spot for buses, which is at the Eastfork
38 Bridge, something that we've never had before, and the
39 issue for us with the Eastfork area is that it is a
40 real hot spot for bears. So lots of human/bear
41 interactions at that location. We learned a lot last
42 year about how to manage that. And with the
43 construction of the bridge beginning this year the road
44 beyond that point where people were actually able to
45 walk on the road past the Eastfork bridge last year,
46 much of that road will not be available for people to
47 walk on and that is one of the hot spots where we have
48 lots of human/bear interactions. So that, hopefully,
49 will ease the pressure there a little bit. But, we,
50

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1 like I said, learned a lot of things about how to
2 manage bears and people out there and I think things
3 will go a little bit smoother for us this year.
4

5 In terms of sheep surveys, I did report
6 last fall that we did do a ground base sheep survey and
7 provided some of those numbers and also the fact that
8 we had intended to do an aerial survey in August.
9 Unfortunately due to weather and pilot availability
10 that survey did not occur in August and the only thing
11 we have to go on was the ground base survey and then
12 one sort of informal flight to look at sheep and this
13 year we're expecting that we're going to be able to do
14 a full blown moose survey and if everything cooperates,
15 weather and pilot availability, which is already
16 getting lined up, we should be able to pull off an
17 aerial sheep survey and do a better job on that this
18 coming year.
19

20 Let's see, moose monitoring. Our moose
21 monitoring surveys are on hold indefinitely. This has
22 been an ongoing thing so I won't talk much about moose
23 monitoring.
24

25 Caribou monitoring. Like everybody
26 else is reporting, we're seeing caribou numbers
27 decrease a bit. Productivity was looking pretty good
28 and this is based on 43 radio collared females that we
29 had out there. It was a little higher than the long
30 term average but what we found is that in mid-June when
31 we did the post-calving surveys 22 calves per 100 cows
32 by September when we did the composition surveys, that
33 declined to about eight per 100 cows. So, you know,
34 looking at past caribou numbers in the Park, you know,
35 we had a high back in the early '90s, somewhere around
36 give or take 3,200 caribou, that dropped down to either
37 side of 2,000 for a number of years between, oh, I
38 don't know, maybe 1991 or '92 up until 2010, '12 and
39 then we had a little bit of a rise and now it looks
40 like maybe things are starting to drop back down again.
41 We have not done anything in the way of vegetation
42 surveys to -- I'm anticipating the question about their
43 range and eating themselves out of their range,
44 personally I find that a little hard to believe that
45 that could be what's going on based on the amount of
46 area that they've got to cover. These caribou spend
47 time in the Interior of the Park, down on the south
48 side of the Alaska Range over in the Stampede Corridor,
49 they cover a lot of ground and for that many caribou, I
50

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1 would doubt that that's what's going on. We do know
2 that predation is obviously an issue. What else is
3 going on out there is -- we're a bit unsure about.

4

5 For wolf monitoring. We monitor 13
6 packs. We observed production of 38 pups in the
7 spring. 37 of those pups were recruited into the
8 population. We're doing the same thing that we've been
9 doing for a great number of years for moose and
10 monitoring, mainly the alpha male and female from each
11 of the packs that we can identify that spend time
12 within the Park and -- and wolf seem to be doing just
13 fine.

14

15 Just to mention the Alpine wildlife
16 project that I've mentioned to you before, 2022 was the
17 last year of field work for that study. The folks that
18 were working in the field on that study were a graduate
19 student, and three technicians were in the Park from
20 the first part of June until mid-August doing a lot of
21 hiking in the backcountry. They placed 10 motion
22 sensor cameras and 24 temperatures loggers looking at
23 collared activity and then also visited 30 other sites
24 and conducted surveys for other Alpine wildlife, mainly
25 Arctic ground squirrels, pika and hoary marmots. The
26 other aspect of that study which is a citizen science
27 project where we actually get visitors to the Park to
28 report these species, that's also been underway and you
29 can see there that to-date, at least when this was
30 written last fall, 53 people submitted observations,
31 mainly through eyenaturalist and that will be ongoing.
32 But, like I said, the field work for this is complete.
33 We hope to continue to acquire the data from any
34 visitors that are interested and in the field and
35 report back to us.

36

37 So as far as avian projects go, the
38 Golden Eagle information that I provided last fall is
39 the same here. We will conduct productivity and
40 survival surveys for Golden Eagles again in 2023. The
41 nesting occupancy surveys will be done in April and
42 then the productivity surveys will be done in June --
43 or, I'm sorry, July.

44

45 We will conduct breeding bird surveys
46 again in June. This year we were only able to do the
47 breeding bird surveys on that first half of the road.
48 We're going to try -- whether or not we're going to be
49 able to do it, but we are going to try to conduct

50

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1 breeding bird surveys because we do have a couple
2 routes that are west of Polychrome and we're going to
3 see if we can get the approval to do those surveys west
4 of Polychrome this year. That's still uncertain.

5

6 The nest predation study that USGS did,
7 they were supposed to be back in the Park in 2022, they
8 did not return for a number of reasons, but we do
9 expect the field work on that project to resume in
10 2023. So hopefully we'll see a crew from USGS in the
11 Park to do that work.

12

13 I think that's about it for me.

14

15 If anybody has any questions, I'd be
16 happy to take them. If there's anything you think of
17 after this, my contact information is at the end of
18 that report, and also if anyone is interested in our
19 end of season human/bear conflict and management report
20 and -- actually our wildlife management report you can
21 also contact me for that. So that's it.

22

23 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
24 Pat. Any questions.

25

26 Donald.

27

28 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don Woodruff.
29 And my question is how are you studying the nest
30 predation, do you have cameras on the nest?

31

32 MS. OWEN: Yes. Yeah. There's -- I --
33 I don't remember off the top of my head the numbers
34 but, yeah, basically they find nests of a number of
35 different species and put cameras out there and then
36 check the cameras basically weekly, pull the cards and
37 change the cards out in the cameras and they've gotten
38 some really, really interesting video of predation
39 events at nests of a lot of different avian species.

40

41 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
44 questions.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Charlie or
49 Eva.

50

0156

1 (No comments)

2

3

4 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All right,
5 hearing none, I think we got through all those reports,
6 I hope I didn't miss one. Arctic will be tomorrow.
7 So.....

8

9 MR. WRIGHT: Madame Chair.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes.

12 Charlie, go ahead.

13

14 MR. WRIGHT: I'd just like to say thank
15 you for the great reports, that's all. No questions.

16

17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Thank
18 you, Charlie.

19

20 Just to remind the Council and
21 everyone, tomorrow morning we'll do the non-agenda
22 public comments again and then we go into the review on
23 Arctic Village Sheep Management Area. We'll probably
24 get the report and then go into that. And then at
25 10:30 we have the wood bison. These are all those
26 things that got changed on us so that's -- that's how
27 we'll start the meeting in the morning, okay.

28

29 I think we went a little bit past 5:00,
30 anything else Council members.

31

32 MR. BASSICH: Yeah.

33

34 Andy.

35

36 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I'd just like to
37 make a request, if possible, tomorrow at 3:00 o'clock,
38 depending on where we are on the agenda, if we could
39 maybe have a short break, there's a teleconference that
40 I think Charlie and I would like to attend, at least
41 try and get the flavor of it.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.

44

45 MR. BASSICH: Regarding Area M stuff

46 so.....

47

48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: How much time
49 do you need?

50

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1 MR. BASSICH: Even if we had 15
2 minutes, just a 15 minute break somewhere around there
3 to where we can kind of hear the initial comments.
4 I've asked them to try and consolidate as much of that
5 as possible. We don't know but I think Charlie and I,
6 both, would probably like to listen in on that.

7
8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Absolutely.

9
10 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

11
12 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: And you might
13 have to remind us again so, yeah.

14
15 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I will.

16
17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Okay.

18
19 MR. BASSICH: I just wanted to bring it
20 to your attention.....

21
22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: That's not a
23 problem.

24
25 MR. BASSICH:so it's not last
26 minute.

27
28 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah.

29
30 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

31
32 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Great.
33 All right, we'll start again in the morning at 9:00.
34 We're completed for today.

35
36 (Off record)

37
38 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

4) ss.

5 STATE OF ALASKA)

6

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

10

11 THAT the foregoing pages numbered 02 through
12 ____ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the
13 EASTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY
14 COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I taken electronically on the
15 1st day of March 2023;

16

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

22

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

25

26 DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 4th
27 day of April 2023.

28

29

30

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

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