

1 KODIAK/ALEUTIANS FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5
6 VOLUME I

7
8 Best Western Kodiak Inn
9 Kodiak, Alaska
10 September 29, 2015
11 9:00 a.m.

12
13
14
15 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

16
17 Speridon Simeonoff (Telephonic)
18 Melissa Berns
19 Coral Chernoff
20 Patrick Holmes
21 Thomas Schwantes
22 Antone Shelikoff
23 Rebecca Skinner
24 Della Trumble (Telephonic)
25
26 Regional Council Coordinator, Karen Deatherage

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Kodiak, Alaska - 9/29/2015)

(On record)

MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Good morning. I would like to call the Kodiak/Aleutian Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Do a roll call.

MS. DEATHERAGE: We're doing a roll call now for the Council. Can we start with Pat, your name and location. Is that how? I don't know how to do it.

MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Just name off all the Council members.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Oh, okay. I'm learning. Pat Holmes.

MR. HOLMES: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Coral Chernoff.

MS. CHERNOFF: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Tom Schwantes.

MR. SCHWANTES: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Melissa Berns.

MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Antone Shelikoff.

MR. SHELIKOFF: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Rebecca Skinner.

MS. SKINNER: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: On the phone, Della Trumble.

MS. TRUMBLE: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: And Mitch Simeonoff.

1 MR. SIMEONOFF: Here.
2
3 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you.
4
5 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Certify a quorum
6 present?
7
8 MS. DEATHERAGE: Certify a quorum
9 present.
10
11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Invocation. Pat,
12 would you please lead us in an invocation.
13
14 (Invocation)
15
16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Pat.
17 Call the meeting to order. Welcome and introductions.
18 Mitch, as the Chair, would you like to start off with
19 welcome and introductions.
20
21 MR. SIMEONOFF: (Indiscernible).
22
23 MS. DEATHERAGE: We couldn't understand
24 you, Mitch. Could you repeat that.
25
26 MR. SIMEONOFF: We usually have
27 (indiscernible).
28
29 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We can go around
30 the room then and do introductions. Please state your
31 name and your community or the agency you're with.
32 Start with you, Pat.
33
34 MR. HOLMES: Pat Holmes, Kodiak RAC. I
35 think everybody knows me. I'm just really glad that we
36 have this Council and our abilities to try to solve
37 problems for subsistence folks.
38
39 Thank you.
40
41 MS. CHERNOFF: Coral Chernoff, Kodiak.
42 I'm a big subsistence user and lived here most all my
43 life.
44
45 MR. SCHWANTES: Tom Schwantes,
46 subsistence user. I've been here in Kodiak since 1979
47 and I really enjoy working with this Council.
48
49 Thank you.
50

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Good morning. My
2 name is Melissa Berns, Kodiak RAC and born and raised,
3 and live in the community of Old Harbor and subsistence
4 user.

5
6 MR. SHELIKOFF: Antone Shelikoff. I
7 have been on this Council probably since 2010. I'm a
8 subsistence user also.

9
10 Thank you.

11
12 MS. SKINNER: Rebecca Skinner from the
13 community of Kodiak.

14
15 MS. DEATHERAGE: My name is Karen
16 Deatherage. I'm the Council Coordinator from the
17 Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage.

18
19 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We can go ahead
20 and go around the room here.

21
22 MS. INGLES: Palma Ingles. I'm with
23 U.S. Fish and Wildlife in Anchorage.

24
25 MS. KRUEGER: Kelly Krueger, Sun'aq
26 Tribe, Kodiak.

27
28 MR. KRON: Tom Kron, Fish and Wildlife
29 Service, OSM.

30
31 MS. TONNESON: Heather Tonneson, U.S.
32 Fish and Wildlife Service in Anchorage.

33
34 MS. HAYDEN: Natasha Hayden, Native
35 Village of Afognak.

36
37 MS. FOX: Lisa Fox, Fish and Game, in
38 Cold Bay in the summertime and then here in the winter.

39
40 MS. BUMSTED: Pam Bumsted from Kodiak,
41 Sun'aq area.

42
43 MR. PYLE: Bill Pyle, Kodiak National
44 Wildlife Refuge.

45
46 MR. LANCE: Tom Lance, Sun'aq Tribe of
47 Kodiak, Natural Resources.

48
49 MS. LEE: Tonya Lee from Kodiak, Kodiak
50 National Wildlife Refuge. I'm the Refuge Information

1 Technician or RIT.

2

3 MR. RIVARD: Hi, I'm Don Rivard. I'm a
4 fish biologist with the Office of Subsistence
5 Management in Anchorage.

6

7 MR. SCHROF: I'm Steve Schrof with Fish
8 and Game here in town, Comm Fish.

9

10 MR. POLUM: Tyler Polum, Sport Fish,
11 Department of Fish and Game, Kodiak.

12

13 MS. FINKLE: I'm Heather Finkle. I'm a
14 fisheries research biologist with ADF&G.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Who do we have on
17 the phone?

18

19 MR. SIMEONOFF: This is Mitch
20 Simeonoff. I live in the village of Akhiok.

21

22 MS. TRUMBLE: Good morning. This is
23 Della Trumble. I'm sorry I couldn't make it, but we're
24 grounded.

25

26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
27 other agency folks on the phone with us this morning.

28 MR. EVANS: Good morning. This is Tom
29 Evans with the Office of Subsistence Management.

30

31 MR. CRAWFORD: Good morning. This is
32 Drew Crawford, Department of Fish and Game in
33 Anchorage.

34

35 MR. PAPPAS: Good morning. This is
36 George Pappas, Office of Subsistence Management.

37

38 MR. LIND: Orville Lind, Office of
39 Subsistence Management, Native Liaison.

40

41 MR. DAMBERG: Hi, this is Doug Damberg,
42 Refuge Manager at Izembek Refuge calling in from Cold
43 Bay.

44

45 MR. SHARP: I think I walked on
46 someone. This is Dan Sharp with Bureau of Land
47 Management in Anchorage.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you very
50 much. We'll review our agenda with the new added

1 agenda items.

2

3 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
4 Mitch.

5

6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
7 Mitch.

8

9 MR. SIMEONOFF: I had a discussion with
10 Karen and somebody from the Refuge, but she had to
11 leave, so we moved them under old business. Since they
12 have to leave, we're going to have them go first. And
13 under new business we have (indiscernible), we have
14 Karluk report and for ADF&G we have the (indiscernible)
15 report. Those are new items.

16

17 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: You're breaking
18 up, Mitch, but we do have those added to our newly
19 revised agenda. Are you able to email the new one to
20 him to review?

21

22 MR. SIMEONOFF: This connection is not
23 very good.

24

25 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yeah, we have a
26 poor connection.

27

28 MR. SIMEONOFF: I'll just be quiet.

29

30 MS. DEATHERAGE: Through the Chair,
31 everybody, in their meeting books, has a copy of the
32 agenda and we're adding or amending the agenda at this
33 meeting. So I'm going to go ahead if you don't mind
34 and repeat what Mitch said because of the line breakup.
35 We are under old business, number 10. We are moving
36 Refuges proposed rule on hunting before the Rural
37 Determination update. Under new business we are adding
38 the Aleutian and Bering Sea Islands Landscape
39 Conservation Co-op, LCC for slow writers. That's under
40 new business. Under agency reports, tribal
41 governments, we're adding the Native Village of Karluk
42 that will be calling into the meeting. Further down
43 the page under ADF&G we're adding ACR number 6. ACR is
44 agenda change request, which was made to the Board of
45 Fisheries, and we're adding that under ADF&G under
46 their reports. Materials for all these new issues are
47 on the back table.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Great. Thank you.

50

1 Go ahead, Pat.
2
3 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. I'd like to
4 also add -- under the section new business we have
5 wildlife proposals. There's a proposal. I just got a
6 copy of it. Board of Fish proposals for the Aleutians
7 and there's a proposal in there that our Council had
8 discussed before when Vince Tutiakoff was on for
9 closing the inner part of Unalaska Bay. I'll have to
10 look it up. Anyway, I just wanted to bring that to the
11 Council's attention that that was moving forward in the
12 State discussions.
13
14 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We'll add that as
15 item E.
16
17 MR. SIMEONOFF: This is Mitch. It's a
18 proposal. It goes under the WP16-21, right?
19
20 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: That is correct.
21 Thank you, Mitch. Do we have any other additions to
22 the agenda, changes, modifications.
23
24 MR. PYLE: Madame Chair.
25
26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
27 Bill.
28
29 MR. PYLE: Bill Pyle, Kodiak Refuge. I
30 would like to request consideration for a change of the
31 Kodiak Refuge agency report to later today if possible.
32
33 Thank you.
34
35 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
36 objections to that request?
37
38 (No comments)
39
40 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do you want to be
41 after lunch?
42
43 MR. PYLE: Yes, please.
44
45 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chairman. I
46 recommend we approve the agenda as current written.
47
48 MS. SKINNER: Second.
49
50 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Seconded by

1 Rebecca. All in favor.
2
3 IN UNISON: Aye.
4
5 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any opposed.
6
7 (No opposing votes)
8
9 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Okay. The agenda
10 is approved. Review and approval of previous meeting
11 minutes. I think everyone has received a copy of the
12 meeting minutes.
13
14 MS. SKINNER: I'll move to approve the
15 minutes.
16
17 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We have a motion
18 on the table to approve the minutes as presented. Do
19 we have a second.
20
21 MR. SCHWANTES: Second.
22
23 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Seconded. All in
24 favor.
25
26 IN UNISON: Aye.
27
28 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any opposed.
29
30 (No opposing votes)
31
32 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Minutes approved.
33 Council service awards.
34
35 MR. KRON: Madame Chair. I'm Tom Kron
36 with OSM and we have three service awards to present
37 and only one of those people is here, so I will present
38 the one award and then I'll read through the
39 presentations for the others and we'll get them to
40 them.
41
42 Our first award is for Antone
43 Shelikoff. We have a certificate for you. You've been
44 on the Council for five years. I was listening to you
45 when you were doing your introduction. This is signed
46 by Tim Towarak, Federal Subsistence Board Chair. Let
47 me read this first. We thank Mr. Shelikoff of Akutan
48 for five years of service on the Kodiak/Aleutians
49 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to represent
50 subsistence users.

1 In the past, Mr. Shelikoff assisted
2 ADF&G and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with
3 marine mammal, fish and bird surveys. He's been active
4 as a subsistence duck hunter and fisherman. He also
5 has served as a tribal council member.

6
7 Thank you to Mr. Shelikoff for your
8 five years of service on the Regional Advisory Council.

9
10 (Applause)

11
12 MR. KRON: We're going to get a picture
13 here. I'm going to go ahead and read these, Madame
14 Chair, if that's okay.

15
16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes.

17
18 MR. KRON: Also Rick Koso, who was
19 unable to make it to the meeting, but I will read this.
20 We thank Mr. Koso of Adak for 10 years of service on
21 the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory
22 Council to represent subsistence users.

23
24 Mr. Koso has over 50 years of
25 experience harvesting and using a wide range of fish
26 and wildlife species, including marine mammals, land
27 mammals, anadromous fish, shellfish and freshwater fish
28 from Adak and the King Cove areas. Mr. Koso has
29 harvested and used resources from Izembek National
30 Wildlife Refuge and the waters of the Alaska Maritime
31 National Wildlife Refuge for both subsistence and
32 guiding purposes.

33
34 Mr. Koso has participated as an
35 instructor in cultural and educational camps. He was a
36 commercial fisherman throughout the state of Alaska for
37 salmon, herring, halibut and crab for 40 years. He has
38 been a Class A assistant guide for bears and caribou.
39 He's an active sport fisherman and has a solid
40 understanding of regulatory differences between
41 commercial, subsistence and sport uses, seasons and
42 methods.

43
44 He has served as an officer with the
45 Adak Community Development Corporation and was a member
46 of the King Cove Fish and Game Advisory Committee. He
47 was the mayor of King Cove, a member of King Cove and
48 Cold Bay city councils and the Aleutians East Borough
49 Assembly.

50

1 Thank you to Mr. Koso for his 10 years
2 of service to this Regional Advisory Council.

3
4 Let's give him around of applause.

5
6 (Applause)

7
8 MR. KRON: Again, we're all sorry that
9 he was unable to make it to this meeting. Our third
10 award is for 15 years of service and this goes to
11 Speridon Simeonoff.

12
13 Thank you to Mr. Simeonoff of Akhiok
14 for 15 years of service on the Kodiak/Aleutians
15 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to represent
16 subsistence users. Mr. Simeonoff used all salmon and
17 hunted deer and goat and marine mammals. He has fished
18 commercially for 20-plus years and has also sport
19 fished.

20
21 He has served as chair of the Kodiak
22 Area Native Association and is a member of the Native
23 Village of Akhiok. He has served as chairman of the
24 Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission and participated
25 in meetings on migratory birds, Steller sea lion and
26 sea otter. He has helped with children's programs and
27 drug and alcohol programs.

28
29 Thank you to Mr. Simeonoff for his 15
30 years of service to the Kodiak Advisory Council.

31
32 (Applause)

33
34 MR. KRON: We have plaques for both
35 Rick and Speridon and we'll have to get them to them.

36
37 Thank you all.

38
39 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you very
40 much. Council member reports. We can start to the
41 right of me again. Pat, would you like to start us off
42 with Council member reports?

43
44 MR. HOLMES: Yes. Thank you, Madame
45 Chair. I guess getting old is kind of a drag, so don't
46 do it. Anyway, my red fishing this year was rather
47 mediocre, but it's because I still cling to the dory I
48 made 42 years ago and my OMC that's probably older than
49 most folks here. I do wish that in some ways it was
50 back before the Marine Mammal Act where I could do it

1 in a few seals because I would have been better on my
2 home pack with seals than with reds.

3

4 One exciting thing is this spring I had
5 a juvenile fur seal working along with hair seals and
6 with the sea lions. Anyway, I ended up with half a
7 salmon after I gave away the rest of them, so it wasn't
8 the most productive year. But I would say that my
9 beach combing for tide pool chowder and limpets and
10 chitons is improving. I'm wondering what will be
11 happening with that disease in the starfish. At least
12 it will give us a little more stuff for chowder now
13 that we can't really eat clams in this neck of the
14 woods.

15

16 I have noticed quite an increase in the
17 amount of deer tracks. A few days ago I was down on
18 Mission Beach and saw the tracks of a big buck down
19 there. So I think deer on this end of the island are
20 improving. The ladies that I know that do North
21 Afognak and Tonya Lee has helped out the local tribes
22 on their Native foods and cultural things. I just
23 would like to applaud all those ladies that do all that
24 work with the young folks.

25

26 Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

27

28 MADAME CHAIR BERNIS: Thank you, Pat.

29

30 Coral.

31

32 MS. CHERNOFF: Hi, I'm Coral. I don't
33 really have much to report. I guess last year we
34 talked a lot about the Emperor Geese. So it looks like
35 we have some very healthy populations. I, myself, sort
36 of observed them last year because I made it a point to
37 go observe because we'd heard a lot about how many
38 there were and we were talking they were doing counts
39 starting around April 24th, 25th, so I wanted to see
40 when our geese left here. I don't know when our geese
41 left, but the last time I saw them was April 22nd and I
42 went week after week just in the Bells Flats area. So
43 I'm not sure how long it takes our geese to go there,
44 but at least I noted about 160 of them regularly all
45 the time in Womens Bay that were probably not included
46 in the counts that began on the 25th up north. So that
47 was kind of interesting.

48

49 Then I've noticed that -- I think it
50 was September 12th I noticed the first geese back here,

1 so that was a little bit exciting. I think there was
2 10 of them and then on Facebook last week I saw
3 somebody had seen like 80 in Middle Bay. Just
4 interesting, you know. We've been talking a lot about
5 the geese, but we haven't really -- you know, no one's
6 been studying them, no one has been looking at
7 numbers, so I thought, you know, maybe if more of us
8 went and observed and took photos, we'd have a better
9 idea of what's going on with the Emperors here in our
10 area.

11
12 I attended the local Kodiak regional
13 meeting for AMBCC and I'm very excited, being an
14 Alaskan artist, that there's been a proposal and I
15 think it's going to be approved, the final wording on
16 it, but Alaska Natives will be able to use the non-
17 edible parts from their subsistence hunt, so we'll be
18 able to use feathers and bones and things in our art.

19
20 The bird list is limited and from
21 archeological -- or actually from pieces in museums
22 that contain bird parts, many of those birds that they
23 made coats and hats and other items out of from here do
24 not appear on the list that we'll be able to use, but
25 we will be able to use many bird parts, which is
26 exciting.

27
28 As an artist and as somebody who likes
29 to use all parts of the animal, it's pretty frustrating
30 to have to throw away parts that are usable, like the
31 feathers and hides and things like that. So that's
32 very exciting. They've been working on this -- I think
33 Sun'aq proposed this in 2011, so it's been a long time
34 coming and I'm very excited to see that happening.

35
36 I guess we all talk about the deer
37 populations. I was kind of surprised. Late August I
38 was on the other side of island and we didn't see many
39 deer, but we did see a set of does with fawns and the
40 fawns still had spots on them, which I've never
41 observed so late. It was almost September and they
42 were still spotted. And then, of course, around town
43 we see the moms and the babies all over Near Island and
44 you drive out the road and you see moms with -- I think
45 I've seen more does with three fawns this year than
46 I've ever seen in all my time. So it seems like
47 they're producing and hopefully healthy and growing.

48
49 Thank you.
50

1 MR. SCHWANTES: Tom Schwantes. The
2 reports I'm hearing there's still some concern
3 regarding availability of salmon although the Buskin
4 did real well this year. A number of local people have
5 turned in the past to Pasagshak and, of course,
6 Pasagshak was a big failure again this year.

7
8 As far as the deer population, from
9 what I'm hearing and what I'm seeing, the deer
10 population looks really healthy. A lot of deer on the
11 road system. I am hearing that there's not a lot of
12 deer being observed on the south end as in the past.

13
14 The other concern that I'm still
15 hearing is there's a number of folks around that would
16 sure like to get at those Emperor Geese and I think
17 we're moving forward in that direction.

18
19 That's all I have.

20
21 Thank you.

22
23 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.
24 Melissa Berns from the community of Old Harbor. We had
25 a very, very busy summer out in Old Harbor with our
26 tribe, our summer camps. We had a very successful
27 environmental and stewardship camp as well as our
28 Nuniaq Cultural Camp on Sitkalidak Island which I was
29 able to be a part of and to share subsistence
30 harvesting and processing of marine mammals and fish
31 and birds and basically anything we could get our hands
32 on.

33
34 This year we have had a great salmon
35 return for subsistence around Old Harbor. Our local
36 creek behind the village, Big Creek is just flooded
37 with fish. It's amazing to see the return within the
38 Big Creek and the Barling Bay system, which is able to
39 provide for our community. You just can't keep the
40 silvers off your hook. It's pretty amazing. The kids
41 love it.

42
43 Our deer population has rebounded in
44 and around Old Harbor and on Sitkalidak Island, which
45 is a great thing for our community as it's suffered
46 greatly in the past year. So it's nice to see that
47 coming back. As Coral was talking about, you do see a
48 lot more does with fawns and a lot more of multiples
49 and triples.

50

1 One thing that we are doing too with
2 our tribe and not really -- I guess you wouldn't really
3 look at it as subsistence or some people wouldn't, but
4 we do down in our neck of the woods is subsistence
5 harvesting for wood. We don't have trees, so we have a
6 grant that we're working with our tribe and it's called
7 Wood For Our People and taking our youth out and
8 learning about harvesting wood. What types of wood
9 burn best and how to have low impacts on our air
10 quality within our community. With that we're also
11 passing on the stewardship and having our kids learn
12 about harvesting respectfully on our lands but also
13 providing for our elders in the community who aren't
14 able to go out and harvest woods themselves.

15
16 There has been quite a bit of concern
17 for the murre, which I've heard from a lot of our
18 local fleet that they're seeing a lot of dead birds
19 floating around as they're out on their fishing
20 grounds, but being in close to the village I've also
21 seen them floating in our boat harbor. So that is of
22 concern for us in Old Harbor, just kind of understand
23 what really is going on with the ecosystem and what's
24 going on with the murre population.

25
26 We have had low crab stocks for
27 subsistence harvesting this year. I know that a lot of
28 our fishermen will have to go -- they've been bringing
29 crab back from the south end of the island, which, for
30 us is -- it's hard for locals who don't have access to
31 that because we're so used to just harvesting in our
32 backyards.

33
34 We're just looking forward to winter.
35 It looks like a great population of goats around Old
36 Harbor throughout Three Saints Bay and up in our high
37 pass area that are close enough for community members
38 to have access to for harvesting.

39
40 Unfortunately around here people don't
41 harvest shellfish or they don't as much, but there has
42 been a shellfish study going on through the tribe and
43 the school district. We've been able to collect
44 shellfish over the last couple years and get data about
45 the PSP levels on our local beaches. They do say that
46 they're quite high and that we shouldn't be consuming
47 them. However, we do as a community. We still subsist
48 off of our shellfish and look forward to doing that
49 this fall.

50

1 I think that's all I have. Antone.

2

3 MR. SHELIKOFF: I do have a written
4 report, but I'll do an oral report first. I first met
5 Pat I think back in 2011 in Cold Bay and it's been my
6 opinion -- I gave my opinion. I'm very impressed with
7 Fish and Game. I've done surveys for them. I helped
8 them do surveys for sea mammals back in probably the
9 winter of '97. It was probably May 8th when they first
10 started. I worked with a guy name Ron Stanek with Fish
11 and Game, but I think he's since retired.

12

13 And going on to -- well, this year
14 there's been in August -- in August there's usually a
15 cultural camp and this year I didn't participate, but
16 every year -- this year there's been a shortage of
17 money, I guess, or funds. There was a lot -- there
18 seemed to be a little less this year compared to last
19 year for help to clean up the creeks and that was it.
20 The written report is more detailed, but I'll just hand
21 those out.

22

23 Thanks.

24

25 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Antone.

26

27 Rebecca.

28

29 MS. SKINNER: Over the summer the
30 Kodiak Island Borough was contacted by our D.C.
31 lobbyist and asked for a resolution supporting the
32 subsistence legislation that was proposed by Murkowski
33 and Young. The Borough decided to postpone action on
34 that resolution pending the Federal Subsistence Board
35 outcome from the end of July meeting. I know we're
36 going to be talking about the rural determination
37 process later in the meeting, so I think that should be
38 a good update and a good discussion. Hopefully we'll
39 touch on how that relates to the proposed legislation.

40

41 Since our last meeting, during the
42 month of May there was a closure of the trawl
43 groundfish fishery and subsequently both the city and
44 the borough of Kodiak supported an emergency rule to
45 open the groundfish fishery. That was put into place,
46 so the fishery opened back up, I think, in August and
47 that allowed the trawl cod fishery in September. The
48 closure was due to reaching the chinook cap. I know
49 we've had discussions or this group has had discussions
50 before I got on the board about chinook. So I just

1 raise that for awareness purposes.

2

3 And then regarding PSP, I had an
4 opportunity to attend a presentation last month about a
5 new PSP testing kit. It's almost being customized for
6 Alaska because the problem is our PSP levels are so
7 high that if you use traditional testing kits, you're
8 always going to basically get back a reading that says
9 don't eat these clams, but we're eating the clams and
10 we're not getting sick. So these new tests are going
11 to have higher levels set and they're basically
12 designed to take out in field and get immediate
13 results. So an individual user could take the testing
14 kit to their beach, harvest the clams and then test the
15 clams right there.

16

17 That's all I had. Thanks.

18

19 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.

20

21 Mitch.

22

23 MR. SIMEONOFF: This is Mitch. One
24 thing this summer we seen a lot of geese in the area,
25 Emperor Geese and their young. (Indiscernible) Cape
26 Alitak area. There was a healthy population of goats
27 up there and we always have a lot of hunters out there.
28 We have a lot of seals and Steller sea lions that get
29 caught in (indiscernible) than usual. We have a little
30 fish in Kempff Bay, which we usually don't see these
31 little animals there, but this summer there have been
32 some in there. The sea otters are growing. We're
33 trying to get them to go (indiscernible) and not get
34 into our clam beds.

35

36 That's it. We did have summer camp,
37 the kids camp. It's called Akhiok Kids Camp and that's
38 all subsistence and cultural camp. This summer it was
39 pretty good. We built a angyaq, but we didn't put the
40 fabric or skin on there.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mitch.
45 We're having a very hard time hearing you. There's
46 some disconnect there. Would you mind maybe writing up
47 or summarizing what you just shared with us so that can
48 go into the notes so we can reflect that. And then
49 also would you mind calling back in to see if maybe we
50 can get a better connection with you.

1 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay, I'll try hanging
2 up and calling back in.
3
4 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mitch.
5
6 Then Della.
7
8 MS. TRUMBLE: Good morning. Actually I
9 could hear Mitch loud and clear.
10
11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Then maybe the
12 line is on our end. Hopefully we'll get a better
13 connection here.
14
15 MS. TRUMBLE: Yeah. Well, this morning
16 we actually had snow up around the mountains, so winter
17 is starting to show up. This season I think fishing
18 went really well. The guys fished until the 20th of
19 September, which the past two years in August they
20 hadn't fished at all. I think the summer this year was
21 a little cooler and lots of rain. Everybody has been
22 putting up their subsistence fish and getting lots of
23 silvers.
24
25 They didn't have the caribou drawing,
26 which I do have, I think, concerns about, but we'll
27 talk about that when we get to the report. Everybody
28 is trying to look for the birds at this time. The
29 tribe did do their culture camp this summer and I do
30 know that staff from Izembek did participate and it was
31 a success. Other than that I think everything seems to
32 be going well.
33
34 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Della.
35
36 Mitch, are you back on with us.
37
38 MR. SIMEONOFF: Yes.
39
40 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair.
41
42 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes.
43
44 MR. HOLMES: Della, I was wondering.
45 You were going to try to organize a local group with
46 your cod fishermen folks on trying to see what was
47 going on with Emperor Geese in your area during the
48 year and particularly during the survey period. Did
49 folks see the geese there in April or so like we were
50 seeing them up here in Kodiak. It sounds like the

1 distribution of Emperors is much broader and more
2 abundant than we've seen in years. I was just
3 wondering how it was down on the peninsula.

4
5 MS. TRUMBLE: Yeah, it totally had
6 slipped my mind. I guess we will get that out there
7 this year and make sure they can try to do that.
8 Possibly ask the tribe to do it as part of their
9 survey. They do have a survey and I'm not sure how --
10 that is part of some of their observations. I'll try
11 to see what I can find out from them and get back to
12 you.

13
14 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Okay. We can go
15 on to the Chair's report. Mitch, did you have a Chair
16 report? Anything in addition? Are you on, Mitch?

17
18 MR. SIMEONOFF: This is Mitch. How is
19 the connection?

20
21 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Much better.

22
23 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay. Do you want me
24 to give my report again or is that all right?

25
26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Would you mind
27 giving it to us again now that we have a better
28 connection.

29
30 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay. I was saying
31 that, first off, we seen a lot of Emperor geese this
32 summer. There seemed to be a flock of maybe 100. I'm
33 trying to remember what I said. The sea lions are
34 coming in closer than usual. There's usually no sea
35 lions around and this summer we've had several. The
36 sea otter population is growing. We're trying to get
37 some hunters to go harvest them so that they don't get
38 into our clam beds.

39
40 The Akhiok Kids Camp is a subsistence
41 camp. We do everything. We go out fishing, go out
42 hunting and the kids seem to really like that. This
43 year we didn't do much of the hunting part because we
44 had a big project. We built an angyaq. We need to fix
45 the ribs and put some fabric or put some skin on there
46 and that will be determined later this year.

47
48 That was it, I think. Okay?

49
50 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mitch.

1 Much clearer. It sounds like you need to harvest some
2 of those sea lions for your umiak. We'll go into
3 public and tribal comments. We have John Reft. If
4 anybody else would like to make a public comment, there
5 are comment cards located at the back of the room.

6

7 MR. REFT: Thank you, Madame Chair.
8 I'm John Reft, the vice chair of the Sun'aq Tribal
9 Council. My statement I'm making is personal knowledge
10 from hunting and fishing. It's not a council report.
11 But listening to Coral, and I want you to know I do
12 appreciate her for her time and effort on the Emperor
13 Geese. This is all personal time that she puts into it
14 to record the locations and everything of the geese and
15 the increase in the population.

16

17 I have been at this increase on the
18 Emperor Geese for several years, but finally now it's
19 on the table here and I just came back from Fairbanks
20 Friday and it was a big issue up there on getting a
21 season and getting it open somehow. The increase of
22 the geese here that I have observed as a hunter and a
23 local person. I commercial fished all my life.
24 Retired now. Forced retirement. Too many metal parts.
25 Had to get off. But in my commercial fishing,
26 especially the south end of the island where Mitch and
27 them are talking about, I used to fish and hunt there
28 periodically and there was a tremendous amount of
29 Emperor Geese down there. Whenever you wanted some
30 fresh meat and the tenders couldn't get to you with the
31 food or something, too rough, you always had that as a
32 backup to eat.

33

34 My statement on the Emperor Geese now
35 to close on the geese is that there are a lot of geese
36 down in the south end and I do not believe that the
37 survey or the count that they do includes the south end
38 of the island. There's a tremendous amount from Moser
39 Bay, Deadman, all them areas, Trinity, Russian
40 Anchorage, all the Geese Islands out there. My
41 experience in knowing what's there and it's not being
42 surveyed during the regular surveillance time is that
43 it has to be and I indicated that in Fairbanks the
44 other day. So I believe we have a lot more geese on
45 this island than people realize. That's it on the
46 Emperor Geese.

47

48 On the ducks, this is my personal
49 viewpoint, is that these Emperor Geese when they come
50 in here, they take over and they

1 drive the ducks out, so you can't get the ducks. Geese
2 are too big. I think the ducks are too scared, so we
3 don't have the amount out here in ducks. My personal
4 knowledge of what is happening on the ducks too is that
5 when you hunt and you don't utilize the bird or animal,
6 it doesn't matter, it's a wanton waste situation.

7

8 I've got a couple reports that out here
9 when the Coast Guard hunts, they don't utilize the
10 bird. They hunt for enjoyment and then they come in,
11 they throw them in the dumpster or feed to the dogs.
12 These ducks, if we had an alliance that we used to have
13 before the new commander in -- he doesn't meet with us
14 anymore, tribal. If we had the alliance still in
15 existence with the Coast Guard, those ducks that they
16 hunt could be bagged up and distributed to the Natives
17 that want them to eat, not throw them in the dumpster.
18 You know, that's ridiculous. I mean that's real wanton
19 waste. I think that somehow word ought to be put out
20 to these people that it's against the law to discard
21 and waste.

22

23 The third and final thing is the sea
24 otter. Tom, you know as well as I do that there are so
25 many sea otter here now. Years ago, I think it was
26 '93, I had an agreement -- because we were getting
27 overwhelmed with the sea otter and I told them our
28 shellfish and stuff are going to disappear if we don't
29 curtail this amount of sea otter. I said we're going
30 to lose our shellfish. We're already losing clam beds
31 in Port Bailey and Raspberry and different areas. I
32 said you see them diving out there in the straits
33 coming up with tanner crab and stuff. I said there's
34 too many. I said we need to work together to keep the
35 population down. This was out here in Buskin I was
36 talking with him.

37

38 So we made an agreement because I said,
39 you know, I've got a market for these and so does the
40 Franklin brothers in Southeastern where they're getting
41 overrun with sea otter too. I said if we could harvest
42 them under your jurisdiction and monitor what abundance
43 of sea otter population is building up, maybe we could
44 keep it down to a level where we don't get eaten out in
45 our shellfish, and they agreed. I said, whoa, I can't
46 believe it, you're agreeing with me? They said, yeah,
47 yeah.

48

49 Then in came the significantly altered
50 statement and I said, well, what does that include.

1 What about the blankets and the coats or whatever you
2 make. They said, well, you have to have four sea otter
3 for a blanket to be significantly altered. I said
4 that's fine, you know. Then after the agreement on
5 everything we thought here we go. We'll come in, get
6 them measured and recorded and everything and work
7 together with you guys. Then they said, John, hey,
8 we've got good news for you. Before you go out, we've
9 got it down to two sea otter for a blanket and I said,
10 whoa, I can't believe my good luck, this is great.

11
12 So we go out and we get 68 sea otter
13 and I said to my brother I think we ought to go in and
14 get these checked out, measured and recorded and see
15 what the status is on our agreement with the Fish and
16 Wildlife now. So we did. We came in and as soon as I
17 went in the door they said, oh, we're glad you're here.
18 I said, oh, no, give me the bad news. That's why I
19 came in. They said we cannot allow you to ship them to
20 Korea or Japan to your markets that you guys have and
21 Southeastern too. I said why and they said, well, too
22 much pressure from Greenpeace. I said Greenpeace?
23 They don't even know what's going on here. They don't
24 know the abundance of sea otters and how detrimental
25 they are to us and what's going to be the end of our
26 shellfish. They said, well, we can't allow our
27 agreement to go through. So there we were stuck with
28 all them sea otter.

29
30 Now, what I was trying to tell Tom is
31 that when we hunted, especially Anton Bay, you shoot a
32 few sea otter and they disappear. Just like Sharatin,
33 Kizhuyak, down to Whale Pass and wherever. But they
34 got so smart that during the day they disappear in the
35 bay. You don't see anything. But as soon as dusk
36 comes and you look out to the entrance when you're
37 anchored up like I was and you look out there and you
38 can hardly see because it's getting dark and it looked
39 like a big raft of logs, you know. I told them, hey,
40 wake up guys, look at this. We might have to pull
41 anchor and move. It looks like a raft of logs coming
42 at us. My brother said, logs, hell, those are all sea
43 otters. Man, there was a couple hundred sea otter and
44 they come in and they spread out the bay for the night
45 and feed, then when daybreak comes they disappear.
46 That's how smart they get.

47
48 And that's what's happening out here
49 too. There's a lot of sea otter in Womens Bay. When
50 we're gillnetting silvers -- and I can't believe how

1 they're taking over and moving down the east side and
2 stuff. Mitch and them mentioned, you know, they hope
3 their clam beds are protected. They will not be
4 protected. These sea otter are smart. When you can't
5 scare them out of there during the day, they'll come in
6 and eat you out at night.

7
8 That's just like ducks. When you think
9 there aren't any ducks out here. You go out there at
10 dusk and you get out of the car and walk under the
11 telephone wires and poles out into ponds and little
12 marshes and you stand there and all of a sudden you
13 hear the whirl of wings and stuff. Boy, here they come
14 at night. They're just as smart if not smarter.
15 They're here, but they're just like us. They want to
16 eat and survive and they'll figure out a way to do it
17 no matter what.

18
19 Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

20
21 Sorry I took so long.

22
23 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.
24 Comments. Tom.

25
26 MR. SCHWANTES: Johnny, I appreciate
27 you coming in and sharing that with us. I was out at
28 Anton yesterday and it was full of sea otters.

29
30 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Pat.

31
32 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. Johnny. I
33 forgot to ask, but I was talking with Kenny Hall -- do
34 you remember him and his dad.....

35
36 MR. REFT: Yeah.

37
38 MR. HOLMES:dungeness fishermen
39 here for 50, 60 years? But he was telling me that his
40 family hasn't gotten any dungeness, either commercial
41 or subsistence, in Womens Bay or at the Buskin in 10
42 years. I know that I used to routinely get dungies in
43 my net at the Buskin and put out a ring net that way
44 and get them and I'm not getting any dungeness.

45
46 I was chatting -- and I want to tie
47 this back to the otters and I'm wondering if that might
48 be the problem and you're kind of the expert as I know.
49 I was chatting with Eric Munk, he's a retired biologist
50 that was doing the opening of crab pots in Womens Bay,

1 the derelict pots, but I guess before he retired last
2 summer he went out on an assignment and took some, you
3 know, the small pyramid pots to catch some tanners for
4 a project and he was out there for a week and a half
5 and didn't catch any tanners. I guess the last time he
6 dove he hardly saw any king crabs.

7
8 I'm wondering, you know, because we've
9 been concerned about Womens Bay for king crab, but do
10 you know of anybody that's been getting king crab out
11 there and do you think it's the otters that have
12 basically wiped out the last available king crab for
13 subsistence?

14
15 MR. REFT: Pat, that's a good question,
16 but my personal point of view as fishing subsistence
17 and everything it's not the pots that are detrimental
18 to the existence of your dungeness, tanners and king
19 crab. It's the sea otter. I watch them. I mean they
20 go down and when NOAA had a big school of them in there
21 and they were monitoring for years, that was before the
22 sea otter moved in. Now they're so thick that the king
23 crab, everything are disappearing. There's no more
24 tanners, dungeness. The guys can't put those pots
25 along the road and make a living, you know,
26 periodically picking like they did. I mean it's tough.
27 It's the sea otters that are detrimental to everything
28 we got. I can't say any more on it. That's how bad it
29 is. It's not the pots.

30
31 Thank you, Pat.

32
33 MR. HOLMES: Thank you, Johnny.

34
35 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you very
36 much.

37
38 MR. REFT: Thank you, Madame Chair.

39
40 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
41 other public comments.

42
43 (No comments)

44
45 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tribal comments.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any other non-
50 agenda items anyone want to bring to the table. Yes,

1 Mr. Pyle.

2

3 MR. PYLE: Madame Chair. If I may,
4 just for the benefit of the report that was just
5 submitted by Mr. Reft, mention that when I present this
6 afternoon, I will be addressing both a recent Emperor
7 Goose survey that occurred on the east side of Kodiak
8 Island in February of 2015 as well as an Archipelago-
9 wide sea otter population survey that occurred last
10 summer.

11

12 Thank you.

13

14 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mr.
15 Pyle. Moving along to old business. We have Refuge's
16 proposed rule on hunting. Heather Tonneson with U.S.
17 Fish and Wildlife Service. This is also reflected on
18 Page 41 in your booklet.

19

20 MS. TONNESON: Good morning. My name
21 is Heather Tonneson and I am the regional Refuge
22 ecologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service here
23 in Alaska. I also have with me Anne Marie LaRosa, who
24 is the Refuge manager at the Kodiak National Wildlife
25 Refuge. We're going to be talking to you today about
26 the proposed Alaska National Wildlife Refuge's
27 regulatory changes.

28

29 So the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
30 is in the process of updating the regulations governing
31 non-subsistence hunting and trapping of wildlife on
32 Alaska National Wildlife Refuges. The U.S. Fish and
33 Wildlife Service is mandated to conserve fish and
34 wildlife populations and habitats in their natural
35 diversity
36 and to maintain biological integrity, diversity, and
37 environmental health on Refuges in Alaska.

38

39 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is
40 also required to conserve species and habitats on
41 refuges for the long term, benefitting not only the
42 present but also future generations of Americans. In
43 Alaska, this includes ensuring the opportunity for
44 continued subsistence uses of fish, wildlife and
45 plants.

46

47 The Alaska National Interest Lands
48 Conservation Act or
49 ANILCA requires that Federal agencies manage wildlife
50 consistent with the conservation of healthy populations

1 of fish and wildlife. The legislative history defines
2 this phrase as the maintenance of fish and wildlife
3 resources and their habitats in the condition which
4 assures stable and continuing natural populations and
5 species mix of plants and animals.

6

7 We strongly support the sustainable
8 harvest of fish and wildlife and manage these
9 activities to ensure consistency with refuge
10 establishment purposes, including managing species
11 populations and habitats in their natural diversity on
12 refuges in Alaska.

13

14 We have been talking with folks in
15 local communities across the state through tribal
16 consultation conferences and various other meetings,
17 such as these RAC meetings, about these proposed
18 regulatory changes for about the last year. We've
19 heard a lot of helpful feedback so far. We're also
20 consulting with the State of Alaska on this matter.

21

22 So you have several handouts, but two
23 in particular that you can follow along with. One is
24 the print-off of the slides that I'm going to go
25 through and the other one I'd like to draw your
26 attention to is this fact sheet here. If you want to
27 start on the front page there, I'm going to kind of go
28 through the different components of the proposed rule.

29

30 So the proposed Refuge regulations we
31 are considering can be broken into three main
32 components with the first component pertaining to
33 clarification of our existing mandates under ANILCA and
34 the Refuge Improvement Act in relation to predator
35 management. Specifically, predator control is only
36 allowed on refuges in Alaska if it is determined
37 necessary to meet refuge
38 purposes, federal laws, or policy and is consistent
39 with our

40 mandates to manage for natural and biological
41 diversity, biological integrity and environmental
42 health. The need for predator control must be based on
43 sound science in response to a significant conservation
44 concern. Demands for more wildlife to harvest cannot be
45 the sole or primary basis for predator control on
46 refuges in Alaska.

47

48 The second component of the proposed
49 rule pertains to the prohibition of particularly
50 effective methods and means for the non-subsistence

1 take of predators on refuges in Alaska due to the
2 potential for cumulative effects to predator
3 populations and the environment that are inconsistent
4 with our mandates to conserve the natural and
5 biological diversity, biological integrity, and
6 environmental health on refuges in Alaska.

7
8 Specifically, the following methods and
9 means for predator harvest would be prohibited under
10 the proposed rule on refuges in Alaska: The take of
11 brown bears over bait, the take of bears using traps or
12 snares, the take of wolves and coyotes during the
13 spring and summer denning season specifically from May
14 1st to August 9, the take of bears from an aircraft or
15 on the same day as air travel has occurred. I do want
16 to point out that the same day airborne take of wolves
17 and wolverines is already prohibited under existing
18 refuge regulations.

19
20 Lastly, the take of bear cubs or sows
21 with cubs. For this one there are some exceptions that
22 would apply. In response to feedback that we heard
23 during our scoping period, we decided to allow an
24 exception for resident hunters to take black bear cubs
25 or sows with cubs under customary and traditional use
26 activities at a den site in accordance with State law.

27
28 Originally we were considering a much
29 longer list of potential prohibited wildlife harvest
30 methods and means for inclusion in these proposed
31 regulations, but after hearing concerns from the local
32 communities that were brought up earlier in our scoping
33 process we reduced the proposed prohibited methods and
34 means that we are considering from 16 original down to
35 these five here.

36
37 Also in response to feedback received
38 we decided not to propose language which would have
39 opened Alaska refuges to the collection of natural
40 resources, for instance fruits, berries and other
41 edible plant materials, by recreational users as a part
42 of what we were considering for inclusion. I do want
43 to point out though that this practice is currently
44 open to subsistence users and this would not change.

45
46 MR. HOLMES: Could you repeat your last
47 statement, please. I didn't hear you.

48
49 MS. TONNESON: Sure. We were
50 originally considering proposing opening the gathering

1 of -- collection of natural resources to recreational
2 users. That's already available to subsistence users,
3 but we were going to open it up for recreational users
4 to participate in that practice as well, but we decided
5 -- we heard a lot of feedback from folks and they were
6 concerned about potential impacts of doing that, so we
7 decided to remove that proposal. We're not going to
8 change anything as far as if it would still be allowed
9 for the subsistence users.

10

11 MR. HOLMES: Okay. So it won't be
12 allowed for the recreational users? I don't understand
13 even the need to even discuss it. I'm sorry, I didn't
14 have my mic on. I'm afraid I'm a little dense and
15 foggy-brained, but I don't understand even the need to
16 discuss it. Are you going to prohibit it for
17 recreational users? I don't even understand why the
18 topic of berry harvest is even coming up in this
19 context.

20

21 MS. TONNESON: It was just something we
22 were initially proposing to include in this proposed
23 rule, but we're no longer going to include it at this
24 point in time, so we're not going to put it in
25 regulation. Does that help?

26

27 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I understand. Well,
28 if it's not going to be in regulations, it doesn't even
29 need to be argued about or discussed. To me, it seems
30 to be such a bizarre Stateside concept to even think
31 about having a regulation for that is my perplexity, I
32 guess.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 MS. LAROSA: Pat, there already is an
37 existing regulation. What we were considering is
38 removing that regulation and allowing for recreational
39 harvest, but now, based on feedback, that's not part of
40 the proposal, but subsistence is not part of the
41 proposal anyway. So subsistence harvest always has
42 been and still will be allowed.

43

44 MR. SCHWANTES: Okay. So I'm a little
45 confused. Are you telling me that a recreational user
46 cannot go on a refuge and harvest berries? Is that
47 what you're telling me the law says now?

48

49 MS. TONNESON: Yes. According to our
50 National Refuge regulations you're not allowed to take

1 any natural resources off of refuges unless it's
2 specifically allowed under regulation that's specific
3 to a refuge or a region.

4

5 MR. SCHWANTES: So I would recommend
6 you put it back in because you're not going to stop
7 recreational users from going and picking berries. It
8 isn't going to happen. Who's going to enforce it? I
9 guarantee you if you take it before a judge, he's not
10 going to enforce it. I mean you're going to tell the
11 public they can't go out and pick berries? You've got
12 to be kidding me.

13

14 MR. HOLMES: Or use other natural
15 resources. You're getting both curmudgeons here wound
16 up. You can arrest everybody in this whole bloody
17 building, including your staff, because you have staff
18 come on here that fly out, you bring in congressmen to
19 go to Camp Island to have a nice, fun time sport
20 fishing and they're out there fishing and gathering
21 berries and natural resources. I've even known 15, 20
22 years ago where some of them didn't even have a bloody
23 State fishing license. I think that this is an
24 entirely absurd concept.

25

26 Please make sure that's in our minutes.

27

28 MS. DEATHERAGE: I got it.

29

30 MS. TONNESON: So I would encourage you
31 to include that in your comments when we get to the
32 public comment period once this is released if that's
33 something you're interested in seeing put back in. You
34 can certainly let us know your thoughts on that. It
35 may be a possibility that would be considered either
36 under this proposed rule or maybe something in the
37 future. Essentially we were trying to address this
38 issue by putting it in, but we got such an overwhelming
39 amount of feedback that people did not want it in there
40 that we ended up taking it out at this point in time.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Rebecca.

43

44 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. Can you give
45 us a sense for what -- the feedback you received, what
46 was the nature or substance of the concerns? So if I'm
47 understanding correctly, recreational harvest of
48 berries is not allowed and there was a proposal to
49 allow recreational harvest of berries and you got a lot
50 of feedback from people. Maybe you could talk a little

1 bit about who gave you the feedback, but also what were
2 some of the major concerns they had that justified you
3 pulling that back out.

4
5 MS. TONNESON: Sure. So we heard from
6 a lot of the different tribes in the rural communities
7 through tribal consultation that they had specific
8 concerns of overharvest. They also had concerns about
9 damage to the plants by people going out who did not
10 understand how to harvest those resources correctly. I
11 would say that was the bulk of what we heard. It was
12 those two primary concerns that folks just wanted to
13 ensure that it stayed open for subsistence users, but
14 did not want others coming out and being able to
15 harvest those resources in a manner that could cause
16 damage or overharvest.

17
18 MS. SKINNER: Thank you.

19
20 MS. TONNESON: So the third component
21 of the regulatory changes we are proposing would be to
22 update our public participation on closure procedures
23 on Alaska National Wildlife Refuges. This part of the
24 regulations apply to closing or restricting
25 recreational activities on Alaska refuges or in areas
26 within refuges such as general or sport hunting and
27 fishing, camping and recreational trail use. The
28 proposed regulatory changes would not apply to the
29 taking of fish and wildlife under Federal subsistence
30 regulations or the use of transportation methods
31 traditionally employed by rural residents engaged in
32 subsistence activities.

33
34 If you're following along on your fact
35 sheet, what I'm going to go through next is actually
36 covered on the back side. Flip that over.

37
38 So we are proposing these changes to be
39 more consistent with other Federal regulations and to
40 more effectively engage the public. Some of the
41 updates we are considering under this part are to
42 conservation of natural and biological diversity,
43 biological integrity, and environmental health to the
44 current list of criteria, to increase the possible
45 duration of an emergency closure from 30 to 60 days.
46 This would be more consistent with the timeframe for
47 emergency special actions under the Federal subsistence
48 regulations and also the process used by many other
49 State and Federal agencies.

50

1 We're proposing also to update the
2 temporary closure duration. I want to be clear that
3 for the temporary closures we would be retaining
4 language that clearly states that temporary closures
5 may only remain in place as long as is reasonably
6 necessary under the given circumstances. For closures
7 pertaining to the non-subsistence take of fish and
8 wildlife, we're proposing to remove the 12-month time
9 limit, but require mandatory review as necessary at a
10 minimum of every three years. Again, this is
11 consistent with the Federal subsistence process for
12 temporary closures.

13
14 Additionally, as a part of the
15 mandatory review process we are adding in a requirement
16 that the agency would have to produce a written
17 statement justifying whether and why they were going to
18 either keep the closure in place or reopen the area or
19 the practice. Additionally, we're adding in a
20 requirement for publication of an annual list of refuge
21 closures including contact information for the U.S.
22 Fish and Wildlife Service lead for that particular
23 closure and we would be putting this list out annually
24 for public review and input. We are adding in a
25 requirement to consult with the State and affected
26 tribes and Native corporations on temporary and
27 permanent closures.

28
29 Based on feedback received during
30 scoping, we decided to retain the requirement for a
31 public hearing as opposed to just having a meeting or
32 an opportunity for public comment. So we would retain
33 the requirement to have this public hearing in the area
34 affected prior to implementation of a temporary or
35 permanent closure.

36
37 Lastly, we're proposing to expand the
38 methods for public notice by adding the use of internet
39 or other available methods, in addition to continuing
40 to use the more traditional methods of notification
41 including newspapers, signs and radio.

42
43 So talking a little bit about why we
44 are proposing these regulatory changes. I want to
45 start by first saying or again reiterating that hunting
46 is a priority public use on National Wildlife Refuges
47 under existing law and agency policy. Again we have
48 and will continue to strongly support hunting and
49 sustainable harvest of fish and wildlife on National
50 Wildlife Refuges including harvest of predators and

1 most State of Alaska hunting and trapping regulations,
2 including harvest limits, would continue to be adopted
3 and apply on refuges in Alaska.

4
5 The Fish and Wildlife Service must
6 administer hunting on refuges in a manner compatible
7 with refuge establishment purposes and consistent with
8 all other legal mandates. The proposed regulations are
9 aimed at ensuring that the overarching establishment
10 purpose for refuges in Alaska as defined under ANILCA
11 of conserving all fish, wildlife and habitats in their
12 natural diversity is met. According to the Refuge
13 System Improvement Act, all National Wildlife Refuges,
14 including those in Alaska, must also be managed so as
15 to maintain biological integrity, diversity and
16 environmental health.

17
18 In the recent past, the Alaska Board of
19 Game has adopted hunting and trapping regulations and
20 intensive management for predator control areas in
21 various parts of the state which allow particular
22 practices for the harvest of predators, such as the
23 take of wolves and coyotes during the spring and summer
24 denning season, take of brown bears over bait, trapping
25 and snaring of bears and same day airborne take of
26 bears and wolves.

27
28 The Fish and Wildlife Service believes
29 that these recently adopted or considered methods and
30 means for take of predators conflict with our legal
31 mandates because they are intended or have the
32 potential to depress and manage predator populations on
33 Alaska refuges at levels inconsistent with conserving
34 all fish and wildlife in their natural diversity and,
35 again, maintaining biological integrity, diversity and
36 environmental health on these refuges.

37
38 MR. HOLMES: Excuse me. I'm kind of --
39 can't process as quick as you talk. I assume that
40 we're going from this handout, the one that says
41 proposed regulations non-subsistence, et cetera. I was
42 trying to find out where we're at. Where are we on
43 this one here?

44
45 MS. TONNESON: We're on the slide
46 handout, but it is also going to be touched upon on --
47 I believe, it's question two in the question and answer
48 document you were just referring to.

49
50 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Your slide is

1 located in your folder, Pat.
2
3 MR. HOLMES: Oh, okay. Just one
4 moment, please. Sorry. I get lost.
5
6 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
7 Mitch.
8
9 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Mitch.
10
11 MR. SIMEONOFF: Being on the phone I
12 would suggest that people state their name before they
13 speak so we know who's talking.
14
15 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, we'll do
16 that. Thank you, Mitch, for the reminder. Do you have
17 your handout, Pat?
18
19 MR. HOLMES: Yes, I found it. My
20 colleague here, Coral, has loaned it to me.
21
22 Thank you.
23
24 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: You can continue.
25
26 MS. TONNESON: Thank you. So this is
27 Heather Tonneson and continuing on what I was saying.
28 The Fish and Wildlife Service is required to the extent
29 practicable to be consistent with State regulations
30 governing the take of fish and wildlife on Alaska
31 refuges and it is, in fact, our preference to do so
32 whenever we can.
33
34 That said, while we fully respect the
35 State's role and responsibilities for managing wildlife
36 in Alaska, we also recognize that differences do exist
37 between the State's mandates and Federal laws governing
38 administration of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges and
39 that these differences sometimes require a different
40 regulatory approach.
41
42 In addition, we aim to more effectively
43 engage the public by updating our public participation
44 and closure procedures to broaden notification and
45 outreach methods, ensure consultation with tribes and
46 the State, provide for increased transparency in our
47 decision-making and to allow for additional
48 opportunities for the public to provide input.
49
50 The changes that we are considering

1 under the proposed regulations would apply only to
2 State-regulated intensive management activities in
3 general or sport hunting and trapping, which is open to
4 all Alaska residents as well as people from the Lower
5 48 on Alaska National Wildlife Refuges.

6
7 These proposed regulations would not
8 apply to Federally qualified subsistence users hunting
9 or trapping under Federal subsistence regulations. So,
10 for example, this doesn't apply to this area, but I'm
11 just going to use it because it's one of the few
12 examples that I have here.

13
14 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Excuse me. We've
15 got a question.

16
17 MS. TONNESON: Oh, go ahead.

18
19 MR. SCHWANTES: In my handout it says
20 these proposed regulations would not apply to Federally
21 qualified subsistence users. However, there's a circle
22 with a cross through it. Tell me about that. Why is
23 that on here? Tell me about that. What does that
24 mean?

25
26 MS. TONNESON: It's just trying to
27 clarify that the regulations do not apply to Federal
28 subsistence regulations. So it would not change that.
29 That's all that's saying.

30
31 So just to give an example, brown bear
32 baiting is currently allowed under Federal subsistence
33 regulation in Unit 25D. These proposed refuge
34 regulations would not change that, so people will still
35 be able to -- or Federally qualified users will still
36 be able to hunt brown bears over bait in Unit 25D.

37
38 MR. SCHWANTES: Just for clarification
39 that's very confusing because in print you're saying
40 they don't apply, but then you have it crossed out. So
41 are you telling me -- to me, that's telling me that
42 you're saying it doesn't apply, but then you're
43 crossing it out, so now it means it does apply. I mean
44 I smell a rat. Let's put it that way.

45
46 (Laughter)

47
48 MS. LAROSA: Perhaps it's a bad use of
49 the symbol, but I think it was just intended to be --
50 the X is X-ing that the proposed regulations don't

1 apply to the -- yeah.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: For those on the
4 phone, Mitch, that was Anne Marie LaRosa with U.S. Fish
5 and Wildlife Service.

6

7 MS. LAROSA: Oh, sorry. Yeah.

8

9 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: If we could please
10 state our names prior to speaking. Thank you.

11

12 MS. TONNESON: So this is Heather
13 Tonneson again. Maybe this will help. These proposed
14 regulations would be updating the Code of Federal
15 Regulations or the Alaska specific refuge regulations
16 under 50 CFR 36. So the changes would only apply to
17 sport or general hunting, so that's this book here, and
18 would not affect anything in this book here. Sorry for
19 the confusion on the symbol. Maybe we can look to
20 change that so it will be less confusing in the future.

21

22 MS. LAROSA: This is Anne Marie. If
23 that symbol weren't there, would that make sense to
24 you?

25

26 MR. SCHWANTES: Oh, absolutely.

27

28 MS. LAROSA: Okay. We'll take it out.
29 Maybe it's a bad presentation technique, but it's never
30 intended to be deceiving.

31

32 MS. TONNESON: Okay. I'm almost done.
33 This is Heather Tonneson again. The U.S. Fish and
34 Wildlife Service has final authority for managing
35 plants, fish and wildlife on refuges in Alaska. These
36 proposed regulations would only apply on National
37 Wildlife Refuges in Alaska, so they would not apply to
38 other Federal, State, private or Native lands and
39 waters, even those within Refuge boundaries.

40

41 So on this slide here I'm just going to
42 go through some of the examples that are relevant here
43 within the area under the purview to the
44 Kodiak/Aleutian RAC. These proposed regulations would
45 apply to the Alaska Maritime, Izembek and Kodiak
46 Refuges as well as statewide, but again just talking
47 about specifically for this RAC, within GMUs or Game
48 Management Units 8, 9 and 10. The proposed regulations
49 would result in changes to current general hunting and
50 trapping regulations on these three refuges since the

1 proposed prohibited methods and means for wildlife
2 harvest we are considering are not consistent with
3 existing State regulations for Game Management Units 9
4 and 10.

5
6 On the left-hand side I've shown the
7 current existing State regulation and then on the
8 right-hand side I have the proposed rule, what would be
9 enacted under the proposed rule if it were put into
10 place. Under current State general hunting and
11 trapping regulations brown bear baiting is legal in
12 Game Management Unit 9. Under the proposed rule brown
13 bear baiting under State regulations would be
14 prohibited on refuges.

15
16 Under current State general hunting and
17 trapping regulations wolves may be harvested from
18 August 10th to June 30th and coyotes may be harvested
19 year round in Game Management Units 9 and 10. Under
20 the proposed rule, wolves and coyotes may be harvested
21 under State regulations on refuges only from August
22 10th to April 30th, so that would be a shift in the
23 timeline for the open season for wolves and coyotes in
24 those Game Management Units.

25
26 So to wrap up, just going through our
27 timeline, currently we're preparing and going through
28 our final review of the proposed rule, which is
29 expected to publish by mid-October. During that time
30 we're going to be continuing to do our outreach to the
31 tribes and the local communities. Then, as I
32 mentioned, we hope to publish our proposed rule in
33 October sometime. Then that would start our 90-day
34 public comment period. So once the proposed rule
35 publishes that starts that public comment period.

36
37 Tentatively we have scheduled a hearing
38 here in Kodiak. We had it scheduled for the week of
39 December 2nd. That may end up being shifted. We're
40 still trying to figure that out. Our timeline is kind
41 of in question right now as far as when the proposed
42 rule will actually be published. Then sometime in
43 January through March of next year we'll be reviewing
44 the public comments received and updating and
45 finalizing the proposed rule. We hope to publish a
46 final rule sometime around April or May of next year.

47
48 So, with that, I just want to say
49 thanks again for the opportunity to talk with you today
50 and we'd welcome any feedback or questions you have at

1 this time.

2

3 Thank you.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Rebecca.

6

7 MS. SKINNER: This is Rebecca Skinner.

8 I have questions on the temporary closures or

9 restrictions of the proposed changes. So under the

10 existing regulation a closure cannot exceed beyond 12

11 months and under the proposed change it takes out that

12 12-month restriction and it just says for as long as

13 necessary, then it provides for a minimum three-year

14 review. So I was hoping you could explain a little bit

15 more about how the determination is made that a closure

16 is no longer necessary and are you basically using this

17 three-year period as a default or do you anticipate

18 more frequent reviews when there's a temporary closure

19 or restriction?

20

21 MS. TONNESON: Heather Tonneson again

22 with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Several questions

23 there. I'll see if I can answer them all. Essentially

24 the really important part is that we're retaining that

25 language that a closure would remain in place only for

26 so long as reasonably necessary given the reason for

27 the closure. We do not anticipate and, in fact,

28 history has shown that most of our temporary closures

29 do not go longer than a year, but in some cases there

30 has been a need to do that. It happens very rarely.

31

32 If that was the case, we also -- that's

33 why we added in the requirement to publish that annual

34 list to ensure that people are still getting an

35 opportunity at least annually to be updated on which

36 closures are still in place and also to be very clear

37 about who would be the point of contact for that

38 particular closure so that if a member of the public

39 wanted to talk with the point of contact from the Fish

40 and Wildlife Service about the closure, had concerns,

41 doesn't think it's warranted, maybe wants to see if we

42 can have a meeting or hearing in the local area, those

43 types of things, that is the reasoning for adding in

44 that requirement to publish that annual list. So there

45 would still be opportunity for public input along the

46 way. Certainly we would be held to that standard of --

47 as soon as that closure is no longer necessary, we have

48 to take action to remove it as soon as possible.

49

50 Does that help?

1 MS. SKINNER: Well, so your response
2 indicated that past closures hadn't extended beyond a
3 year, but the existing regulation doesn't allow it to
4 extend beyond a year. So I'm not sure that that
5 addresses my question. I'm trying to understand what
6 are the internal processes that are going to be used to
7 review the status to determine that it is no longer
8 necessary. So is that initiated by a public request or
9 are you going to have built-in timelines that every
10 month or quarter the status will be reviewed? I'm just
11 trying to understand once these closures go into place
12 how are we avoiding that they're basically going to
13 default at a three-year minimum closure?
14

15 MS. TONNESON: This is Heather Tonneson
16 again with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To
17 answer the first part of what you said as far as
18 temporary closures extending beyond 12 months. So the
19 way the current refuge regulations are set up we could
20 have a temporary closure that does go longer than 12
21 months. The thing there is that we would have to start
22 the process over, so it's a little different than just
23 extending it. We'd have to kind of start over. So
24 that's what I'm talking about in that a closure could
25 technically go for longer than 12 months, but the way
26 it's set up now we would just have to start over.
27

28 MS. SKINNER: Right. And that ensures
29 there's a built-in review process, which is what I'm
30 trying to understand with the new regulation. What is
31 that kind of built-in regular review?
32

33 MS. TONNESON: Thank you. Heather
34 Tonneson again. So, to the second part of your
35 question, you asked what would trigger that closure
36 review. Essentially it could be triggered by a member
37 of the public inquiring or it could be also handled
38 internally. So, at a minimum of every three years we
39 have that as an absolute requirement that it would be
40 reviewed at that point through a formal process, but it
41 could happen certainly more often and it should happen
42 more often than that. So that could happen, you know,
43 if it's triggered internally or by a member of the
44 public.
45

46 MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della. I have a
47 comment.
48

49 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Della.
50

1 MS. TRUMBLE: I was thinking about what
2 was just brought up. My concern in this is keep it at
3 12 months and not the three years. Keeping it at the
4 12 months puts all the parties at the table to discuss
5 what is going on with a certain species and to continue
6 to work to enrich the population or to address what the
7 problem is. My concern is that going to three years
8 it's just left there and three years later we're going
9 to look at this problem and see where we're at. I
10 don't agree with that. I think there's a number of us
11 who will disagree with it. It's kind of conflicting.
12 Just a comment to what's being discussed at this point.

13
14 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Della.
15
16 Tom.

17
18 MR. SCHWANTES: I have the same
19 concern. What I'm hearing, you're telling us that it's
20 seldom ever gone beyond 12 months. So my question then
21 is why do you need three years. If it's seldom gone
22 beyond 12 months, why don't we make it 18 months or two
23 years, but certainly we don't need to jump to three
24 years. I think that's totally unreasonable.

25
26 Then I'm just going to make a comment
27 on this non-subsistence users using the Refuge. Again,
28 I think we need to go back and change that. I think
29 that's ridiculous.

30
31 Thank you.

32
33 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Pat.

34
35 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. I would
36 like to ask a couple questions here and a statement.
37 I'll just start with the statement. I think you should
38 just leave it at 12 months. Beyond that it's not
39 necessary. It seemed like a lot of this is the Refuge
40 system fighting against the State Board of Game and
41 their efforts or thoughts on predator control.

42
43 Why do this statewide? Because on
44 Kodiak there's never going to be bear baiting, there's
45 no wolves, there's no coyotes. Because the local Fish
46 and Game Advisory Committee, the guides, have a strong
47 set of ethics here and they just flat won't do it. This
48 has only occurred in a few places in the state. The
49 Federal government is still in the process, I believe,
50 of suing the State over that issue on that type of

1 predator control. I just don't see where the problem
2 is. Why not leave it in the courts.

3

4 I think directing this through the
5 Refuges statewide is totally inappropriate because the
6 State, if there's an issue in one area, they deal with
7 it in one area. That particular manager deals with an
8 emergency, be it a salmon closure, Buskin for
9 subsistence. There's no fish, they close it, but it
10 doesn't last for years, it lasts for the red season and
11 then they reopen it for pinks and silvers.

12

13 So what you're doing is having -- and
14 pardon me for using the phrase stateside because I'm
15 just a newcomer to Alaska. My dad got out of the Navy
16 in '59 and that's when we came up. So I kind of grew
17 up with the state, but with a lot of the bad feelings
18 that caused Statehood and that was because of
19 obfuscation from Federal agencies at the time. Gross
20 mismanagement on predator control.

21

22 We used to get -- I don't know if
23 Johnny is here -- seven bucks for a hair seal scalp and
24 50 cents or a couple bucks for eagle claws and that's
25 all stupid. The State doesn't do that. People don't do
26 that anymore. The mismanagement of particularly fish
27 and salmon -- which you folks really aren't getting
28 into except on arguing whose river is whose river for
29 managing. You know, those things do cause some angst
30 amongst folks.

31

32 I don't see -- I really would suggest
33 and I would recommend that our Council take a position
34 that this should stay at a one-year point for emergency
35 actions and that emergency actions be done on a Refuge-
36 by-Refuge basis. So when we get to our business, I
37 think that's what we'll recommend on this or I will ask
38 our Council to consider because you don't need to take
39 action throughout the whole state just because of some
40 difficulties that your regional manager is having with
41 the Commissioner of Fish and Game or the Board of Game.

42

43

44 I think sometimes the Board of Game
45 things aren't particularly correct. I don't think that
46 if you've got a problem with moose or caribou, that,
47 you know, going in and killing a cub in a den -- I just
48 don't think that that's rational, but I don't think you
49 need to do it statewide.

50

1 Thank you very much.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any further
4 comments. Della.

5

6 MS. TRUMBLE: I'm just going to kind of
7 throw this out there because I really don't feel good
8 about this at all. I think there really needs to be a
9 lot more effort put into this prior to this going out
10 for public comment. To work with all the Regional
11 Councils and get -- I'd like to see what their comments
12 are.

13

14 For one, when we look at this on page
15 41, it basically states: We recognize the importance
16 of the fish, wildlife and other natural resources in
17 the lives and cultures of Alaska Native peoples and in
18 the lives of all Alaskans. These proposed
19 regulatory changes would not change Federal subsistence
20 regulations or restrict taking of fish or wildlife
21 under Federal subsistence regulations.

22

23 Now you go to the changes they're
24 considering and basically how demands for more wildlife
25 for human harvest cannot be the sole or primary basis
26 for predator control on refuges in Alaska.
27 I don't need to say any more. You know where I'm
28 coming from with that.

29

30 Then you go to 44 and it basically
31 says: The overarching goal of the U.S. Fish and
32 Wildlife Service's wildlife-dependent recreation policy
33 is to enhance opportunities and access to quality
34 visitor experiences on Refuges and to manage the Refuge
35 to conserve fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats.
36 We consider hunting to be one of many priority uses of
37 the Refuge System, when and where compatible with
38 refuge purposes, that is a healthy, traditional outdoor
39 pastime, deeply rooted in the American heritage.

40

41 I really have concerns with all this
42 and I think more time and effort needs to be put into
43 this. Definitely some information and comments and
44 responses from the various RACs statewide prior to
45 this, I think, going to the public is my personal
46 opinion.

47

48 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Della.
49 Do we have any further comments or questions?

50

1 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes.

4

5 MR. HOLMES: I would like to compliment
6 you ladies because you're trying to do your job
7 assignments from your regional bosses and from the
8 folks stateside, but part of Della's concern is this
9 whole discussion of predator/prey. Frankly, I think
10 predator/prey management up until Statehood, as I
11 mentioned before, wasn't the best, but I really don't
12 think any longer, and it's my perspective, and I'll go
13 to State meetings and argue precisely against that type
14 of thing, but somewhere in here I saw a comment saying
15 that predator control was not an appropriate management
16 technique.

17

18 But we'll have a discussion later on
19 for Lem Butler's work down in Unit 9 where only on 40
20 percent of the land they only removed, I think, 31
21 wolves that attacked only does dropping fawns on the
22 calving grounds and they were able to bring up the
23 whole population on the Peninsula to where we can have
24 some small subsistence harvest. That's a scientific
25 fact. It worked in just 40 percent.

26

27 So I really think that there is, I
28 feel, a strong emotional overreaction just as folks in
29 Alaska had at that time on predator control before
30 Statehood. And I wish folks would sit down with the
31 Feds and the State and come up with some new definition
32 of biological equilibrium or whatever. Because when
33 you don't have -- you don't have to do it a long time.
34 You don't have to do it very much. Just a few critters
35 that are causing the problem can be removed. It's
36 exactly the same as your methods for removing foxes on
37 the islands. That's predator control and it's shifting
38 into the balance of birds.

39

40 So it was my impression back when going
41 to listening to the hearings on ANILCA and ANCSA and
42 the whole thing of formalizing subsistence management
43 in Alaska that that was kind of the priority, is that
44 folks would be able to have their food. So on Unimak
45 my friends down there haven't had caribou in probably
46 10 years. They haven't had caribou and that's a
47 traditional food. I will ask you to think, before I
48 give up on my little curmudgeon speech, to think about
49 things that remind you of your grandmother back in
50 Missouri or your grandpa in Naknek or wherever, what

1 typifies your culture and your food as your food.

2

3 And so when folks there can't have
4 caribou because removing -- I think the State was
5 planning on taking five or six wolves that were doing
6 that on the very small amount of calving grounds on
7 Unimak Island and we had what we thought was a
8 presentation to our board when they did the EA on
9 Unimak, and Della will certainly agree with me, we
10 thought that that was a presentation to us.

11

12 We had -- the person that wrote the EA
13 draft was a former Refuge Manager and he told me
14 confidentially at the meeting -- are you going to go to
15 the villages here, to Unimak Island, to False Pass and
16 talk to the folks and he said, no, I can't go. It's
17 like 60 miles. He could have flown there in the
18 afternoon and come back. He said, no, I have to go
19 back to Anchorage and meet for -- I think it was two
20 days with the environmentalist and another day with the
21 guide industry and he did not go to the village most
22 impacted and I don't think the people there even felt
23 that our RAC meeting, where we teleconference with
24 them, was actually part of the process. So the people
25 actually involved were ignored in relation to the
26 impact of politics on your agency in Anchorage.

27

28 So I'll be quiet. I do apologize. But
29 I would like to compliment you because you are trying
30 to do your job. So if we bark at you a little bit,
31 it's accumulative frustrations over many years and not
32 necessarily directed to you personally. Thank you.

33

34 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Pat.
35 We have Rebecca and then we've got a public comment.

36

37 MS. SKINNER: Thank you. This is
38 Rebecca Skinner. I guess I'll start talking and figure
39 out if I have a question. I'm following up on Pat's
40 comments about predator control and then I'm going to
41 also speak to the adding conservation of natural and
42 biological diversity as a criteria for closures and
43 restrictions.

44

45 I guess I would like to better
46 understand how the Refuge views or assesses natural and
47 biological diversity in the time period that is
48 considered in that review. So for me looking at Kodiak
49 now, I think there's deer all over the place. Well, at
50 one point there were no deer on Kodiak. So if you're

1 talking about natural and biological diversity, are you
2 trying to reach back to a period in time and achieve
3 and actually change the current biological diversity to
4 achieve something that existed in the past or are you
5 starting from the more current period? And then how
6 does that relate to the subsistence use in some of
7 these areas where subsistence users have come to rely
8 on what could be considered invasive or non-native
9 species?

10

11 So we had public testimony earlier
12 today related to the sea otters and the crab in Womens
13 Bay. As the testimony was being given, I was thinking,
14 oh, that sounds like predator control. Well, sea
15 otters and the types of crab, as far as I know, would
16 be considered -- they're natural or native to the
17 island. So if we're looking for the sea otters and
18 crab in Womens Bay, do you have any -- I guess here's a
19 question -- do you have advice or feedback on how --
20 what things are you weighing when you're again trying
21 to get to this natural and biological diversity and
22 when you're weighing basically the needs of different
23 user groups with the health of a particular resource?

24

25 So is it okay or advisable to kill the
26 sea otters in order to have more crab or should we be
27 looking at it as there's a natural balance that will be
28 achieved naturally between the sea otters and the crab?

29

30 I understand the sea otters and the
31 crab in Womens Bay aren't directly related to these
32 regulations, but the concept of predator control and
33 trying to achieve natural and biological diversity and
34 defining what that means I think that's at the heart of
35 this discussion, which it seems to be ongoing because
36 this was a big topic at our last meeting as well.

37

38 MS. LAROSA: This is Anne Marie. I'm
39 not sure where to start, Rebecca, because that was a
40 long discussion. Could you focus maybe a question?

41

42 MS. SKINNER: Yeah. I guess if you
43 wanted to start with how is the Refuge defining or
44 viewing natural and biological diversity as it relates
45 to a timeline? So are you kind of reaching back to a
46 previous time, a previously existing certain biological
47 diversity or are you starting from a more recent point
48 in time where there may be species introduced and a
49 reliance by subsistence users on those new species?

50

1 MS. LAROSA: Well, that issue doesn't
2 necessarily always directly apply to these regulations
3 and particularly not in Kodiak. The National Wildlife
4 Refuge System Improvement Act, which discusses
5 biological diversity and environmental health, directs
6 us to look at the past, but we don't have a specific
7 timeline, like the Park Service has a specific timeline
8 that they look back to to say we want vignettes of
9 primitive America that appeared at this particular
10 point in time before white people showed up on the
11 scene I think was their thinking at the time, but we
12 don't have that.

13
14 We look at it more holistically and we
15 recognize that certain species have been introduced
16 into the environment. When they have been introduced,
17 we look at that more specifically in terms of their
18 potential invasiveness and their impact on other
19 species. So for instance fox where they've been
20 introduced if they're preying on bird eggs or something
21 like that, then that's more of a concern to us for
22 their impact on those other species. Deer are not
23 predatory, so we would be looking at, you know, their
24 impact may be on the environment.

25
26 So we do carefully monitor and we work
27 with Fish and Game to manage deer population so they
28 don't have an impact. So I think it's somewhat species
29 dependent if that's helpful, but we don't have an
30 absolute timeline. Heather might have something to
31 add.

32
33 MS. TONNESON: This is Heather Tonneson
34 with the Fish and Wildlife Service, through the Chair.
35 I put up some definitions here that may be helpful, so
36 these are the definitions provided in the biological
37 integrity policy, which again is based on the
38 Improvement Act, as Anne Marie said. So she was kind
39 of getting into it, but the last one there, the
40 historic conditions, that kind of gets at your question
41 on timeline.

42
43 So that last part there where it's
44 underlined says prior to substantial human-related
45 changes to the landscape. Again, it is somewhat of a
46 judgment call, but I think Anne Marie kind of explained
47 how we look at different things in order to make that
48 call. Certainly when we're talking about introduced
49 species, you know, looking at potential impacts there.
50

1 Another thing I do want to point out
2 too is just that I want to make sure that it's clear
3 that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service still does
4 consider predator control a valid management tool in
5 appropriate circumstances. So in cases where it is
6 consistent with maintaining that natural diversity,
7 biological integrity and environmental health and our
8 other mandates, we would still potentially consider
9 that as a management tool on Refuges. So we're not
10 just flat out saying no predator control.

11
12 So it's more kind of bringing in a
13 process, making sure our existing mandates are clear in
14 the regulation. There has been some confusion in the
15 past because when many people go to look for things,
16 especially from the general public, they're going to be
17 looking more in the Refuge regulations rather than
18 looking up maybe the Refuge System Improvement Act or
19 ANILCA. I mean some people refer to both. We just
20 wanted to make sure that it's in both places, so we're
21 really just taking our existing mandates and we're
22 clarifying them in regulation. So hopefully that
23 should help.

24
25 MS. SKINNER: Yeah, it did help. I
26 think my biggest takeaway is that there is flexibility,
27 that you don't have dictated timelines as to what is
28 historic or what is biological diversity. You do have
29 definitions, but if there is flexibility leeway, that
30 means there's room for discussion and there's room for
31 input from groups like the Kodiak RAC.

32
33 Thank you.

34
35 MS. LAROSA: This is Anne Marie from
36 Kodiak Refuge. I think it also might be illustrative
37 to point out that in 1997 we did have the Refuge
38 Improvement Act, which was a substantial -- I don't
39 know if I would call it change, but a strengthening of
40 the original Refuge Administration Act. So that's a
41 legal mandate for us. It kind of raised the bar in
42 terms of how we manage species on Refuges for
43 conservation. We have to pay attention to the laws
44 that guide us and that is our primary guiding
45 legislation, along with ANILCA in Alaska. So we have
46 to balance those two pieces of legislation. I think,
47 frankly, some of the implications and direction in the
48 Refuge Improvement Act is just now catching up with us.
49 I mean it's been 20 years, but it takes a while to
50 fully implement some kind of changes like this. So

1 that's where we are with Refuges. So if you think back
2 of, well, I remember what happened on the Refuge in
3 1970 or 1980, those were all before the Refuge
4 Improvement Act.

5
6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
7 Pat.

8
9 MR. HOLMES: Through the Chair, Anne
10 Marie. Thank you for that clarification. Could you
11 possibly give us a copy of the National Refuge
12 Improvement Act and then maybe use one of those -- I
13 still haven't figured out the new copy of Windows, but
14 identify what was replaced, you know, or this is new.

15
16 The comment -- and I'm not arguing with
17 you, but we have seen in just -- I can't remember when.
18 It's been probably six or so years when we had the
19 discussions on Unit 9 on adjusting the wolves on the
20 grounds and we were told, I believe, and my mind is
21 foggy as Johnny's, Haskett told us that they would not
22 do it and it was not a wilderness. I asked him are you
23 doing it on Unimak because it's a wilderness. He said,
24 yes, that's why they didn't do control air, but we
25 never really did get a straight answer on the rest of
26 Unit 9.

27
28 So, you know, we'll probably be coming
29 back and asking more and more questions to the Refuge
30 System about that because the Act was in place at that
31 time. Sometimes we've seen in our community some of
32 your leaders in Anchorage headquarters making personal
33 decisions and interpretations and sometimes you talk
34 with some of the managers and staff and they go, gee, I
35 didn't know where that came from.

36
37 My emotional response is different than
38 my logical response. My emotional response I feel on
39 this is a whole argument against because these things
40 on bears and dens and wolves and all that, you know,
41 comes back again and that kicks back to decisions on
42 the Board of Game and some of them have been political.

43
44
45 Anyway, I'll just stop there. But,
46 please, it would be, I think, helpful for us to see
47 what that Act was and what the changes were. Sometimes
48 the individual manager's interpretation is different
49 than what we've gotten in the past from your
50 headquarters. So I can't help but logically assume

1 that these changes are being driven more by some
2 individuals within your agency rather than the ground
3 up.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 MS. LAROSA: This is Anne Marie. I
8 just have two other things to say. One that I can't
9 really -- I'm not the right person to respond to
10 anything in Unit 9. That's not what I do.

11

12 Also earlier when you were talking
13 about the emergency closures and you were talking about
14 statewide versus specific areas. I just want to make
15 sure that it's clear, because I wasn't sure from your
16 comment, that the changes to the means and methods that
17 are proposed in this regulation would apply statewide
18 upon publishing the regulation and the emergency
19 closures would be other potential regulations in
20 addition to those that would be done under an
21 emergency.

22

23 MR. HOLMES: Thank you for that
24 clarification.

25

26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I'd like to
27 welcome Mr. Dick Rohrer, who would also like to address
28 the Council in regards to this issue. Maybe you can
29 come up here by Pat and we can share a mic.

30

31 MR. ROHRER: Thank you, Madame Chair.
32 My name is Dick Rohrer. It's unfortunate that Sam is
33 not here. He's much more versed on this particular
34 topic than I am. I just got in from the field and I'm
35 not really prepared. He's probably sitting in the snow
36 on Mt. Glottof with a goat hunter.

37

38 One of the things I wanted to make the
39 RAC aware of is, and I'm speaking for myself, as these
40 regulations, emergency closures potentially impact the
41 guide industry. My experience here is in Kodiak and
42 I've operated on the Refuge for many many years under
43 special use permits. The procedure today for us to get
44 a permit to conduct big game guiding on a Refuge is to
45 go through a competitive process every 10 years. It's
46 very extensive. Included in that is a safety plan,
47 operations plan, environmental impact, all the
48 certifications that the permittee, potential permittee
49 has, is required to have all the certifications that
50 his guides are going to have.

1 What we faced two years ago and
2 potentially right now has to do with when Congress
3 can't approve a budget and the government gets shuts
4 down. That happened to us a couple years ago and it
5 happens at this time of year. The Refuge staff
6 managers around the state responded differently. It
7 happened two years ago in the midst of the brown bear
8 season on the Alaska Peninsula. We had goat hunters in
9 Kodiak, Mike Munsey had clients in the field.
10 Potentially it would have impacted non-resident bear
11 hunters. Some Refuge Manager said just go ahead and
12 finish your hunt. We're not in the office. We finally
13 got word here that we weren't allowed to be in the
14 field. Some were already in the field.

15
16 My concern with these potential
17 closures is that -- potentially that closure could have
18 gone on for a year. Maybe I'm wrong, but that's a
19 concern from the guide industry. The State and the
20 guide industry brought suit. The judge said, no, you
21 don't have standing because the Refuge is now open.
22 You're not being hurt. But the potential is really
23 there and I'm not quite sure what the answer is, but I
24 wanted to make sure you're aware of those concerns and
25 how that impacted some people two years ago and
26 potentially could right now.

27
28 Just to point out that I might say
29 under -- when we're selected for a special use permit
30 under the competitive process, it's a five-year permit.
31 I'm required to operate under all of those conditions
32 and it really doesn't matter practically whether
33 there's someone in the office at the Refuge office or
34 not. Over the -- I've been in Kodiak since '69 and all
35 the years that I've had Refuge permits there have been
36 very few times when Refuge staff have actually been in
37 the field at my camp. A few times. State troopers
38 check us always in the spring of the year because
39 they're out checking on herring fishermen. They always
40 stop at the bear camp, check licenses, tags, so forth.
41 From a practical standpoint, if the government shuts
42 down, there's no reason we can't continue our guiding
43 activities.

44
45 I guess my question to the ladies,
46 you've heard about this before, but what assurance can
47 you give me that we're not going to be out of business
48 come October 24th?

49
50 MS. LAROSA: Dick, what I could say

1 about the last time is that -- and Heather emphasized
2 this, is that the regulations say only as long as is
3 reasonably necessary and that goes to the reason for
4 the closure. So if the reason for the closure was the
5 government shutdown, as soon as the government shutdown
6 was over, then the reason for the closure was over. I
7 understand your concern, but there was never any
8 possibility that it would go on for a year because that
9 was the only reason it was shut down.

10

11 MS. TONNESON: This is Heather Tonneson
12 with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through the Chair.
13 I also just wanted to add that we've been talking with
14 the Alaska Professional Hunters Association. We've met
15 with them several times at their request, including Sam
16 and several others. We have responded to some of their
17 concerns already by making changes in what we were
18 proposing. They have given us a letter on additional
19 concerns and have also told us they'll be providing
20 additional comments when the proposed rule actually
21 comes out, but I just wanted to add that in that we
22 have been talking with them and trying to work with
23 them in addressing some of those concerns.

24

25 The government shutdown unfortunately
26 is obviously way above our level, so we don't have much
27 pull in that. We kind of have to do what they say.
28 When there's no money to operate, they say you have to
29 close doors, so I guess I'll just leave it there.
30 Unfortunately it's not a good situation for any of us.

31

32 MR. ROHRER: Madame Chair. Thank you,
33 ladies. Dick Rohrer again. Just one other thing that
34 I'm not sure if this is pertinent or not, but on the
35 front page of the handout down about the third bullet
36 point one of the reasons for this update is public
37 participation, closure procedures, to make them more
38 consistent with other Federal regulations. I guess my
39 question to the ladies, at a meeting I was at a year
40 ago, it was insinuated that some of the reason for
41 doing this is those other Federal regulations are
42 actually Park Service regulations and we're making some
43 changes with the Fish and Wildlife Service that would
44 then be consistent with the Park Service and that
45 concerns me. I guess is that the case or is that not
46 the case?

47

48 MS. TONNESON: Heather Tonneson,
49 through the Chair. The Park Service has made some
50 similar changes they put out for their proposed rule,

1 but the impetus actually for us looking to update our
2 closures and public participation procedures was
3 actually to be more consistent with many of the Federal
4 Subsistence Board processes. So that three-year review
5 timeframe is a Federal Subsistence Board policy on
6 closures, so that's where we got that from. We were
7 initially looking at a five-year timeframe for
8 temporary closures and we got a lot of feedback that
9 people were very concerned about that, so we looked to
10 the potential to adopt the Federal Subsistence Board
11 policy on allowing for that mandatory three-year review
12 on temporary closures. Then additionally going from 30
13 to 60-day timeframe on emergency closures, that's also
14 consistent with the Federal Subsistence Board emergency
15 special actions.

16

17 MR. ROHRER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

18

19 MR. SCHWANTES: I guess I do have a
20 question based on what Dick Rohrer said. If, in fact,
21 there is a government shutdown and these guides are
22 already in the field, then why would -- what would be
23 the reason for shutting them down? I mean for the most
24 part, from my experience, and I've been in Fish and
25 Wildlife law enforcement on Kodiak Island for 18 years,
26 and the majority of the enforcement for guides was from
27 the State, not from the Federal government. So why
28 would we shut down the guides just because the
29 government shut down?

30

31 MS. LAROSA: I have to say I don't know
32 what's proposed for this year. I think we're all
33 hoping that it doesn't happen, but people are talking
34 about what happened this year. My understanding for
35 last year -- I was in Fairbanks at the time, not here,
36 and I was actually out of the county when the
37 government shut down on leave -- was that our director
38 made a decision in the Lower 48 Refuges are closed
39 until open, which is directly the opposite of Alaska
40 where they're open until closed.

41

42 So I believe we made a case in Alaska
43 that it wasn't appropriate here to close Refuges
44 because on those Refuges in the Lower 48 we opened
45 Refuges to certain uses and then, you know, there's an
46 obligation to actively manage those uses and a lot of
47 those Refuges occur in very populated places, so I
48 think that seemed like maybe an easy decision for him
49 and not thinking so much about Alaska. For some
50 reason, the decision was made anyway for Alaska.

1 So I would guess that people are
2 talking about that, but I have not heard yet. There's
3 still another day and a half to go. But if I can try
4 to find out while I'm here, I'll let you know. I've
5 been thinking the same thing given what happened the
6 last time.

7
8 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Do we
9 have any other comments in regards to the Refuge's
10 proposed rule on hunting?

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Anne
15 Marie and Heather. I'd like to take a quick break at
16 this point in time. It is 11:15, so if we can come
17 back together at about 11:30, that would be greatly
18 appreciated.

19
20 (Off record)

21
22 (On record)

23
24 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We'll wait for
25 our Council members to be seated and then we can get
26 started here.

27
28 (Telephone issues)

29
30 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: While we're
31 getting reconnected with the teleconference, before we
32 go into rural determination update I'd like to ask for
33 Don Rivard with OSM to -- if you wouldn't mind coming
34 up and speaking as to the point of order for commenting
35 and questioning when we have a discussion on the table.
36 Don, if you wouldn't mind, please.

37
38 MR. RIVARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
39 Don Rivard with Office of Subsistence Management. This
40 is just to remind everybody that the kind of discussion
41 that happened just before the break when somebody is up
42 to testify, they want to testify in front of the board,
43 they're not allowed to ask questions of somebody else
44 unless they go through the Chair and the Chair gives
45 them permission to have that kind of a discussion. So
46 that's just a point of order on that. Because, you
47 know, you want to control the back and forth and it
48 really is all going through you as a Chair.

49
50 Thank you.

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.
2
3 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
4 Mitch.
5
6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Mitch.
7
8 MR. SIMEONOFF: I'm getting music in
9 here.
10
11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We all are. We
12 tried to disconnect and reconnect. Someone has us on
13 mute and hence the music. All right. They're back on
14 hopefully.
15
16 MS. DEATHERAGE: Through the Chair.
17 This is Karen Deatherage. For those folks on the
18 phone, please do not put us on hold from your end.
19 Even though the music was pleasant, we can all hear it.
20 So if you are going to step away, just leave your phone
21 on mute and it should be just fine.
22
23 Thank you.
24
25 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Karen.
26 Moving along. Old business, rural determination update
27 with Tom Kron with OSM. This is on Page 25.
28
29 MR. KRON: Madame Chair. Members of
30 the Council. Again, this is just an update. I've been
31 before you a number of times. Staff have been before
32 you presenting the rural issue and receiving comments.
33 The big item here is to give you an update on what
34 happened at the Federal Subsistence Board meeting on
35 July 28th, 2015, just a couple months ago.
36
37 During that work session the Board took
38 action on the rural determination process. The Board
39 divided the rural determination process into three
40 phases. Just back up a minute. Again, there's a bunch
41 of rural determination information in your RAC book
42 starting on Page 25. A lot of that's information that
43 was presented to the Board as well.
44
45 Back to the process. Phase I addressed
46 the Board's recommendation on the current Secretarial
47 proposed rule. The Board voted to recommend to the
48 Secretaries to adopt the proposed rule as written.
49 Phase II was determining a starting point for nonrural
50 communities and areas. The Board voted to publish the

1 direct final rule adopting the pre-2007 nonrural
2 determinations. Phase III was direction on future
3 nonrural determinations. The Board voted to direct
4 staff to develop options to determine future nonrural
5 determinations for the Board's consideration.

6

7 All three requests passed unanimously
8 8-0. OSM Staff is expected to have draft options for
9 the Board by the January 2016 meeting. Currently the
10 Secretarial final rule and the Board's direct final
11 rule are being reviewed by the Interagency Staff
12 Committee. We expect to be able to send them to
13 Washington, D.C. very shortly.

14

15 Following Interagency Staff Committee
16 review, the documents will be forwarded to Washington,
17 D.C. for final review and publication in the Federal
18 Register. Each document will become effective upon
19 publication. After the Board provides guidance in
20 January 2016 on which it decided to pursue future
21 nonrural determinations, OSM staff will draft either a
22 policy or a proposed rule and present it to the
23 Councils for input and recommendations to the Board.

24

25 Again, this is an update item. We just
26 wanted to let you know what's happening. Basically I
27 don't think there's any new information here. Again,
28 the information you saw earlier is being reviewed right
29 now by the Interagency Staff Committee. It will be
30 sent to Washington, D.C. to implement as a final rule
31 and then the question about how do we handle rural
32 determinations in the future. Staff are working to put
33 that together. It will be presented to the Board in
34 January and then it will be brought back to the
35 Councils and this Council to review and comment on.

36

37 Thank you, Madame Chair.

38

39 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Any
40 comments from the Council. Rebecca.

41

42 MS. SKINNER: I have a question. This
43 is Rebecca Skinner. Have staff from Murkowski's office
44 or Young's office reached out or had any dialogue with
45 OSM? Because we have these regulatory changes that you
46 just discussed going through the system at the same
47 time we have proposed legislation from Murkowski and
48 Young that would, as I can tell, accomplish exactly the
49 same thing, but it wouldn't utilize the existing kind
50 of process and system that's currently built into the

1 Federal Subsistence Board. So have you had any contact
2 or dialogue with either of those two legislators?

3

4 MR. KRON: Madame Chair, Member
5 Skinner. I have not personally, but it's my
6 understanding that senior staff have. Again, what my
7 understanding is, this is pursued and is being pursued
8 as an administrative fix to the situation. What I have
9 heard is that a congressional delegation would like to
10 see it addressed administratively if at all possible.
11 Again, there has been communication. I think we are
12 proceeding down the administrative fix avenue.

13

14 Thank you, Madame Chair.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
17 further questions or comments in regards to the rural
18 determination update, Council members. Mr. Holmes.

19

20 MR. HOLMES: Tom, by developed
21 administratively, by the Alaska Federal Board of
22 Subsistence, is that what you mean?

23

24 MR. KRON: Yes, Pat. Madame Chair,
25 through the Chair. Basically administratively through
26 the Regional Council, the Federal Board, Fish and
27 Wildlife Service, Department of Agriculture process.
28 Essentially handling them through the process that we
29 all work as part of.

30

31 Thank you, Madame Chair.

32

33 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Any
34 further comments. Pat.

35

36 MR. HOLMES: Well, then I guess that
37 means that everybody's on the same page. Because I
38 know we were having some concern on having worked so
39 long and I know, chatting with some of the other RACs
40 in the state, on moving to where we are now with the
41 RACs having more influence on defining what's rural and
42 basically going back and saying, okay, you know, where
43 we're at.

44

45 So I guess we're on the same page and
46 these bills will just kind of be sitting there but not
47 really introduced as long as you folks are making
48 progress or are they going to be tossed in just to get
49 Saxman and a couple other places defined forever in
50 concrete as rural?

1 I'm sorry, I guess I'm making you
2 speculate, but it seems like they're moving together,
3 but has there been actual communications to OSM or the
4 Federal Board of Subsistence?

5
6 MR. KRON: Madame Chair, Member Holmes.
7 Again, my understanding is that there has been
8 communications and again, my understanding is that the
9 hope was, by the Congressional Delegation, that there
10 would be an administrative fix so they wouldn't have to
11 implement these. Again, it's their call whether or not
12 to implement these congressional fixes, but what I can
13 say is that we're moving through the process.

14
15 The Federal Board took action. A
16 number of the Federal Board members during that meeting
17 specifically talked about this issue. I think --
18 again, we think that what is being pursued is an
19 administrative fix to this issue. So, again, I can't
20 speculate beyond that.

21
22 Thank you, Madame Chair.

23
24 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any other
25 comments, Pat. Is that good? Okay. Yes, go ahead.

26
27 MR. KRON: Madame Chair, one final
28 comment. Again, we'll continue to keep this Council
29 and all the other Councils posted. Again, as noted,
30 the staff right now are going to be developing what's
31 the next step, where do we go from here, how do we
32 handle things. The Regional Councils are going to have
33 a much larger role in the process in the future. We'll
34 have to develop some of these procedures and lay it out
35 and we'll come back to you with that.

36
37 Thank you, Madame Chair.

38
39 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mr.
40 Kron. Move forward into new business. We have an
41 addition to our agenda. We'll start off with Aleutian
42 and Bering Sea Islands Landscape Conservation Co-op.
43 Aaron Poe with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

44
45 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair. Aaron
46 Poe should be on the phone right now. Aaron Poe, are
47 you on the phone?

48
49 (No comment)

50

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We may need to
2 skip this until he gets on the phone. We'll come back
3 to it.

4
5 MS. DEATHERAGE: Okay.

6 MR. EVANS: Madame Chair, I can go down
7 and see what the situation is.

8
9 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. I'd
10 appreciate that. We'll go ahead and defer and go to
11 item (b) under new business, wildlife proposals. WP16-
12 21 caribou season Units 9C and 9E. Tom Kron with OSM.

13
14 MR. KRON: Madame Chair. The analysis
15 for Proposal 16-21 begins on Page 47 and I'll go
16 through very quickly and cover this. If I could ask,
17 Tom Evans, are you on the phone there from Anchorage or
18 did you have to go to the other meeting yet?

19
20 MR. EVANS: I am here. I was going to
21 run down to see what Aaron's situation was just
22 briefly.

23
24 MR. KRON: Okay. Well, I will get
25 started. Again, I'll just do a quick overview of the
26 analysis that is in the Council book. Again, I don't
27 know what we're going to have for questions here, but
28 if you could be available, that would be great.

29
30 MR. EVANS: I'll be here.

31
32 MR. KRON: Okay. Then proceeding.
33 Madame Chair, I'm starting on Page 49. I'll be going
34 through the analysis and just covering some of the high
35 points and then we'll see what comments, questions and
36 any recommendations that you have on this proposal.

37
38 WP16-21 was submitted by the Bristol
39 Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and it
40 requests that the caribou season in Units 9C remainder
41 and 9E be modified from having no open season to a to
42 be announced season and open to Federally qualified
43 subsistence users.

44
45 The proponent notes that the Northern
46 Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd population status has
47 been slowly improving since 2008 and in the October
48 2014 survey, based on the bull:cow ratio, there are
49 more bulls available than are needed to grow the herd.
50 The caribou season has been closed since the 2005/2006

1 season. The Council believes Federally qualified
2 subsistence users should have an opportunity to harvest
3 the available surplus.

4
5 The proponent states that this change
6 will allow the Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National
7 Wildlife Refuge manager to provide opportunities for
8 local subsistence users and open a Federal hunt
9 concurrent with a prospective State Tier II hunt.

10
11 Rural residents of Units 9B, 9C, 17,
12 and Egegik have a positive customary and traditional
13 use determination for caribou in Unit 9C. Residents of
14 Units 9B, 9C, 9E, 17, Nelson Lagoon and Sand Point have
15 a positive customary and traditional use determination
16 for caribou in Unit 9E. So it's the Sand Point
17 connection here that results in this being a crossover
18 proposal for this Council to consider.

19
20 In August 2005, the Federal Subsistence
21 Board adopted Special Action Request WSA05-02, which
22 temporarily closed Federal public lands in Units 9C
23 remainder and 9E to the hunting of caribou by Federally
24 qualified subsistence users. In April 2006, the Board
25 adopted Proposal WP06-22, which closed Federal public
26 lands in Units 9C remainder and 9E to the hunting of
27 caribou by all user groups. The Board took this action
28 due to conservation concerns based on the continued
29 Northern Alaska Peninsula Herd population decline.

30
31 At its February 2015 meeting, the
32 Council was presented with Wildlife Closure Review
33 WCR14-06, which again discussed the Unit 9C and Unit 9E
34 caribou closure. In addition, the Alaska Department of
35 Fish and Game reported that the State may open a very
36 limited Tier II hunt in the fall of 2016 if North
37 Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd survey results continue
38 to show positive composition counts and population
39 minimum counts.

40
41 Based on the closure review and ADF&G's
42 report, the Council unanimously recommended to modify
43 the closure but to also provide for a hunt on Federal
44 public lands to Federally qualified subsistence users
45 should the State open a Tier II hunt. This proposal is
46 the result of that recommendation.

47
48 If this proposal is adopted, it would
49 allow the Federal manager flexibility to provide
50 opportunities for local

1 subsistence users if the Northern Alaska Peninsula
2 Caribou Herd reaches a point where harvest is deemed
3 feasible. Restricting the hunt to only Federally
4 qualified subsistence users may require a Section 804
5 analysis to determine the priority of users when the
6 harvest quota may be limited.

7

8 Based on the 2014 composition survey
9 results, the bull:cow ratio is now above the management
10 objective and is at the highest
11 level since 2002 and indicates that there are surplus
12 bulls available for harvest.

13

14 There is a possibility that the State
15 may open a Tier II hunt in the fall of 2016. Having a
16 to be announced season in regulation will provide the
17 Refuge with management flexibility to provide Federally
18 qualified subsistence users the opportunity to harvest
19 caribou.

20

21 If this proposal is adopted, it would
22 establish a to be announced season in regulation and
23 limit the harvest to residents of Units 9C and 9E.
24 Quotas and any needed closures would be announced by
25 the Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National Wildlife Refuge
26 Manager after consultation with ADF&G. This will
27 provide
28 the Refuge with management flexibility to allow for a
29 limited Federal season if warranted. The Northern
30 Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd composition data has
31 continued to improve and the minimum population counts
32 have slowly risen since 2009.

33

34 This to be announced season would
35 provide the Refuge Manager the ability to open a
36 subsistence hunt of surplus bulls, which could provide
37 a limited harvest opportunity for Federally qualified
38 subsistence users, while still allowing the herd to
39 grow.

40

41 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
42 support the proposal with modification to specify a
43 may-be-announced season, remove mention of Federal
44 public lands closure, and to remove language
45 referencing the total number of permits to be issued,
46 remove regulatory language referencing quotas and
47 needed closures and delegate authority to determine
48 quotas, and set season opening and closing dates via a
49 delegation of authority letter.

50

1 The OSM preliminary conclusion is
2 presented on Page 55 of your book. The justification
3 for that is below. I've already touched on the issues
4 here, but again the herd is growing. It's a good
5 thing. The desire is to be able to provide opportunity
6 based on the Bristol Bay Regional Council request.

7
8 Thank you, Madame Chair.

9
10 MADAME CHAIR BERNES: Thank you. Any
11 questions or comments. Rebecca.

12
13 MS. SKINNER: This is Rebecca Skinner.
14 Do you know, when the proposal was made, was there
15 discussion about approximately how many bulls they
16 thought they would harvest? Oh, and another question.
17 Were they anticipating basically immediately opening
18 hunting for the bulls or was it more changing the
19 regulation to allow the possibility that there might be
20 hunting down the road if the population increased. So
21 those two questions.

22
23 MR. KRON: Madame Chair. Tom, are you
24 on the phone?

25
26 MR. EVANS: Yes, I'm on the phone. I
27 can answer those questions.

28
29 MR. KRON: Yeah, please. Thank you.

30
31 MR. EVANS: So the State proposed the
32 changes to regulation if the caribou herd continued to
33 increase and there was a surplus of bulls, then they
34 might open up a hunt. So when this proposal was put
35 forward, it would just allow the ability for the hunt
36 to be opened on the Federal public lands. So basically
37 this is just setting it up in case there is an opening.
38 Sets up the potential for the Refuge to open up a hunt
39 on Federal lands. I'm guessing it will be a very, very
40 limited bull hunt.

41
42 The State's recommendations for the
43 number of bulls per 100 cows is 35. In 2014 it reached
44 40, but that had been the first time since 2002 that it
45 had gone above 35. The population is still way below
46 what the State recommended levels for that caribou herd
47 are. The State recommends roughly 12-15,000 animals in
48 the herd. As of 2014, the count was only 2,700. So
49 it's going to be a very, very limited hunt if a hunt at
50 all.

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Does
2 that address your question?

3
4 MS. SKINNER: Yes.

5
6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do you have any
7 other questions, comments. Go ahead, Pat.

8
9 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. I'm
10 wondering if we should be taking a position on the
11 Council to endorse this proposal. Would that be
12 appropriate?

13
14 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Pat.

15
16 MR. HOLMES: If so, I would like to
17 make a motion that the Kodiak/Aleutians Advisory
18 Council endorse OSM modifications for this proposal and
19 support it.

20
21 Thank you.

22
23 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Do we
24 have a second.

25
26 MR. SHELIKOFF: Second.

27
28 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Seconded by
29 Antone. Discussion. Yes, Rebecca.

30
31 MS. SKINNER: So the clarification that
32 -- really this proposal establishes a framework to
33 allow a possible hunt if, I hope I'm understanding this
34 correctly, if the State assesses that the herd is of an
35 appropriate size to allow a hunt. So mainly this
36 proposal is just setting up a framework to potentially
37 allow a hunt. This isn't intended to immediately allow
38 a hunt. I'm comfortable with that.

39
40 And looking at the population size, I
41 know the comment in the proposal indicates that the
42 herd has increased since 2009, but I mean it looks like
43 it's increased minimally and you're looking at right
44 now a population of 2,700, as you said, with a target
45 population of 12,000. So I would be very uncomfortable
46 having a hunt occur with a 2,700 population, but I do
47 agree with having the flexibility -- so creating the
48 framework allowing the flexibility for a hunt when it
49 becomes appropriate. So that makes sense to me.

50

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead.

2

3 MR. KRON: Madame Chair, just a follow
4 up here. Again, what they're thinking now is that
5 based on the increase in bulls in the herd they could
6 have a small bulls-only hunt and they wanted to provide
7 opportunity for subsistence users to participate in
8 that. They could have a small bulls-only hunt without
9 affecting the growth of the herd. That's what they're
10 thinking. They would still like to grow the herd, but
11 they can do that and still harvest some of the bulls.

12

13 Thank you, Madame Chair.

14

15 MS. SKINNER: So my follow-up comment
16 to that, just doing the math, to get the target bull
17 ratio from 40 percent to 35 percent, based on the
18 estimated population of 2,700, you're looking at 135
19 bulls. If you take out 135 from the 2,700, you're down
20 to almost 2,500, which it looks like that was the
21 population when they initially shut down hunting.

22

23 So, again, if there's an intent to
24 immediately hunt, I have a lot of concern about that.
25 So I'm not sure if I would support this proposal as
26 written if that is the intent, but I do support setting
27 up a framework to allow the potential hunt when the
28 population increases.

29

30 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Mr.
31 Schwantes.

32

33 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chair. I have
34 the same concern. I mean we're talking about five
35 bulls per 100 animals. With the herd being as small as
36 it is -- I understand that it would be good to have an
37 option for a subsistence hunt, but with the herd that
38 small I'm just concerned about having any kind of hunt
39 at all. If we're going to put this into place just so
40 that it's possible in the future, then I guess I'm okay
41 with that. I do have a concern with going in there and
42 hunting with the herd the size it is.

43

44 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead.

45

46 MR. KRON: Madame Chair. Again, the
47 change in the regulations would just allow the
48 possibility for this to happen if the people that are
49 doing the counts and the managers felt that it was
50 appropriate. I think, again, your comments and Member

1 Skinner's comments are heard loud and clear. I think
2 that input will definitely be passed along in the
3 process. Again, the overall approach is just to change
4 the regulation so that this would be allowed. It's
5 closed right now.

6

7 Thank you, Madame Chair.

8

9 MADAME CHAIR BERNES: We currently have
10 a motion on the table. Mr. Holmes.

11

12 MR. HOLMES: Yes, Madame Chair. That
13 is a concern to me. We did get some small growth in
14 the South Peninsula Herd that allowed for a very small
15 subsistence harvest. I guess, along with my motion, if
16 you go back to the transcripts to have our concerns in
17 there, it would be good to have -- and if Nate Svoboda
18 is here from the State for Unit 8, but if you could
19 make sure that Lem and his crew from North Peninsula,
20 it would be good for the agencies to work together and
21 perhaps have something set up where you could do like a
22 drawing hunt like we had on the south end and they
23 certainly didn't achieve the level of harvest they
24 thought they were going to get because when the numbers
25 are down, they're not so easy to find them unless you
26 have Tom Kron leading the gang or his kids. They can
27 actually smell out a caribou anywhere. Anyhow, it
28 would be good to provide for that in a small way, but
29 do it so that one group isn't competing against the
30 other. Because if we have a straight Tier II hunt,
31 that could cause some serious philosophical differences
32 with the folks in Naknek versus the State one. So if
33 it could be coordinated in some way to where there
34 could be -- if there's enough of a surplus, maybe so
35 that you could at least have a few, one or two, caribou
36 for each village or community so that they could have
37 it for a fall potlatch or something like that. That
38 would be desirable as a starting point. But just like
39 9D, you know, we're really wanting to see those herds
40 grow, but we'd still like to have folks have a chance
41 to occasionally have some caribou. I'm sorry I'm
42 rambling, but you get the gist.

43

44 Thank you, Madame Chair.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR BERNES: Thank you, Pat.
47 We currently have a motion on the table from Mr. Holmes
48 on behalf of the RAC to endorse WP16-21 caribou season
49 in Unit 9C and 9E and that's been seconded by Mr.
50 Shelikoff here. Yes, Karen.

1 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair. Perhaps
2 this might be a good time to make sure that we do not
3 have any testimony from tribes or agencies or the
4 public on this particular issue.

5
6 MR. SIMEONOFF: Why?

7
8 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Do we
9 have anybody with tribes or agencies wishing to speak
10 at this point in time in regards to this issue or
11 proposal.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Seeing none. The
16 motion has been made. Oh, yes, go ahead.

17
18 MR. RIVARD: Madame Chair. This is Don
19 Rivard with the Office of Subsistence Management. I
20 just wanted to make sure the motion's clarified. What
21 I'm understanding is it's basically supporting the OSM
22 conclusion to support the proposal with modification as
23 laid out on Page 55.

24
25 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes. That is my
26 understanding as well. Mr. Holmes, is that the motion
27 that you're making?

28
29 MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am.

30
31 MR. CRAWFORD: Madame Chair, are you
32 open for agency comments?

33
34 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, we are open
35 for agency comments at this point in time.

36
37 MR. CRAWFORD: Drew Crawford, Alaska
38 Department of Fish and Game in Anchorage. The
39 Department's recommendation for Proposal WP16-21 is to
40 support as modified by OSM. I also wanted to add that
41 later in the meeting under agency reports Dave Crowley,
42 who's the area wildlife biologist for Units 9 and 10
43 will be speaking to you via teleconference and you'll
44 be able to ask him questions on any updates he has on
45 the Northern Peninsula Caribou Herd at that time.
46 Over.

47
48 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. We
49 have a suggestion from Mr. Schwantes to hold off on
50 this motion until after the report provided. Does

1 anyone have any objections to that.
2
3 (No objections)
4
5 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Hearing none.
6 Thank you very much. Do you want to back up -- do we
7 have Aaron Poe on the line with us at this time?
8
9 (No comments)
10
11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Aaron Poe, are you
12 with us?
13
14 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair. I can
15 send him a text and he could get on the phone shortly.
16 It is 12:12, so I wasn't sure when you were planning to
17 break for lunch.
18
19 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Anybody hungry?
20
21 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
22 Mitch.
23
24 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Mitch.
25
26 MR. SIMEONOFF: We have a motion on the
27 table. Do you want to deal with that or finish it or
28 what do you want to do?
29
30 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We had discussion
31 to hold off on the motion until after the presentation
32 was made. It was deferred until after the presentation
33 is made later on, the Fish and Game report.
34
35 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay, you got more
36 information coming, is that correct?
37
38 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, that is
39 correct, Mitch.
40
41 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay. Just remember
42 that when we come back after lunch.
43
44 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, thank you.
45 I'll do my best to remember. Okay. Do we want to
46 break for lunch at this time or do we want to continue
47 on, Council.
48
49 MR. HOLMES: Lunch.
50

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Pat wants lunch.
2 Okay. Let's go ahead and break for lunch. It's 12:10
3 at this time. Do we want about an hour, hour 20.
4 We'll come back together at 1:30 sharply.
5
6 Thank you.
7
8 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay. This is Mitch,
9 I'm out.
10
11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mitch.
12
13 (Off record)
14
15 (On record)
16
17 MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della. I'm
18 online, but in about half an hour, 45 minutes I have
19 something I need to attend to and then I'll return.
20
21 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, that's quite
22 all right. Just let us know when you come back online.
23
24 Thank you, Della.
25
26 MS. TRUMBLE: Okay. Thanks.
27
28 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Mitch, are you
29 with us?
30
31 (No comment)
32
33 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We'll give Mitch a
34 couple more moments and let other people kind of get in
35 here before we get started.
36
37 (Pause)
38
39 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Mitch, are you
40 online?
41
42 (No comment)
43
44 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: It is 1:32 and we
45 do have a quorum here, so we can go ahead and get
46 started. Just so everybody's on the same page we're
47 going to start back under 11, new business, (a)
48 Aleutian and Bering Sea Islands Landscape Conservation
49 Co-op. Aaron Poe, do we have you online?
50

1 MR. POE: Yeah, I'm here.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Great. We'll go
4 ahead and give you the floor. Karen is going to get
5 your presentation set up here.

6

7 MR. POE: Okay, great. Thank you so
8 much. Karen, if you just want to let me know when I
9 should begin.

10

11 MS. DEATHERAGE: Aaron, you're all set.

12

13 MR. POE: Okay, great. Good afternoon,
14 everybody. Apologies for missing my call earlier. I
15 was hoping to join you at 1:30. I ended up being in
16 another call earlier, I think, when you called my name,
17 so I wasn't able to jump off of that one. But I'm here
18 now. I'm sorry I couldn't be there in person to talk
19 with you guys, but I wanted to share a little bit about
20 a partnership called the Aleutian and Bering Sea
21 Islands Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

22

23 Hopefully that's on the screen there
24 with some sea lions for your viewing pleasure. You'll
25 see our website there is absilcc.org so you can check
26 that out. I'm sure you're all on Twitter right now
27 twittering away. You can find it there on Twitter as
28 well. Hopefully that was took as a joke.

29

30 Anyhow, I'm going to dive right in here
31 and basically, Karen, I'll just say next slide. You
32 should be looking at a slide that says welcome to
33 Landscape Conservation Cooperative or LCC. I'm not
34 sure how familiar folks are with these, but basically I
35 just wanted to give you that little bit of background.
36 We are public/private partnerships that are focused on
37 conservation. Our goal is to try to take on really big
38 issues, things like climate change that really are too
39 large for any one agency, organization or group to take
40 on on their own.

41

42 The LCCs are largely funded by the U.S.
43 Fish and Wildlife Service though we do have funding
44 partners from a variety of other sources as well.
45 Within Alaska there are five LCCs that have geography
46 in Alaska. I'll show you a map of that in a moment. I
47 just wanted to point out of those five LCCs there's 130
48 different member organizations that are working at
49 various levels within the LCC. Some are project
50 partners, some serve on our leadership, which are

1 steering committees, others help us with workshops,
2 they help us with trying to engage communities.
3 There's a diverse array of people that are involved in
4 these partnerships from agencies, tribes, non-
5 government organizations and universities.

6
7 Next slide. So hopefully what you're
8 seeing now is a map of North America. This is just to
9 kind of give you a perspective that there are 22 of
10 these partnerships across the continent, so they do
11 include into Mexico, the Caribbean and actually in the
12 Pacific and South Pacific as well and into Canada.

13
14 Next slide. We should be able to zoom
15 into Alaska. The one we're talking about today, the
16 one that I work for is there in kind of the orange
17 color at the far left of your screen, the Aleutian and
18 Bering Sea Islands or ABSI. The one that you are all
19 sitting in there in Kodiak is the Western Alaska LCC,
20 so I'll talk about them a little bit at the end of my
21 presentation as well, but I just kind of wanted to give
22 you that picture to see how they break across the
23 geography of Alaska and see they do extend into Canada,
24 so they have active partners across the border working
25 on things as well.

26
27 Next slide. So this is just to zoom in
28 kind of that light blue area that you see. That's the
29 ABSI region, Aleutian and Bering Sea Islands. The
30 thing that just popped up there on the bottom of the
31 screen, that's some of the things I emphasize about
32 this area. I'm sure you folks are much more familiar
33 with kind of the region Aleutians and Bering, but those
34 are the types of talking points I guess that I share
35 with audiences whether I'm talking to folks here in
36 Anchorage or whether I'm talking to folks in the Lower
37 48 or other places just to try and show the
38 significance of this region. Things like 50 percent of
39 the U.S. seafood, the Alaska Native tribes out there
40 that live in some really remote communities and then
41 some of the great, you know, sort of the biological
42 resources, the critters that are out there as well.

43
44 Next slide. Hopefully what you're
45 seeing now is the leadership group. This is the
46 steering committee. I think I mentioned that LCCs are
47 directed by a steering committee of folks. So these
48 are the people and the member organizations that
49 essentially are my bosses. Even though I work for the
50 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I actually respond to

1 folks from eight different agencies, tribes,
2 organizations. We work together to try and tackle
3 those big challenges like climate change in the
4 Aleutians. Some of those names on there might be
5 familiar to folks. These are the different groups that
6 are involved.

7

8 Next slide. One of the projects we've
9 been working on is trying to figure out what's going on
10 with climate change in the region. This one specific
11 project, I'll kind of note the logo there, but the
12 Alaska Climate Science Center and also the Alaska Ocean
13 Observing System. We're partners in this endeavor and
14 basically -- hit the next slide -- we put together a
15 team of 30 top experts that are working in the region
16 on everything from A to Z, so from anthropology all the
17 way down to zooplankton, to try to understand what are
18 some of the effects that we might expect based on
19 climate change in this region.

20

21 There were two analyses that came out
22 from UAF -- one of them from UAF and another from
23 University of Washington, that gives downscaled climate
24 modeling. We're getting down to a finer resolution of
25 what we might expect in terms of things like changes in
26 sea surface temperature and air temperature. So those
27 analyses were kind of fed to this group of 30 experts.

28

29

30 They broke into teams that you see
31 there in the bullets, so they looked at -- there was a
32 team that worked on community subsistence and cultural
33 resources, a team that worked on fish, commercial
34 fisheries, a team that worked on marine mammals and
35 then a team on seabirds and then also one on
36 terrestrial vegetation. Basically those groups
37 identified what were some of the things we could expect
38 in terms of impacts and what was further researched,
39 what were further information needs to help us get a
40 better picture of what we could expect.

41

42 If you hit the next slide, you should
43 see one that says what might we expect for our
44 communities. This is just an example of some of the
45 outputs from this project. That's the team that worked
46 in the communities and identified these five things.
47 The things that were, you know, threats that we could
48 expect in this region. So things like increased travel
49 costs and increased risk as subsistence harvesters in
50 the fishing industry or trying to use this region with

1 a projection of increased storminess, having to maybe
2 travel further to get some of the fish stock that
3 they've fished in the past that tend to look to be
4 moving further north, for example.

5
6 Changes in the timing and the type of
7 traditional subsistence harvest practices are expected.
8 Damage to infrastructure and archeological sites,
9 cultural sites. Along the shoreline particularly as it
10 relates to coastal erosion or coastal inundation.

11
12 They also talked about increased
13 prevalence of new pathogens. Folks maybe have heard
14 quite a bit recently about harmful algal blooms in kind
15 of this region and actually in Kodiak as well. But
16 things like paralytic shellfish poisoning, PSP, and
17 things like those also become potentially more
18 prominent in the future as water temperatures increase.

19
20 That last bullet, concerns about
21 increased vessel traffic if we have reduced sea ice,
22 basically allowing transit through the Arctic more
23 easily and for more months out of the year than in the
24 past. So folks were concerned about that potential
25 traffic as well.

26
27 The next slide. You should see a
28 picture of a big container ship from the perspective of
29 an island and kind of segueing from the discussion
30 about vessel traffic. One of the other key things that
31 ABSI has been working on, again in partnership with UAF
32 and Wildlife Conservation Society, is trying to get a
33 better understanding of vessel traffic patterns through
34 the Aleutians and up through the Bering and through the
35 Bering Strait.

36
37 If you hit the next slide. Just to go
38 into a little bit of technical detail, and some people
39 are probably familiar with this, but basically any
40 vessel in ocean waters that's over 300 tons is required
41 to carry an automatic identification system transponder
42 or an AIS transponder. So what this graphic is trying
43 to show you is that the signals basically ping the
44 locations of boats up into the sky and they're picked
45 up by station-based things, almost like cell towers
46 along the shoreline, of which there's a network of
47 those throughout Alaska. But they also more recently
48 have been able to be picked up by satellites in orbit
49 starting in about 2010. Those vessel locations have
50 been able to be sucked up by these satellites and

1 recorded as data.

2

3 If you look at the next slide, that
4 kind of gives you a picture, and hopefully what you're
5 seeing is a picture of the Pacific Ocean with a bunch
6 of sort of blue and white dots and lines all over it
7 and that represents basically those pictures of the
8 vessel traffic throughout the region based on a
9 satellite perspective of those AIS signals.

10

11 So our work was basically purchasing a
12 dataset of 70 million locations specific to the Bering
13 and Aleutians region. These were collected during 2010
14 and 2013. That's basically about as soon as that data
15 was available via satellite. So we did work to analyze
16 that to try and develop some kind of pictures and
17 projections about what that traffic might look like in
18 terms of patterns.

19

20 If you hit the next slide. Hopefully
21 this will work on your end there. You should see kind
22 of a moving graphic that maybe shows some kind of red,
23 orange and yellow vessels lines transiting through the
24 Aleutians. Are people seeing that just to check in?

25

26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, we are.

27

28 MR. POE: Okay, great. So basically
29 what this represents is monthly averages for this
30 particular type of vessel. This is container ships or
31 what we call dry goods, like the picture in the bottom
32 right there. You can kind of see how throughout the
33 year them getting into the Russian Arctic, kind of up
34 through October, but that traffic starts to shut down,
35 for example, if you have kind of the more ice season.
36 It starts to pick up again in June and July.

37

38 Kind of the one feature that you see
39 throughout this kind of annual snapshot of vessel
40 traffic you see these three lines that are kind of
41 going right through Unimak Pass there and then cutting
42 out through the Aleutians and this is the traffic
43 essentially between North America and Asia. So it's a
44 lot of this kind of cargo traffic.

45

46 So this is the way that we're hoping to
47 be able to kind of make folks aware of the type of
48 traffic that's out there. Certainly there's data that
49 we can provide that can get down even to the numbers of
50 vessels and the types of vessels. But that was just

1 one way to kind of get some perspective on the amount
2 of traffic that's out there and what the use patterns
3 look like.

4
5 If you hit next slide. So that was a
6 moving picture obviously, but these are snapshots of
7 kind of the other vessel types that we have data about.
8 So the dry goods are the container ships, but we also
9 have boat carriers, tankers and then also fishing boats
10 that are equipped with the AIS transponders. Now not
11 all fishing boats are equipped with those, but I guess
12 the larger ones typically are. So just another
13 snapshot of some of the different data types that we
14 have.

15
16 The next slide. You should see a slide
17 talking about the Aleutian Life Forum. This is an
18 event maybe some folks have attended it in the past.
19 It was 2005 and I think 2006 or 2007. It was held a
20 couple years in a row out in Unalaska. Basically it
21 was organized to kind of be like a science and local
22 knowledge conference out there. So we, along with a
23 bunch of the partners that you see kind of on the right
24 side of your screen there, are hoping to kind of
25 rebirth this idea and bring it back and try to do
26 something like this maybe even every couple of years to
27 kind of synthesize the latest information from the
28 region.

29
30 So we're targeting August 13-19, 2016.
31 I don't know if it's come up today, but I think Karen
32 is at least trying to push to get you guys funding to
33 actually maybe bring the RAC to the Aleutian Life Forum
34 and see about having a possible kind of simultaneous or
35 a meeting at least associating the same week as this
36 Aleutian Life Forum. I think it could be kind of a
37 great opportunity for you guys. The Qawalangin tribe
38 has a grant through BIA to bring in some regional
39 tribal leaders from a lot of the different Aleutian and
40 Alaska Peninsula communities. So there might be some
41 folks that you will necessarily be able to interact
42 with in person at least, like maybe you haven't in the
43 past.

44
45 There possibly will be some great
46 plans, presentations I think would be good for folks on
47 things like climate change, things like vessel traffic,
48 ocean acidification. Some of these big looming issues
49 that are out there. We're also hoping to kind of
50 provide some potential solutions, so there's going to

1 be a session about establishing prospective local
2 observer networks for example to help us kind of keep
3 track of some of these threats, like harmful algal
4 blooms or PSP or something like that.

5
6 Another key part of this conference
7 we're going to be trying to help scientists learn how
8 to be more effective with the type of information that
9 we're serving up, such that when we're collecting this
10 information we're synthesizing and providing in a way
11 that can actually be used by managers, by communities,
12 by stakeholders. So that's going to be another part of
13 this conference.

14
15 The other key piece you see there is a
16 workshop focused on issues of coastal resilience. So
17 ABSILCC along with a couple of the other LCCs are doing
18 a series of workshops in kind of coastal hub
19 communities in Western Alaska starting next year.
20 We'll have one in Nome. There will be one associated
21 with this Aleutian Life Forum that we're hoping that
22 you guys will be at. Then there will be one in King
23 Salmon next fall and one in Kotzebue kind of later in
24 the late fall next year. That will be part of this
25 event as well.

26
27 So I just wanted to kind of get that
28 out there now that we are working on a save the date
29 that hopefully will be out in the next couple of days
30 and we'll start circulating that. Melissa Goode, who
31 is with Alaska Sea Grants based in Unalaska, is
32 developing a website that will have the latest
33 information on it as well.

34
35 If you want to hit the next slide. I
36 mentioned early on that I was going to talk about the
37 Western Alaska LCC for the one that includes Kodiak,
38 kind of the west coast of Alaska all the way up to
39 Nome. Basically they wanted me to share a couple of
40 things with you guys. They have launched -- they
41 funded, I guess, the development and implementation of
42 a regional freshwater temperature monitoring network.
43 There's probably potentially people in the room there
44 that know more about this than me, but it's being led
45 by Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge and Fish and Game,
46 Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association, Old Harbor and
47 Larsen Bay Tribal Councils are partners as well.

48
49 Again, as I said, I don't know a lot
50 about this project, but if folks are interested in

1 wanting to know more, that westernalaskalcc.org that's
2 referenced on the bottom of the slide might be your
3 best course of action.

4

5 If you want to hit the next slide, the
6 last one they wanted me to share with you guys is this
7 request for proposals, so they have a call out
8 basically for research ideas right now, hoping for
9 studies that will inform decision-makers about climate
10 change effects on terrestrial habitats, particularly
11 those effects that might have implications for
12 important resources. So say subsistence species, for
13 example, that folks are going to be concerned about.

14

15 So this request for proposals is a
16 funding opportunity for folks, whether it's research
17 partners or some of your colleagues that you might have
18 who's interested in these issues in Western Alaska.
19 Again, I'd point you again to that westernalaskalcc.org
20 for more details about that RFP. I do know that they
21 are having a webinar next Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. So the
22 webinar details would be there on that website as well.

23

24 I think the next slide should be my
25 last slide, Karen. Basically I just left time for
26 questions if there's any questions in the room there or
27 if folks want to jot down my email address and email me
28 later. Again, you know, referencing our website there.
29 I'll be happy to talk with folks more about our
30 efforts.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Aaron.
35 Any questions or comments from the RAC in regards to
36 this project.

37

38 MR. SHELIKOFF: Antone with the RAC. I
39 used to crab fish a while back and my question is is
40 the shell going to be softer for crab like red king
41 crab, Bering Sea crab, do you know?

42

43 MR. POE: I couldn't understand very
44 much of the question through the phone, but you were
45 asking about maybe returning stocks of crab, was that
46 what it was?

47

48 MR. SHELIKOFF: Yeah, I was asking
49 about the king crab shells. Are they going to be
50 softer?

1 MR. POE: Oh, like say, for example, as
2 a result of ocean acidification?

3
4 MR. SHELIKOFF: Yeah, as a result of
5 climate change they're supposed to be softer,
6 unharvestable.

7
8 MR. POE: Yeah, I don't know the answer
9 to that question specifically. I do know -- actually,
10 I believe there's a gentleman in Kodiak, Bob Foy, that
11 I think him and some other researchers are looking at
12 that question about ocean acidification impacts for
13 crab species. I know that definitely an issue of
14 concern that folks have brought up, but I don't know
15 the specific answer about that.

16
17 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Okay. Do we have
18 any other questions.

19
20 (No comments)

21
22 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you very
23 much for your presentation.

24
25 MR. POE: Absolutely. Let me know if I
26 can be of any further help.

27
28 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Moving along to
29 wildlife proposals. We have a Board of Fish proposal
30 for us. Karen, do we have information on the Board of
31 Fish proposal that was added?

32
33 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair. It was
34 a Board of Fish proposal for the Aleutians closing the
35 outer part of Unalaska Bay. This was brought up this
36 morning as an agenda change request for the meeting.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Is anyone speaking
39 to it?

40
41 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair. It
42 doesn't appear that the person that requested that is
43 still in the room because this was requested aside from
44 the agenda changes that I presented to you.

45
46 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Oh, Pat.

47
48 MR. HOLMES: I brought that up.

49
50 MS. DEATHERAGE: It appears that the

1 person that requested that is indeed in the room,
2 Madame Chair.

3

4 (Laughter)

5

6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you very
7 much. Mr. Holmes.

8

9 MR. HOLMES: Anyway, Vince Tutiakoff,
10 when he was on our Council, brought up this discussion
11 and it's a concern for the waters of Unalaska Bay
12 inside the bay. Folks down there feel that basically a
13 line from outside the capes would provide protection
14 within the bay that's used for subsistence and smaller
15 users than the Bering Sea trawlers. When the weather
16 is bad, then they come down and fish inside the bay.
17 And this proposal is Number 194 in the current Board of
18 Fish book and it was presented again by the Unalaska
19 Native Fishermen's Association.

20

21 Those that remember Vince, I think we
22 had at one time a resolution supporting that closure
23 based on Vince's passionate discussions of the
24 potential impact for local subsistence users. I could
25 read the whole thing to you, but that's kind of it in a
26 nutshell. I'd like to toss out a motion that our
27 Council support this closure. We don't normally get
28 into other agencies, but I think this is one that's a
29 nice overlap.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have
32 somebody online trying to comment?

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Can I ask that you
37 please mute your line when we're talking unless you
38 wish to speak. Were you going to make a motion?

39

40 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair, I'd like to
41 make a motion that the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional
42 Advisory Council support the Unalaska Native
43 Fishermen's Association proposal 194, which will be
44 coming up before the Alaska Board of Fish at their
45 2015/16 meeting.

46

47 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: A motion on the
48 table. Do we have a second.

49

50 MR. SHELIKOFF: Second.

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Second by Antone.
2 Discussion. Rebecca.
3
4 MS. SKINNER: Is it possible for us to
5 get a copy of the proposal before we vote to support it
6 so that we have a chance to actually read it?
7
8 MR. HOLMES: Sure. I can bring it
9 down.
10
11 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chair.
12
13 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes.
14
15 MR. SCHWANTES: I too would like to see
16 and hear a whole lot more information on this before we
17 vote to support anything. I have absolutely zero
18 information on it and we're asked to support something
19 that we don't have any information on, so I'm not
20 comfortable with that.
21
22 Thank you.
23
24 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Coral.
25
26 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I'm asking if we
27 can maybe get a copy of this and then look at this
28 again tomorrow. Can we bring it onto tomorrow's
29 agenda? Then we all have a chance to look at it, think
30 about it.
31
32 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I agree. Can we
33 get a motion to table the motion? Is that how we need
34 to go with this? And then, Karen, can you make us
35 copies of this so we can take it and review it this
36 evening and then come back to it tomorrow. Is that all
37 right with you, Mr. Holmes?
38
39 MR. HOLMES: Yes, that's perfect. I
40 should have gotten some extra copies at Fish and Game
41 and brought them over.
42
43 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Mr. Schwantes.
44
45 MR. SCHWANTES: So I'll make a motion
46 that we postpone this motion until we've had such time
47 to actually review this proposal and I would like to
48 have a report on it as well, not just see the proposal.
49
50 Thank you.

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do I have a second
2 to that? And then also, in addition to that, is there
3 someone with an agency that can speak about the
4 proposal to present to us tomorrow?

5
6 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair. I'm not
7 aware of anybody with Fish and Game, but it looks like
8 we have a couple hands. So either of you could speak
9 to this issue tomorrow?

10
11 MS. FOX: This is Lisa Fox with Fish
12 and Game. I could look into it and try to provide some
13 information tomorrow.

14
15 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Lisa.

16
17 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
18 Mitch. I'm back.

19
20 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Hey, Mitch.
21 Welcome.

22
23 MR. SIMEONOFF: Are we still talking
24 about the motion on this proposal?

25
26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes. And we're
27 going to get additional information on it as well as
28 hopefully have a presentation in regards to it. So
29 there was a motion on the table that was moved and
30 seconded and then there was an additional motion to
31 postpone that motion until tomorrow so that we can
32 review this information and come back to it. So we have
33 a motion to postpone.

34
35 MS. SKINNER: I'll second the motion.

36
37 MR. SIMEONOFF: I think (indiscernible)
38 just a surplus of funds that aren't available.

39
40 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Oh, I'm sorry,
41 Mitch. We're on a different proposal. We're on a
42 Board of Fish.

43
44 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay.

45
46 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: And we'll get that
47 information to you as well. Karen, will you be able to
48 email that to Mitch and to Della as well so they can
49 review it this evening?

50

1 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair, I should
2 be able to. Mitch has very limited internet, so it
3 depends on the size of the file.

4
5 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Okay. Thank you
6 very much. We've got a second on the table by Rebecca.
7 All in favor of the motion.

8
9 IN UNISON: Aye.

10
11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any opposed.

12
13 (No opposing votes)

14
15 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Okay. Moving
16 right along. We're onto annual report, 99 in your
17 booklet.

18
19 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
20 Mitch.

21
22 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Mitch.

23
24 MR. SIMEONOFF: On the annual report, I
25 would suggest that we move that to the end of the
26 meeting.

27
28 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
29 objections to moving the annual report?

30
31 (No objections)

32
33 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Did you want to
34 speak to that, about moving it to the end of the.....

35
36 MS. SKINNER: Can I ask a question?

37
38 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Rebecca.

39
40 MS. SKINNER: I apologize. Is this
41 annual report our annual report? So this RAC is -- is
42 it our annual report that we're putting together or is
43 it.....

44
45 MR. SIMEONOFF: The RAC's annual
46 report.

47
48 MS. SKINNER: Okay. So it's one we're
49 creating during this meeting or are we reviewing a
50 previous annual report? I'm confused now as to what

1 exactly this agenda item is.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Karen.

4

5 MS. DEATHERAGE: Through the Chair. We
6 are actually creating or you are creating a new annual
7 report for fiscal year 2015. So we will start from
8 scratch and I do have a template for that that we can
9 put up on the screen towards the end of the meeting so
10 we can capture all the concerns of the Council. After
11 that time this will become a draft annual report and it
12 will be presented again at the winter meeting for final
13 approval.

14

15 Thank you.

16

17 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Would it be most
18 fitting to have it following the agency reports after
19 OSM?

20

21 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair, yes.

22

23 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
24 objections to the move.

25

26 (No objections)

27

28 MS. TRUMBLE: Madame Chair, this is
29 Della Trumble. I'm back.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Hi, Della.
32 Welcome. We are just getting ready to go into agency
33 reports.

34

35 MS. TRUMBLE: Okay. Thank you.

36

37 MR. RIVARD: Madame Chair.

38

39 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes.

40

41 MR. RIVARD: I'd like to point out that
42 the reason I'm here is because of item 11(c), which you
43 passed up.

44

45 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Oh, I am so sorry.
46 I apologize. My agenda is written all over. Let me
47 backtrack. I'm sorry. So we're on 11(c) under new
48 business, 2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
49 with Don Rivard with OSM.

50

1 MR. RIVARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
2 Good afternoon to you and to the other Council members.
3 My name is Don Rivard. I'm a fish biologist with the
4 Office of Subsistence Management. I'll be giving you a
5 briefing on the status of the Fisheries Resource
6 Monitoring Program with regards to the 2016 call for
7 proposals, which is now known as a notice of funding
8 availability. The written material for this
9 presentation begins on Page 60 in your Council book.

10
11 Before I get started I'd like to point
12 out that there was a supplement to what was in your
13 book. It's entitled supplement to 2016 FRMP Southwest
14 Region briefing. It's a one-pager. It's Table 1.
15 Does everybody have that? So it's going to be
16 replacing the table that's on Page 71 in your book.
17 The table will be up on the screen at some point too,
18 so if you can't find it right away, we'll be able to
19 look at it on the screen.

20
21 The Fisheries Resource Monitoring
22 Program. Beginning in 1999, the Federal government
23 assumed expanded management responsibility for
24 subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands in Alaska
25 under the authority of Title VIII of the Alaska
26 National Interest Lands Conservation Act, also known as
27 ANILCA. Expanded subsistence fisheries management
28 introduced substantial new informational needs for the
29 Federal system. Section 812 of ANILCA directs the
30 Departments of the Interior and Agriculture,
31 cooperating with the State of Alaska and other Federal
32 agencies, to undertake research on fish and wildlife
33 and subsistence uses on Federal public lands.

34
35 To increase the quantity and quality of
36 information available for management of subsistence
37 fisheries, the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
38 was established within the Office of Subsistence
39 Management. The Monitoring Program was envisioned as a
40 collaborative interagency, interdisciplinary approach
41 to enhance existing fisheries research and effectively
42 communicate information needed for subsistence
43 fisheries management on Federal public lands.

44
45 I wanted to point out that we have six
46 regions that we've delineated under the Fisheries
47 Resource Monitoring Program and there's a map on Page
48 60 in your book that shows these six regions. Your
49 Council is located within the Southwest Region and you
50 share this region with the Bristol Bay Regional

1 Advisory Council.

2

3 To implement the Monitoring Program, a
4 collaborative approach is utilized in which five
5 Federal agencies (the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
6 Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service,
7 Bureau of Indian Affairs, and U.S. Forest Service) work
8 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Regional
9 Advisory Councils, Alaska Native Organizations, and
10 other organizations. An interagency Technical Review
11 Committee provides scientific evaluation of the
12 proposals or investigation plans that are submitted for
13 funding consideration.

14

15 The Regional Advisory Councils provide
16 review and recommendations, and public comment is also
17 invited. The Interagency Staff Committee also provides
18 recommendations. The Federal Subsistence Board takes
19 into consideration recommendations and comments
20 throughout this process and forwards a Monitoring Plan
21 to the Assistant Regional Director of the Office of
22 Subsistence Management for final approval.

23

24 Here are some of the policy guidelines
25 that we have with regards to this program. Projects of
26 up to four years duration may be considered in any
27 year s monitoring plan. Studies must not duplicate
28 existing projects. A majority of Monitoring Program
29 funding will be dedicated to non-Federal agencies.
30 Long term projects will be considered on a case by case
31 basis.

32

33 And then there's some activities that
34 this program does not fund and those include habitat
35 protection, mitigation, restoration, and enhancement;
36 hatchery propagation, restoration, enhancement, and
37 supplementation; contaminant assessment, evaluation,
38 and monitoring; and projects where the primary or only
39 objective is outreach and education. For example,
40 science camps, technician training, and intern
41 programs) rather than
42 information collection.

43

44 I'm going to give you a little
45 historical overview here. The Monitoring Program was
46 first implemented in 2000, with an initial allocation
47 of \$5 million. Since 2001, a total of almost \$104
48 million have been allocated for the Monitoring Program
49 which has funded a total of 431 projects, which you can
50 see here. Now here's the allocation of that funding by

1 regions. Guidelines on the left side of how to divvy
2 out this money per region and then the actual
3 distribution of funds over the past 15 years basically.
4 The Southwest region is the one in purple there on the
5 pie chart, a little over \$10 million.

6
7 Projects are selected for funding
8 through an evaluation and review process that is
9 designed to advance projects that are strategically
10 important for the Federal Subsistence Program,
11 technically sound, administratively competent, promote
12 partnerships and capacity building, and are cost
13 effective. Projects are evaluated by a panel called the
14 Technical Review Committee. This committee is a
15 standing interagency committee of senior technical
16 experts that is foundational to the credibility and
17 scientific integrity of the evaluation process for
18 projects funded by the Monitoring Program.

19
20 The Technical Review Committee reviews,
21 evaluates, and makes recommendations about proposed
22 projects consistent with the mission of the Monitoring
23 Program. Fisheries and anthropology staff from the
24 Office of Subsistence Management provide support for
25 the Technical Review Committee.

26
27 Recommendations from the Technical
28 Review Committee provide the basis for further comments
29 from Councils, the public, the
30 Interagency Staff Committee and the Federal Subsistence
31 Board, again with the approval of the Monitoring Plan
32 by the Assistant Regional Director of Office of
33 Subsistence Management.

34
35 Five criteria are used to evaluate
36 project proposals and you'll see them on your screen.
37 There's strategic priority, technical-scientific merit,
38 investigator ability and resources, partnership and
39 capacity building and the cost benefit of the projects.
40 The projects or proposals that come in need to
41 demonstrate how they will meet all five of these rating
42 criteria. Again, the Technical Review Committee is the
43 one that does the ratings for these projects.

44
45 The Monitoring Program does proposal
46 evaluation. They prioritize high quality projects that
47 address critical subsistence questions, that enhance
48 the Monitoring Program, increase overall program
49 transparency, identify and fund high quality research
50 projects that address priority information needs and

1 maximize funding opportunities.

2

3 Here's some of the recent modifications
4 that we've done on these. The complete project
5 packages need to be submitted on time and must address
6 all five of the specific criteria. Some key
7 modifications to the process include specific
8 guidelines for assessing how and whether a proposed
9 project has addressed each of the five criteria,
10 receiving a single consolidated review
11 from each participating agency, and requiring that
12 agencies recuse themselves from providing reviews for
13 projects in which the agency is involved.

14

15 For the 2016 call for proposals we
16 received seven proposals or investigation plans for the
17 Southwest Region. These were in response to the
18 priority information needs that are listed on Page 69
19 in your book. Some of these were priority information
20 needs that were identified by your Council as well.

21

22 Here's where your supplement comes in,
23 the table that I was telling you about. These are the
24 seven proposals/projects that came in. They have been
25 rated and ranked by the Technical Review Committee.
26 Again, these projects cover both the Kodiak/Aleutians
27 and the Bristol Bay Regions.

28

29 I'm going to give you the option here.
30 I can read these off if you'd like. We can also go and
31 have a brief -- I can give you a brief description and
32 the justification for why these projects are ranked the
33 way they are. So I'll leave that up to the Council as
34 to what you'd like to do. If you'd like a little bit
35 more information on these particular ones or you just
36 want to go with what you're seeing here.

37

38 (Pause)

39

40 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Is there any
41 response from the Council? Would you like him to
42 review each individual project, kind of give a brief
43 overview or would you like to take the time to go over
44 them yourselves. Rebecca.

45

46 MS. SKINNER: I wouldn't mind getting
47 an overview. I mean having read the proposals, I still
48 think I'm going to get something extra from -- as you
49 talk through them. So I would like -- I think I would
50 benefit from having an overview myself.

1 MR. RIVARD: Okay. Madame Chair, I
2 should do that?
3
4 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, thank you.
5
6 MR. RIVARD: Thank you. I want to just
7 point out from the supplement you've got on Table 1 and
8 the difference between the one that's in the book. At
9 the time that the book was published, you can see the
10 last project down below was 16-453, the one in the
11 book, Table 1. That had not been yet ranked or
12 evaluated by the Technical Review Committee. So the
13 453 you can see in your supplement it ranked out as
14 number two. There's no real description of this
15 project at all in the book, so I'll talk a little bit
16 about that as well.
17
18 So we're going to go by the TRC
19 ranking. The number one rank.....
20
21 MS. SKINNER: I have a question.
22
23 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Excuse me, Don,
24 we've got a question on the table. Rebecca.
25
26 MS. SKINNER: Sorry. Before you start
27 your presentation I want to make sure I understand what
28 it is the RAC is doing. Are we going to be supporting
29 the proposed selection of these projects for funding or
30 is this merely informational or are we weighing in on
31 this?
32
33 MR. RIVARD: Through the Chair. The
34 Council has an option of just providing comments or if
35 you wanted to make a formal motion of support or if you
36 have some other way that you would like -- maybe you
37 see a project you would like to see have a little
38 higher priority than another one.
39
40 In the past -- this is new to this time
41 around. In the past, you would see recommendations
42 from the Technical Review Committee of either fund a
43 project or do not fund, but that's no longer the case.
44 What they're doing is they've taken all the projects
45 and they've just ranked them according to the highest
46 rated one versus the lowest rated one. They're not
47 giving you a recommendation of fund or do not fund.
48
49 MS. SKINNER: And there were around 45
50 projects submitted and today you're only reviewing the

1 six that were submitted and ranked for the Southwest
2 Region?

3

4 MR. RIVARD: That's correct.

5

6 MS. SKINNER: So the rankings that
7 we're looking at, which are ranked one through seven
8 for the Southwest Region, we have no way of knowing
9 where those rankings fall in comparison to other
10 proposed projects?

11

12 MR. RIVARD: That's correct. That's
13 not even been done internally. Because there's a
14 funding guideline that I showed before for each region,
15 a certain amount of money that goes for each region.
16 So that's the first criteria, how many projects can be
17 funded given the amount of money for each region.
18 There is a little bit of back and forth. If there's
19 more funding available from one region and the other
20 region didn't have quite enough, that money can be
21 shifted around a little bit. So they're guidelines,
22 funding guidelines. I can go back to that.

23

24 So it's not a hard-and-fast rule, but
25 it's basically on this table on the left has kind of
26 been the guidelines for the different regions.

27

28 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Mr. Schwantes.

29

30 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chair. If I
31 understand what you're telling me, this is pretty much
32 a done deal, is that right?

33

34 MR. RIVARD: No, it's not a done deal.
35 The Technical Review Committee has and is going to have
36 a lot more information than you ever will because it's
37 sort of a contracting process. There's only a certain
38 group of people that can see everything. So you, as a
39 Council, don't get to see the full proposal, you don't
40 get to see the budgets, necessarily what's being spent
41 in the budget. You just see the total amounts, which
42 is on the table for the first year.

43

44 So what we're asking, does this make
45 sense. We've asked in the past for Councils to
46 basically endorse if they feel this is a good
47 monitoring plan for their region. You can make
48 comments, again, like I said, on individual projects,
49 what you think the relative importance is between the
50 different projects.

1 MR. SCHWANTES: But it pretty much
2 sounds to me like.....
3
4 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
5 Mitch.
6
7 MR. SCHWANTES:regardless of what
8 we say it isn't going to make any difference anyway.
9
10 MR. RIVARD: I wouldn't say that.
11 That's not true. It does make a difference.
12
13 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
14 Mitch.
15
16 MR. SIMEONOFF: What is the ranking of
17 Proposal 402 and 401 right now?
18
19 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: 402 is ranked at
20 five and 401 is ranked at six currently.
21
22 MR. SIMEONOFF: I'd like to see those
23 moved up.
24
25 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Can we go ahead
26 and have you go through each one of these projects so
27 we can get an overview of them and then we can weigh in
28 our opinions.
29
30 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair.
31
32 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Mr. Holmes.
33
34 MR. HOLMES: I don't think that's at all
35 necessary. I'd like to go back and present a little
36 bit of history on this whole program. When it first
37 started, our Council and Councils up in Bristol Bay
38 said we don't want to be lumped together. So we've got
39 over \$100,000 here on this Table 1 that will be going
40 basically to Bristol bay and we've got a tad little bit
41 here, 184 for the ecological study in 401 and 70 grand
42 for the Akalura.
43
44 Another thing that used to be in this
45 evaluation program is that there used to be civilians
46 involved and there used to be members from each Council
47 that put their two bits worth in. So this whole thing
48 is stacked against our region and I'm being provincial.
49 So only item number five and six really need to be
50 reviewed because none of these other ones have anything

1 to do with the Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Advisory
2 Council.

3

4 So I would probably be inclined, like
5 Mitch, on an emotional basis, supported by a bit of
6 logic, and say that our Council, after we review these,
7 would endorse five and six and say that all the others
8 should be disregarded because they don't meet our area.

9

10 I sure would hate to see that our
11 region doesn't receive funding because it has a lower
12 priority based on the rankings from your committee.
13 I'm sorry, that's your job to do the rankings, but the
14 point is since this whole thing has started we've been
15 lumped together and we've been fighting against Bristol
16 Bay for funding. I think our Council in the past many
17 times has expressed our displeasure at this. Myself, I
18 don't see any reason to discuss any other proposals
19 other than that 402 and 401.

20

21 Thank you, ma'am.

22

23 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
24 Mitch.

25

26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
27 Mitch.

28

29 MR. SIMEONOFF: We've got to understand
30 this is the Southwest Region and we live in this
31 region. We can choose to not pay attention to other
32 proposals except for the ones that we have, 401 and
33 402, that are in the region.

34

35 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tom.

36

37 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chair. I guess
38 if we're going to decide to rank these, how do we think
39 they ought to be funded? We certainly need to hear
40 about the project before we can make a decision.

41

42 MR. SIMEONOFF: We're going to have an
43 interesting (indiscernible), you know that. I don't
44 want them saying that we didn't do anything when we
45 should have.

46

47 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
48 more comments or can we have Mr. Rivard present on all
49 seven of the proposals or projects, excuse me.

50

1 MR. HOLMES: Well, Madame Chair, if I
2 may. I've read them and the other proposals have
3 nothing to do -- we're talking about an administrative
4 lumping together on an evaluation and they're lumping
5 together discussions of things for Togiak and Lake
6 Clark and our region has absolutely nothing to do with
7 those areas. The Kodiak/Aleutian Regional Advisory
8 Council does not relate to any of those other proposals
9 other than 402 and 401.

10
11 If folks want to do their homework,
12 then that's fine, but I'd like to hear more on those
13 and the rest to me is a waste of time. I think when we
14 get to the end of this I'd like to send a resolution or
15 a motion and I'd like folks to cogitate a little bit
16 here, that we once again ask the Technical Review
17 Committee not to lump in projects from our RAC region
18 with the Southwest, I believe that's the group up in
19 Bristol Bay, because it just doesn't relate. That laps
20 over way back to when they formed this and most of the
21 staff at that time came from that neck of the woods,
22 from Fish and Game, and went to work for Fish and
23 Wildlife Service. It's an inequitable way of
24 presenting information and making an evaluation.

25
26 Thank you, Madame Chair.

27
28 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. I'll
29 go to Rebecca.

30
31 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
32 Mitch.

33
34 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Mitch, I've
35 got comments on the table. We'll go from Rebecca to
36 Tom and then to you.

37
38 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay.

39
40 MS. SKINNER: In looking at how --
41 well, it appears these proposals were developed in
42 response to the notice of funding opportunity, which
43 identified 11 priority information needs that it sounds
44 like came from a strategic planning document because it
45 says the Southwest Region did a strategic plan and I'm
46 assuming that's where these priority information needs
47 were identified.

48
49 So I would like to hear the review of
50 the seven proposals, but I think we also need to have

1 discussion as a RAC identifying what we think our
2 priority information needs are and making sure that we
3 articulate and convey our expectation that those needs
4 should be separated somehow from -- if we want it
5 separated kind of out of the entire Southwest Region.
6

7 Because when you look through the
8 priority information needs that the announcement for
9 the funding was based on, there's hardly anything in
10 there about Kodiak. So I'm not surprised that we don't
11 have a lot of proposals that more directly relate to us
12 because the priority information needs themselves were
13 already skewed.
14

15 So, if it's appropriate or possible for
16 the RAC as a group to come up with what we think the
17 priority information needs are, it seems like that
18 would be perhaps one way of getting our voice more
19 fully into this process because it sounds like these
20 things have been articulated before and they're not
21 showing up in the materials that we're looking at
22 today.
23

24 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tom.

25 MR. SCHWANTES: I think the bottom line
26 is we're a part of that Southwest Region whether we
27 like it or not and in order for us to get any real idea
28 of how we want to support or not support these, we need
29 to hear what those other options are. I mean what
30 those other programs are and I think we need to hear
31 that. I don't think it's wise for us to just say,
32 well, we don't want to be part of that so we're going
33 to ignore them. I think we really need to hear what
34 those other projects are.
35

36 MR. SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Tom.

37 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Mitch.

38 MR. SIMEONOFF: My question is can you
39 sway the ranking of these proposals?
40

41 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: The question is
42 for Don.
43

44 MR. RIVARD: Well, what I would say
45 it's not necessarily -- the TRC has already done their
46 rankings, but you can provide comments that the Federal
47 Board is going to hear as to what you believe. If you
48
49
50

1 believe there's something very important in your
2 region, you can weigh in on that.

3

4 Madame Chair, if I may, I'd like to
5 make a comment here. About a year ago I did present to
6 your Council the whole idea of the priority information
7 needs and really encouraged your Council to come up
8 with priority information needs and I worked closely
9 with Chairman Mitch and staff, Bill Pyle and Anne Marie
10 LaRosa, working very closely with them to come up with
11 some priority information needs that did get in here.
12 The last one listed here on Page 69 was a direct
13 response to what Mitch wanted to see as well as the --
14 Mitch working with the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.
15 So we made a concerted effort to try to get this
16 Council to provide us some priority information needs
17 and this is what we came up with about a year ago or
18 so.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Mr. Holmes.

23

24 MR. HOLMES: When that request was made
25 to our Council, I stressed the continued need for
26 research in McLees Lake in Unalaska. Also continued
27 work on smolt on the Buskin River, which is the biggest
28 subsistence system in the Regional Advisory Council
29 region, which is entirely different than your technical
30 review region, which is an administrative function.
31 We're talking about two kinds of regions.

32

33 I also commented on the importance of
34 the research that has gone on for some time at Afognak
35 Lake, which is one of our other very large subsistence
36 things. So I believe your last statement, Don, was a
37 little bit incorrect. You probably have worked with
38 those folks, but I did make those comments at the last
39 meeting and every single meeting I've come to. I've
40 missed one in I don't know how many years. But there
41 is a broader spectrum and that's why this topic needs
42 to be discussed on an area that relates to a Council.

43

44 As I pointed out, and this is the last
45 comment I'll make, Bristol Bay is not part of the
46 physical region in which our Council is responsible for
47 and you folks have your decisions for there and that's
48 fine, but I don't think they should be separate from
49 what our Council addresses.

50

1 Thank you, Madame Chair and I'm sorry
2 to be a bit grumpy.
3
4 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Do we
5 have any other comments or can we go ahead and.....
6
7 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
8 Mitch.
9
10 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
11 Mitch.
12
13 MR. SIMEONOFF: (Indiscernible), but
14 what specifically are you asking for at this time?
15
16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: So at this point I
17 think the discussion was whether or not we wanted
18 to.....
19
20 MR. SIMEONOFF: (Indiscernible) have it
21 in writing on the projects in the Southwest Region,
22 which we are a part of. Are so are you looking for
23 support or what?
24
25 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I think at this
26 point we're wanting to either look at how -- if we want
27 to weigh in on these projects now or if we want to have
28 Mr. Rivard share a little bit of information about all
29 seven of the projects prior to voicing or weighing in
30 on them.
31
32 MR. SIMEONOFF: The only two we can
33 weigh in is the Akalura and Southwest Kodiak. We can
34 support the other programs if the Bristol Bay region is
35 in support of them.
36
37 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Mr.
38 Schwantes.
39
40 MR. SCHWANTES: I think we're getting a
41 little confused. As I understand it, we are in the
42 Southwest Region and all these projects are within the
43 Southwest Region, so any comments -- after we get a
44 report on these, any comments we have may or may not
45 affect whether or not the Kodiak projects will be moved
46 up higher on the list or not. Is that correct?
47
48 MR. SIMEONOFF: That's correct. I
49 think he just told me that they're already prioritized.
50 They are where they are. We can voice our concerns

1 that we need them to be higher like one or two.
2
3 MR. RIVARD: I think Mitch has captured
4 it correctly. That's what you're dealing with, yes.
5
6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tom.
7
8 MR. SCHWANTES: I guess my point is --
9 I realize these are the only two that affect our area,
10 but if we're going to recommend that these two be moved
11 higher on the list, if that's what we want to do, then
12 I don't think we can really do that without hearing
13 what those other projects are. I'm not going to sit
14 here and make a recommendation that we move ours up to
15 the top of the list without knowing what those other
16 projects are.
17
18 MR. SIMEONOFF: That's true.
19
20 MS. TRUMBLE: Madame Chair.
21
22 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Della.
23
24 MS. TRUMBLE: I'd like a discussion
25 here. I'd recommend if we can have a real fast, brief
26 overview of these and then we discuss maybe
27 prioritizing them would be recommended at this time.
28 We seem to be running in circles.
29
30 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Della.
31 I appreciate that. Can we please have a review of the
32 seven proposal and then we can go ahead and weigh in on
33 our comments.
34
35 MR. RIVARD: Yes, Madame Chair.
36
37 MR. SIMEONOFF: That comment should be
38 that we move 402 and 401 higher up in the ranking.
39 That's all we can do. The other projects are for
40 Bristol Bay and we don't know if Bristol Bay has
41 supported or okayed these projects.
42
43 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Don.
44
45 MR. SIMEONOFF: Our comment can be that
46 we'd like to see them higher on the ranking.
47
48 MR. RIVARD: Madame Chair. The Bristol
49 Bay Regional Advisory Council has not yet met. They're
50 meeting, I believe, in mid-October, so they haven't

1 weighed in on these yet.

2

3 MR. SIMEONOFF: So we can't weigh in on
4 -- we can, but it would be pending the outcome of their
5 meeting. So we have one and two and that needs to be
6 higher on the list.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I think Della had
9 made a recommendation to hear the other seven projects.
10 Can we go ahead with that.

11

12 MR. RIVARD: Yes, Madame Chair. We can
13 start on -- Page 72 is kind of general descriptions of
14 these projects. The number one ranked project is
15 Project 16-451, which is a description and analysis of
16 the subsistence salmon network in Bristol Bay. This
17 project proposes to document subsistence salmon
18 harvests in five communities and examine the sharing
19 patterns that exist among harvesters and their families
20 in neighboring communities. The goal of the proposed
21 research is to provide data on how the social network
22 functions in the allocation and management of
23 subsistence resources and how it could be used by
24 Federal subsistence managers.

25

26 The justification is the proposed study
27 addresses a priority information need for Southwest
28 Alaska and would address a number of cultural practices
29 such as harvest, processing, sharing, and barter. The
30 proposed study builds on previous research and could
31 have important implications for the Alaska Peninsula
32 and the entire Bristol Bay Region. The objectives are
33 clearly written, measurable, and achievable and the
34 investigators have substantial resources, skills, and
35 access to staff and facilities for completing the
36 proposed study.

37

38 So that's the number one rated project.
39 Number two is -- again, it's not in your book. This is
40 Project 16-452.....

41

42

43 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Excuse me, Don.
44 Could we maybe open up for a question after each
45 project so we can have a little more clarification?

46

47 MR. RIVARD: Sure.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.
50 Rebecca has a question on project ranked one.

1 MS. SKINNER: So with the goal -- in
2 the paperwork we have it says that documenting sharing
3 networks would provide insight into how, when and why
4 salmon are distributed in the region and beyond and
5 this would help in the development of comprehensive
6 management plans for salmon. Can you talk a little bit
7 about how understanding those sharing networks plays
8 into the management plans for salmon?

9
10 MR. RIVARD: I may need some help from
11 Palma. I'm not an anthropologist. I'm a fish
12 biologist, so this is kind of beyond my understanding,
13 some of this stuff, frankly.

14
15 MS. INGLES: Good afternoon, Madame
16 Chair and committee. For the record, my name is Palma
17 Ingles and I'm an anthropologist with OSM. My
18 understanding of what they're trying to achieve with
19 this project is to look at sharing networks so that
20 when we do -- I know that Fish and Game has done quite
21 a few communities where they go and talk to communities
22 to find out if they've met their subsistence needs.

23
24 What they're proposing to look at in
25 this project, we recognize that if we say, for example,
26 okay, we've harvested 400 pounds of fish, maybe my
27 particular family only needs 300 pounds, but that extra
28 100 pounds might be going to relatives that are in
29 another community and, therefore, not captured. So if
30 we were strictly looking at the numbers only, we might
31 say all you need is to get 300 pounds of fish, for
32 example, why are you requesting that you have access to
33 400 pounds.

34
35 So they want to be able to document the
36 sharing networks within these communities because they
37 do recognize that people share fish. There's relatives
38 that are elderly, there's people within the communities
39 that they're trying to cover, so that's why it's
40 important because otherwise we don't -- if we only look
41 at the numbers what's needed per family for pounds of,
42 in this case, fish, then we're losing some of the
43 amount that people may hope to catch.

44
45 Does that answer your question?

46
47 MS. SKINNER: It does not. What I'm
48 trying to figure out is how that information feeds into
49 the management system. So is it going to change
50 allocations, is it going to bump up, you know,

1 subsistence harvest levels that are available. I'm not
2 getting that out of the proposal.

3

4 MS. INGLES: The way it could be used
5 within fishing management is to look at it's one more
6 resource. How many fish do we need per family because
7 we do recognize that all the fish is not used within
8 that particular household only where they capture the
9 fish. Does that help answer your question?

10

11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tom.

12

13 MR. SCHWANTES: I guess I don't see
14 that there's a resource concern, in other words a
15 shortage of resource, to provide for the subsistence
16 users.

17

18 MS. INGLES: Through the Chair. Tom, I
19 do not know whether there is a resource concern. I'm
20 not sure that they're trying to capture that. I think
21 they're just trying to give us more information to use
22 along with the numbers of fish needed or the numbers of
23 fish that would be available, that this is one more way
24 to look at allocation and how much might potentially be
25 needed.

26

27 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Do we
28 have anymore questions on project ranked one for
29 Bristol Bay subsistence salmon network?

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Going to project
34 two.

35

36 MS. SKINNER: There's a question.

37

38 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Oh, a question.
39 I'm sorry. I didn't see you down there, Mr. Holmes.

40

41 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. I think
42 that even though this isn't in our neck of the woods,
43 I've helped out many times with the State subsistence
44 folks and Federal ones. This is really important
45 information. I think this probably gets down to the
46 key thing about what the Regional Councils are all
47 about because what it does is it helps local folks
48 document, hey, here's what we use, what we use, this is what we
49 need, it gives you a better feeling for how the
50 integration of culture works and the sharing of

1 resources.

2

3

4 In many places in the state, even in
5 our neck of the woods, Fish and Game has no ability to
6 go out -- in fact they gave up having subsistence
7 reports from outside the road system here just because
8 it's too difficult a burden for folks living in a
9 remote area to turn in a little chit saying I took
10 5,000 humpies, 3,000 reds and 1,000 silvers. It's much
11 easier on a regular, progressive basis to go into those
12 communities and talk to them in a non-threatening, non-
13 government way to just see what do they need, are you
14 getting what you need.

14

15

16 So up there particularly in Bristol Bay
17 I see this as going to be some important information.
18 The areas of Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, Egegik,
19 Perryville, Port Heiden, those are seldom covered. If
20 they have been, it's been many years. Even though this
21 isn't in our Council's turf, I would say that this is a
22 really important piece of work. Maybe even in terms of
23 putting aside my provinciality, I can see why it would
24 be rated one.

24

25

Thank you, Madame Chair.

26

27

MADAME CHAIR BERNIS: Okay. Go on to
28 number two.

29

30

31 MR. RIVARD: Okay. Project 16-453 is
32 on the other side of that one page of the Table 1, so
33 there is a little description of this for you to read
34 as well. Project 16-453 was rated two out of seven by
35 the Technical Review Committee. The project title is
36 Subsistence Harvest Assessment and Biological Sampling
37 of Chinook Salmon in the Togiak River Drainage.

37

38

39 This four-year project proposes to
40 assess the subsistence harvest of Togiak River chinook
41 salmon by the communities of Togiak and Twin Hills
42 through two years of in-season observations, interviews
43 and the administration of a post-season harvest survey.
44 Additionally, investigators will conduct stock
45 assessment of the Togiak River chinook salmon through
46 harvest samples for ichthyophonus and age, sex and
47 length analysis. With this two-prong approach,
48 researchers will attempt to address concerns regarding
49 the health and abundance of Togiak River chinook salmon
50 and a declining local subsistence harvest.

50

1 The principal investigator and the
2 Alaska Department of Fish and Game specifically have a
3 long history with the monitoring program and have
4 successfully completed numerous monitoring programs,
5 stock status and trend and harvest monitoring and
6 traditional ecological knowledge projects. Both
7 co-investigator Courtenay Carty and the Bristol Bay
8 Native Association have a demonstrated track record of
9 successfully assisting with and partnering on
10 monitoring program projects and similar projects funded
11 by other sources.

12
13 The justification for this project is
14 that this project proposes to assess the subsistence
15 harvest of and biologically sample the chinook salmon
16 of the Togiak River watershed for the 2016 and 2017
17 harvest seasons. The project moderately addresses one
18 of the priority information needs of the 2016 notice of
19 funding availability as it primarily addresses harvest
20 escapement rather than escapement. It must be harvest
21 assessment rather than escapement.

22
23 However, investigators have
24 demonstrated that the issue addressed is a critical one
25 for local communities and organizations. The research
26 objectives are sound and the methods are standard for
27 such work and the project uses both stock status trends
28 and harvest monitoring, traditional ecological
29 knowledge methodologies to meet it's objectives.

30
31 The proposal would be strengthened by a
32 more detailed description of staff responsibilities and
33 duties. While not required there is a significant
34 match in funding in existing resources that improves
35 the cost benefit of this project. Partnership and
36 capacity building are strong. The co-investigator is a
37 regional Alaska Native organization and both agencies
38 have established communications with the research
39 committees. Local research assistants and student
40 interns will be employed by this project.

41
42 Madame Chair.

43
44 MADAME CHAIR BERNIS: Thank you. Do you
45 have any questions for project number 16-453.

46
47 Mr. Holmes.

48
49 MS. TRUMBLE: Madame Chair, this
50 is.....

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead.
2
3 MS. TRUMBLE: (Indiscernible) handout.
4 I may need to call in because I hear an echo. Is the
5 16-453 moved up to two, is that what I'm to understand?
6
7 MR. RIVARD: That is correct.
8
9 MS. TRUMBLE: At the time of this page
10 71 it says that the TRC had not reviewed it to date and
11 it hasn't been rated. I'm assuming that apparently
12 they have rated it.
13
14 MR. RIVARD: Through the Chair. Yes,
15 Della. What happened was that this project did not get
16 reviewed by the Technical Review Committee during their
17 June meeting. It kind of got lost in the shuffle and
18 we found it after the TRC met. So we had the TRC look
19 at this project and basically did an email poll and
20 then they rated this project and it came out as number
21 two on the list.
22
23 MS. TRUMBLE: Okay. I just wanted
24 clarification. Thank you.
25
26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Della, we did get
27 an updated handout that was included with our meeting
28 packet here onsite and we can get that updated
29 information to you or it's on its way to you. Do we
30 have any other questions in regards to this project.
31 Mr. Holmes.
32
33 MR. HOLMES: Yes, Madame Chair. Don
34 and, I'm sorry, I forgot the lovely young lady's name.
35
36 MS. INGLES: Palma.
37
38 MR. HOLMES: Paula. I can see why that
39 would get jumped up in its evaluation once it was
40 looked at. Particularly when you think about
41 ichthyophonous, it's a really nasty little parasite that
42 goes from a copepod to herring to king salmon and I
43 remember several years back one of my colleagues was
44 telling me about problems they were having on the Yukon
45 and that more than half the fish people put up
46 basically fell off the racks because this parasite
47 causes an amino acid change in the tissue and it just
48 turns to mush.
49
50 I can see the need to be doing more

1 information on what has happened there because once
2 Anchorage airport I met an old-timer from there and he
3 commented -- Mr. Kron would be interested in this one.
4 He commented that whenever they have a whopping big
5 year in the Bristol Bay reds that their chums and kings
6 dropped off, although timing is spread out and things,
7 but his feelings were that there's cause and effect.
8 Not that you can do much about it. But, you know,
9 Togiak is an area that -- and Togiak kings is where not
10 a lot of information, so I can see importance of that.

11

12 Anyway, thank you, Madame Chair.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Can we go on to
17 project number three.

18

19 MR. RIVARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
20 Don Rivard again. The TRC ranking of 16-452 is three
21 out of seven. You can find this on Page 73. The title
22 is Western Gulf of Alaska Salmon and Other Harvests on
23 Federal Lands and Waters.

24

25 This three-year project spans four
26 calendar years and proposes to document and analyze the
27 subsistence and sport harvest of salmon and the
28 subsistence harvest of all other species for the
29 communities of Cold Bay, King Cove and Sand Point on
30 the Alaska Peninsula.

31

32 This proposal was submitted two years
33 ago for the 2014 Monitoring Program Notice of Funding
34 Opportunity and was not
35 recommended for funding due in large part to a lack of
36 strategic priority for that year. The principal
37 investigator was encouraged to address the reviewer
38 comments and reapply. Since 2014 the strategic
39 priority was strengthened and many of the reviewer
40 comments were addressed. The 2016 investigation plan
41 and research questions have remained the same while the
42 objectives differ only slightly from the 2014 proposal.
43 Other differences include a decrease in project
44 personnel and a significant decrease in project cost.

45

46 I'd just remind everybody that I've
47 left the five criteria up on the board. These are
48 again what the reviewers are looking at when they
49 review all of these projects, so cost does weigh in.

50

1 The justification. The proposal is
2 strong in scope and moves beyond the immediate need for
3 subsistence salmon harvest data as stated in the 2016
4 call to recognize the utility of a current and
5 comprehensive baseline subsistence survey in the three
6 study communities.

7

8 Thank you, Madame Chair.

9

10 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any questions or
11 comments on project 16-452. Mr. Holmes, I see your
12 light on. Do you have a comment or question?

13

14 MR. HOLMES: Yeah, I'd like to stand up
15 and apologize to everybody as being dumb. Once again I
16 got lost in my notes and in my arguments on 402 and 401
17 I forgot that I had in my homework looked at 452 and
18 remembered the discussions we had on that, how
19 important it is to our friends out on the peninsula in
20 Cold Bay and King Cove and Sand Point. It looks like
21 the major author on this has done some revision and
22 again, just like the first one we talked about for the
23 Bristol Bay 451, those are areas that are very seldom
24 surveyed and have really felt the brunt of a changing
25 environment from the loss of sea lions and seals,
26 changes in salmon abundance, changes in caribou.

27

28 Their subsistence program has gone all
29 to heck and they're back to having traditional Spam and
30 Pilot Bread because most of the things that they had
31 gone after are difficult. They don't have any strong
32 sockeye systems out there for salmon. There's a
33 moderate one in Cold Bay area, but most of the time
34 they get it from the commercial fishery. Depending on
35 how their families are doing, that can be -- and the
36 runs, a sticky wicket.

37

38 So, in my mind, when we do come back to
39 talking about things within the Kodiak/Aleutians
40 Regional Advisory Council, our turf, that one is going
41 to be up pretty high on my list of priorities for the
42 KARAC.

43

44 So I do apologize for being a
45 curmudgeon. I would ask Coral if I get out of line to
46 grab my beard and bang my head on the table so I don't
47 get too far out of line. So please excuse me and
48 that's a real important one. Sorry to be a grump, Don.

49

50 MS. TRUMBLE: Madame Chair, this is

1 Della.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Della.

4

5 MS. TRUMBLE: Thank you, Pat. I was
6 sitting back listening to the discussion about Kodiak
7 versus Bristol Bay and then I thought, okay, there's
8 something here we're all missing. At one point in time
9 we basically have stated that we are actually three
10 regions, but we get lumped into this whether we like it
11 or not. I recall this particular proposal being one
12 that Kate Mossy had been working with and asking us to
13 support I think a couple years ago, but that's where
14 we're at I think here today because there was some
15 revisions asked of her in submitting this proposal. So
16 that's why I just wanted that brought to the table.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. One more
21 thing that I recollect from talking with Jim Fall at
22 the State subsistence and then I did talk to some of
23 the people involve in this, is that this lady is also
24 going to be working with the young folks in these
25 communities so that they can establish a procedure
26 where the schools can help participate in doing this
27 research. So having met a young lady that's a niece of
28 one of my -- well, several of the Macks that I know out
29 there, who is now working on her Ph.D.

30

31 I can see this being a really wonderful
32 type of program that could be used throughout the state
33 where you can get your local communities, the schools,
34 the kids involved in doing this kind of research and
35 then that helps support the community, it helps give
36 encouragement to these young folks to go on to further
37 training, be it anthropology or fisheries science or
38 fisheries management. To me, that's like the number
39 one for discussion for KARAC is this proposal and I
40 think it will be really swell in a much broader context
41 than just what's presented.

42

43 Thank you, Madame Chair.

44

45 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Do we
46 have any other questions or comments in regards to this
47 project.

48

49 (No comments)

50

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Hearing none, we
2 move on to five, right?

3

4 MR. RIVARD: Four.

5

6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I'm sorry. Four,
7 404.

8

9 MR. RIVARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
10 This proposal, there's a description of it on Page 74.
11 Project number 16-404 was ranked as number four out of
12 seven by the Technical Review Committee. The project
13 title is Pre-historical Salmon Abundance in the Lake
14 Clark System.

15

16 This proposal requests funds for two
17 years to, quote, estimate pre-historical sockeye salmon
18 abundance in the Lake Clark system. This project will
19 address that data gap by reconstructing sockeye salmon
20 abundance during the past 500 years or so in key
21 locations within the Lake Clark system using lake
22 sediment cores, unquote. The TRC stated that the
23 proposed project title and references thereafter may be
24 more reflective of the project if the term historical
25 were used in place of pre-historical.

26

27 Regardless, the resulting data will
28 facilitate
29 sustainable management by defining the natural
30 variability of sockeye salmon in the system, placing
31 recent fluctuations of abundance into a long-term
32 historical context. Similar studies were funded by the
33 National Park Service in 2003 to fill this data gap
34 using sediment cores and isotope analysis. At the
35 time,
36 the technology was new and pre-historical abundance
37 information was not completed as part of the 2003
38 study. Since then the methods have been refined.

39

40 The justification. The proposed study
41 requests funds for two years. This project will
42 address the data gap. Nutrients from historical salmon
43 runs are deposited onto lake bottoms
44 throughout natal lakes each year within the proposed
45 study area. The size of the salmon runs depositing the
46 nutrients can be quantified by the amount of annual
47 nutrient deposition.

48

49 This project has a direct linkage to
50 Federal lands within and around the Lake Clark National

1 Park and Preserve. Subsistence fisheries, including
2 those harvesting salmon are essential to the diet,
3 economy, and culture of local communities in the
4 Bristol Bay region of Alaska. This study proposal
5 directly addresses one of the priority information
6 needs identified in the 2016 call for proposals. The
7 proposed study has wide geographic implications because
8 Sockeye Salmon returning to the Lake Clark system
9 support subsistence fisheries throughout the Bristol
10 Bay Region.

11

Thank you, Madame Chair.

12

13
14 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do you have any
15 questions, comments.

16

17 Rebecca.

18

19 MS. SKINNER: This might be more of a
20 comment. In looking at these proposals I don't
21 understand how a proposal to analyze historical or
22 prehistorical sediment from a system that has never
23 been restricted by any means, not even during the worst
24 salmon return years, so we're not talking about any
25 sort of resource limitations. How that ranked higher
26 than either of the two Kodiak projects that deal with
27 current conditions and current conditions of the
28 fisheries that are relied upon by subsistence users.
29 So I don't know if you can respond to that and, if not,
30 then just leave it as a comment.

31

32 MR. RIVARD: I can't respond to it. I
33 mean they ranked them the way they did, so it is what
34 it is. I have noted your comment.

35

36 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Coral.

37

38 MS. CHERNOFF: Yeah, I just wanted to
39 say that -- I mean that was the beginning of my
40 comment. I was also reading here and wondering the
41 same thing, how this ranked so high when it also says
42 it's never been restricted and the proposal appears to
43 be mostly research-based and is not of the highest
44 priority to managing subsistence fisheries. Any
45 resulting management would likely have greater
46 implications to commercial fisheries management.

47

48 Yeah, and I guess that was kind of my
49 comment too, is that there doesn't seem to be an issue
50 with restriction and they also say that it's not

1 significant to any subsistence management and I know we
2 have some -- I was wondering how it ranks higher than
3 the Kodiak research ones which address lack of fish in
4 specific areas and finding out how that can be
5 rectified.

6

7 Thank you.

8

9 MR. RIVARD: I've noted that and I
10 think those are very valid comments that the Board
11 should hear. Thank you.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Are
14 there any other questions or comments in regards to
15 this project.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Hearing none.
20 We'll move on to Project 402, which is ranked number
21 five.

22

23 MR. RIVARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
24 This project is at the bottom of Page 75 in your book.
25 This is Project 16-402. It's ranked five out of seven
26 by the Technical Review Committee. The project title
27 is utilization of a time lapse camera system to monitor
28 timing and abundance of the sockeye salmon return to
29 Akalura Lake, Kodiak Island, Alaska.

30

31 This project seeks four years of
32 funding to operate a remote time lapse camera system to
33 estimate sockeye salmon returning to the Akalura Lake
34 system in Southwest Kodiak Island. The proposed project
35 site would be located near the outlet of Akalura Lake
36 within the Akalura River. Sockeye salmon returning to
37 Akalura Lake system have been intermittently monitored
38 by several entities over the last century since 1923
39 using varying techniques. Currently, there are no
40 escapement goals associated with sockeye salmon
41 returning to the Akalura Lake system.

42

43 The justification for the ranking is
44 that this proposal marginally addresses one of the
45 priority information needs identified in the 2016
46 Fishery Resource Monitoring Program priority
47 information needs for the Southwest Region. The
48 project is inexpensive because the principal
49 investigator is supplying all the equipment and field
50 time is minimal due to the type of proposed camera

1 system.

2

3

4 The investigator should have the
5 resources available from the Kodiak National Wildlife
6 Refuge to complete the proposed study; however, he did
7 not identify those resources. Although this study
8 would provide an estimate/index of sockeye salmon
9 abundance in the Akalura river/lake system, it remains
10 unclear as to how the information would be utilized to
11 manage subsistence fisheries. Currently, there are no
12 escapement goals identified for the system and the
13 proposed study likely has localized implications and
14 would assist commercial fisheries management more than
15 subsistence management.

15

16

Thank you, Madame Chair.

17

18

MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Open up the floor
19 for questions or comments in regards to this project.
20 Go ahead, Rebecca.

21

22

MS. SKINNER: I guess a comment I'd
23 like reflected in the record in relation to the point
24 that it's not clear how this project will contribute to
25 the management of the resource. When I asked how --
26 for subsistence users how looking at distribution
27 networks would contribute to the management of the
28 resource, that question was not able to be answered.
29 So it seems to me that project also did not clearly
30 explain how it related to the management of the
31 resource. I think the more we hear about these, the
32 more I think I'm starting to share the frustration from
33 the other end of the table that it seems like Kodiak
34 definitely got the short end of the stick with this
35 process.

36

37

Thank you.

38

39

MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
40 Mitch.

41

42

MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
43 Mitch.

44

45

MR. SIMEONOFF: Akalura and the Olga
46 Lakes up in Olga Bay and there's a lot of commercial
47 fishing out there, setnetting, but it's in an area
48 where we can go whether you're commercial fishing or
49 not because it's away from the commercial fishing area
50 and it's highly used by the subsistence users of

1 Akhiok. This is a system that has been declining for
2 years and this needs projects. They deal with a
3 shortage of a resource. Most of the projects so far
4 have dealt with a shortage or abundance of a resource.
5 These two projects deal with a shortage and directly
6 affecting the subsistence users of the area.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mitch.
11 Do we have additional comments or questions. I think I
12 saw a light going on down here.

13

14 Mr. Holmes.

15

16 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. James
17 Jackson is here and I was wondering, James, if you had
18 a thought. This is really important for folks in
19 Akhiok. The good thing about it is it's inside the --
20 correct me if I'm wrong when you come up, but I believe
21 it's up in closed waters so they don't have to directly
22 compete with the commercial fisherman, but would there
23 be any way in season for such a small place to be able
24 to boost what's going in or would this more or less be
25 something just to give you a notion of what's available
26 for the subsistence folks down there? I hate to put
27 you on the spot, but I just don't know how you can
28 handle it.

29

30 MR. JACKSON: Through the Chair, Mr.
31 Holmes. Just so everybody knows my name is James
32 Jackson. I'm the area management biologist for salmon
33 in commercial and subsistence fisheries in Kodiak.

34

35 Just to be clear, you were just
36 wondering what the benefit of actually counting fish at
37 a sockeye system that's got a lot of subsistence use,
38 what that would be? That's very obvious. Just
39 actually knowing what the fish are, how many fish we
40 have there. We don't even count fish at Akalura
41 anymore. We don't even do an aerial survey down there
42 because we have such limited funds.

43

44 Mitch spoke correctly that Akalura is
45 up in Olga Bay, which -- there's really not a map
46 around here, but it's well into the closed water area,
47 so it's away from the commercial fishery. It's an area
48 where the fish can build up substantially or used to be
49 able to so the subsistence fishermen could go up there
50 and catch fish and go back to Akhiok. Yeah, the

1 utility of having numbers is just having numbers.

2

3 MR. HOLMES: Thank you, James.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
6 other questions or comments. Yes, go ahead.

7

8 MR. JACKSON: I was going to say one
9 more thing. We have a lot of subsistence areas or
10 systems in Kodiak that don't have escapement goals on
11 them. Just so people know.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We'll go from
14 Rebecca to Coral. Don't move.

15

16 MS. SKINNER: And I think you addressed
17 one of my questions, which is just because -- and I
18 don't know if you read the proposal, but it specifies
19 that there's no escapement numbers. As I was reading
20 it, the implication seems to be, well, this system
21 isn't important because there's no escapement numbers,
22 but could you clarify that those are two separate
23 thoughts and just because there's no escapement goal
24 does not mean it's not important?

25

26 MR. JACKSON: Through the Chair, Ms.
27 Skinner. Just because
28 a system doesn't have an escapement goal doesn't mean
29 it's not important. Oftentimes you don't have an
30 escapement goal in an area. It's just because it's not
31 being monitored. Escapement goals hold a degree of
32 regulatory authority that they used to not have, so a
33 lot of areas that we can't cover or monitor as much we
34 basically just get rid of the escapement goal. It
35 doesn't mean we don't monitor or try to monitor that
36 and it doesn't mean we don't have a set amount of fish
37 that we think should be in there.

38

39 MS. SKINNER: And then I just wanted
40 to clarify your last comment about the benefit of
41 numbers is just having numbers. What you mean by that
42 is having numbers is important or it is valuable.

43

44 MR. JACKSON: Through the Chair, Ms.
45 Skinner. Yeah, I mean having any escapement number and
46 having that consistent over a long timeframe is very
47 important for being able to establish whether a run is
48 doing good or poorly.

49

50 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. We'll

1 have Coral and move on to Tom.

2

3 MS. CHERNOFF: So in here it addresses
4 that there's a question about how fish species would be
5 differentiated from one another with cameras, which is
6 kind of funny to me. If anyone fishes, we all have a
7 fairly easy time of differentiating our fish. But can
8 you address how many salmon species maybe go up into
9 this area.

10

11 MR. JACKSON: Through the Chair, Ms.
12 Chernoff. Akalura has, I think -- I'm pretty sure
13 about this. It's got sockeye, steelhead, pink salmon.
14 It's got a lagoon, so I'm sure it has chum salmon. I
15 haven't really seen. You'd probably want to ask Mitch.
16 He'd probably know more than I would. It definitely
17 has Dolly Varden and it also has trout. The camera
18 system, I believe, was going to be set near the lake
19 outlet, so early on you're probably just going to be
20 counting outmigrating steelhead and sockeye going up
21 into the lake. In a year like say this year where we
22 had a tremendous pink run, you'll probably get a lot of
23 pink salmon up towards the lake outlet. Later in the
24 season, right now, you'd probably get a lot of late run
25 sockeye as well as silver salmon and steelhead
26 returning again.

27

28 MS. CHERNOFF: I made the comment I
29 guess just thinking about myself, about identifying
30 those salmon. Do the people who monitor fish at weirs
31 and areas like that, if you see them on a camera, do
32 they have difficulty in differentiating what they're
33 seeing, one species from another?

34

35 MR. JACKSON: No. It's fairly simple
36 with a little bit of training. I have to say we do it
37 with weirs on Kodiak, so we are a little closer and
38 we're looking straight down at the fish and it might be
39 a little easier than a camera system, but you should be
40 able to do it with a camera system as well and they've
41 done it successfully in the past.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.

44

45 Mr. Schwantes.

46

47 MR. SCHWANTES: Mr. Jackson, through
48 the Chair. Being the local biologist, can you tell us
49 how important this area is for a subsistence fishery
50 for the village of Akhiok.

1 MR. SIMEONOFF: Very important. This
2 is Mitch. It is a very important system.

3
4 MR. JACKSON: Through the Chair, Mr.
5 Schwantes. Mitch said everything there. It's
6 important for the local community down there. It was
7 at one time a major sockeye system and it has been in a
8 significant decline for a long time.

9
10 MR. SCHWANTES: Thank you.

11
12 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I would just like
13 to comment on that as well. I also commercial salmon
14 fished for 17 years and that system is equally as
15 important to the neighboring villages on the island.
16 We herring fished back in the day when herring was good
17 and we would also get our subsistence salmon fish there
18 at the end of our herring fishery to take back home.
19 Also there's members of the Akhiok community that do
20 share with their family members elsewhere. I've had
21 the privilege of getting a lot of my subsistence fish
22 from Akhiok and in recent years have switched over from
23 getting my reds from that area and now getting them
24 from Port Lions since we don't have such a strong run.
25 So it does affect other communities on this island.

26
27 Do we have any other comments in
28 regards to Project Number 401.

29
30 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair.

31
32 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead.

33
34 MR. HOLMES: I'd just like to point out
35 for the Council that in the early '80s this area was
36 identified, along with many other minor systems that
37 were important for subsistence around the island and
38 the Archipelago, and our region had gotten a
39 reallocation with Fish and Game of almost \$450,000 and
40 a very large portion of that went to looking at minor
41 systems. I had a young fellow that worked on that weir
42 and helped on two other weirs down at the lower end.
43 In recent chats with James and the folks, all that
44 money is basically gone.

45
46 I would urge people in talking to their
47 legislators that folks in the railbelt have the wrong
48 idea about what Fish and Game management accomplishes
49 for the state because this is a token small amount of
50 money that I think would mean a big difference to the

1 villages on our island. It was a project from long ago
2 that's gone. There might be some way through KRA
3 working with the other agencies to find a way to maybe
4 boost that up a bit. Anyway, I'd rank that number two
5 for the KARAC area and for Kodiak probably at the top.
6 Things change and the politics of money for resource
7 monitoring is getting much much tougher.

8

9 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
10 other comments. That was 402.

11

(No comments)

12

13 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Move along to 401.

14

15

16 MR. RIVARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
17 Don Rivard again. This project can be found at the
18 bottom of Page 76. This is 16-401. It was ranked as
19 six out of seven by the Technical Review Committee.
20 It's called Southwest Kodiak Ecological Assessment.

21

22 This proposal seeks four years of
23 funding to conduct a comparative evaluation of lake
24 rearing sockeye salmon habitats from Akalura, Olga,
25 Red, and Horse Marine lakes in Southwest
26 Kodiak Island region. This project will obtain smolt
27 condition and lake habitat quality data over time for
28 Akalura and Upper Olga lakes and compare them to
29 similar systems, such as ed and Horse Marine lakes,
30 that are in close proximity but have had relatively
31 stable sockeye salmon production. Smolt condition and
32 age data, when coupled with limnological data, provide
33 the information for identifying critical linkages in
34 sockeye salmon life histories when they are most
35 susceptible to mortality as juveniles.

36

37

38 The TRC acknowledged that this
39 addresses one of the Southwest Regional priority
40 information needs identified in the 2016 Notice of
41 Funding Availability. It's the last one on Page 69.
42 Information collected from this project would be
43 applied to management of sockeye salmon returning to
44 Southwest Kodiak Island lake systems located in Olga
45 Bay. The proposed project is technically sound and the
46 objectives, with minor modifications, are clear,
47 measurable and achievable. All investigators appear to
48 have the knowledge and resources available to
49 accomplish the proposed objectives. The proposed cost
50 of the project is reasonable and justified averaging a
little over \$91,000 a year.

1 With regards to subsistence management
2 of fishery resources, the investigation plan does not
3 clearly address or indicate how the proposed study
4 would affect management of subsistence resources within
5 the region. The investigation plan also does not
6 identify any immediate or urgent subsistence concerns
7 within
8 the region. It remains unclear but appears as if the
9 proposed study would have greater implications to
10 commercial fisheries management rather than federal
11 subsistence fisheries because project results could be
12 a prescription for lake fertilization and potentially
13 future enhancement.

14
15 The investigation plan indicates that
16 sockeye salmon stock would be managed for optimal
17 sustained yield. Currently, there are no escapement
18 goals associated with Akalura Lake but biological and
19 optimal escapement goals do exist for other nearby
20 systems including Olga Lake system.

21
22 Thank you, Madame Chair.

23
24 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Questions and
25 comments. Rebecca.

26
27 MS. SKINNER: So my comment that I
28 would like reflected in the record is, first of all, a
29 reference back to the discussion we had on a previous
30 proposal and the importance of the Akalura and Olga
31 Lake systems for subsistence use. The write-up of the
32 proposal seems to indicate that importance to
33 subsistence users was not made clear in the proposal.
34 I think this Council can help that out and I think we
35 have helped it out by making it clear that those
36 systems are important to subsistence users.

37
38 I would also point out that reading
39 through the justification this -- I mean it looks like
40 this project did a really good job of meeting the
41 review points of the Technical Committee, so it
42 directly addressed a priority need, it's applied to
43 management, it's technically sound, it had clear,
44 measurable and achievable objectives. It really looked
45 like -- the missing piece that was identified in the
46 write-up was there's not immediate or urgent
47 subsistence concern and it's not clear that this
48 project would benefit subsistence users.

49
50 I guess I would look for further

1 comment from the Council, but I think that there is an
2 immediate subsistence concern and that there is a huge
3 benefit to subsistence users. So this project, I
4 think, should absolutely be moved up. Well, realizing
5 that we're probably unable to actually move the
6 rankings up, but that would be my comment.

7

8 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
9 Mitch.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yeah, go ahead,
12 Mitch.

13

14 MR. SIMEONOFF: If there were numbers
15 on this proposal you would see that Olga Lake systems
16 went from 150,000 escapement and it's down to 25,000.
17 It is an important system to subsistence users. The
18 reason I say that is that requires to go like 20, 30
19 miles away from the village for subsistence fishing.
20 Upper Station, that's Olga Lakes, Upper Station. If
21 Upper Station continues to decline, there is no other
22 system that we can go to that is 20 miles away. The
23 number has gone down from 150,000 escapement to what it
24 is now, 25,000. That's a drastic decline. It's still
25 important. It's always going to be an important system
26 for this village. I can't stress enough how important
27 it is for a shortage of the resource.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mitch.

32

33 Mr. Schwantes.

34

35 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chairman. I
36 have to concur with Mitch. Out of all these proposals
37 that we've looked at these last two that we've talked
38 about are the only ones that have actually indicated a
39 shortage of resource for subsistence users. So
40 certainly, therefore, I would recommend that we make
41 suggestions to move those up the list. Whether it will
42 do any good or not remains to be seen, but at least
43 these last two that we've talked about have definitely
44 had a subsistence use shortage that's being discussed.

45

46 Thank you.

47

48 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.

49

50 Mr. Holmes.

1 MR. HOLMES: Thank you, Madame Chair.
2 Through the Chair. I've been reflecting on this since
3 I read it a few weeks ago and reading it again. I was
4 a little confused before, but James helped correct me
5 on something. Akalura, Olga and Horse Marine are not
6 what you'd call a big, rip-snorting commercial
7 fisheries. They're pretty much incidental.

8
9 We might suggest that perhaps -- I
10 wonder, Don, if this might sell better to your
11 committee for funding, would be to go back to the -- I
12 was looking back in the supplements here, but I don't
13 see who's the project leader. I might have missed
14 that. But maybe go back and just address the ones that
15 relate to subsistence because, frankly, I don't see
16 them ever going down and fertilizing Akalura Lake.
17 It's just a great big green pond. Maybe just focus on
18 the subsistence ones themselves. To me, the really
19 significant commercial fishery is Red Lake/Akalura. I
20 mean some years that's a real productive area, but I
21 don't know that much subsistence really is directly
22 connected to that one other than people taking fish out
23 of there commercial openings because it's a big exposed
24 beach.

25
26 If that would help improve the ranking,
27 it would be nice if your committee could take a look at
28 that and talk to the authors of the proposal because I
29 really think getting some of that just basic
30 information on those little bitty lakes, if there's
31 some way it might be able to get a few more fish in
32 there for subsistence use, why not.

33
34 MR. RIVARD: Madame Chair. This is
35 somewhat unusual, but we do have the principal
36 investigator who submitted this proposal, Heather
37 Finkle, right behind me. So if you have any questions
38 for her, you've got an opportunity to ask.

39
40 MR. SIMEONOFF: I've got one question.
41 This is Mitch.

42
43 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
44 Mitch.

45
46 MR. SIMEONOFF: Regardless of the
47 ratings, are these projects going to happen this year?
48

49 MR. RIVARD: Mitch, through the Chair.
50 These projects are slated to start in 2016 if they get

1 approved.

2

3 MR. SIMEONOFF: 2016, okay. And
4 approval will come from where?

5

6 MR. RIVARD: It's a combination of the
7 Federal Subsistence Board and the ultimate decision is
8 made by our associate director for subsistence of the
9 Office of Subsistence Management.

10

11 MR. SIMEONOFF: So our comments on all
12 of these projects is essential.

13

14 MR. RIVARD: Yes, that's correct.
15 You'll have a chance or whoever represents your Council
16 at the Federal Subsistence Board, I believe it will be
17 in January, to relay your comments again.

18

19 MR. SIMEONOFF: Yes.

20

21 MR. RIVARD: So it's important that we
22 capture them now and we can summarize them and then
23 have them for you available when you talk to the Board
24 in January.

25

26 Thank you.

27

28 MR. SIMEONOFF: Yes, okay. I would
29 stress then that we kind of focus on trying to get
30 these two proposals higher on the rating list.

31

32 MR. RIVARD: Madame Chair. In order
33 for Heather to speak, you probably need to ask a
34 specific question.

35

36 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Pat, did you have
37 a specific question for Heather?

38

39 MR. HOLMES: My question was relating
40 around the objection that was raised by the Technical
41 Review Committee. It says project results could be a
42 prescription for lake fertilization and potentially
43 future enhancement. I know that OSM doesn't
44 necessarily do enhancement. I wish they would. But my
45 thought was if the big thing is the implications of
46 enhancement for potential effects for a commercial
47 fishery, I was wondering if, you know, in your mind
48 which of these systems contributes substantially to
49 subsistence. I mean do you have a creative way of
50 getting around that objection and is that objection

1 valid?

2

3 MS. FINKLE: Madame Chairman, members
4 of the board, Pat. Thanks for the opportunity to talk.
5 I really appreciate it. This is Heather Finkle with
6 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game speaking. I
7 drafted the proposal. My idea with including the four
8 lakes was to have a means for a comparison. Right now
9 there's a big push with climate change. So you're
10 looking at two systems you have that are similar with
11 Red and Olga. They're both deep, they're both pretty
12 productive considering from a limnological standpoint
13 they're superstars.

14

15 Then you have systems like Akalura and
16 Horse Marine that are smaller and not so much. Horse
17 Marine was considered pristine. It wasn't affected by
18 the Exxon Valdez oil spill, which is when all these
19 declines started to happen. Akalura never recovered,
20 which is the reason the escapements dropped off, the
21 funding went away and that's why there's not a weir on
22 the system anymore.

23

24 So, by looking at these four systems
25 together we can say, well, is it just isolated to one
26 lake or is there something bigger going on. It doesn't
27 matter what the escapement is because there's something
28 bigger. Maybe it's the climate. Maybe, with that,
29 that can be applied to other systems in the region.
30 I'm responsible for the limnology programs down to the
31 Alaska Peninsula, so I get to see all this. So I'm
32 looking at it from a holistic standpoint.

33

34 As far as the subsistence use, I
35 certainly know that the community of Akhiok -- I've
36 gotten letters of support from Akhiok. We've heard
37 from Speridon or Mitch about the concerns. I did
38 address that in my introduction. I don't know if you
39 get to read the full-blown proposal or not, but it is
40 in there and I was kind of slighted that they said that
41 because I know that the village of Akhiok has 100
42 percent subsistence use and a lot of that does come
43 from Akalura. Like James says, it might not have an
44 escapement goal, but it's still an important system
45 because of it's location. It's easy to get to and
46 maybe it's more convenient.

47

48 The thing that also makes it hard is
49 because those fish they have to run a gauntlet going up
50 Alitak Bay to Olga Bay, so they're directly affected by

1 the commercial fishery, so you can't get away from
2 separating the two. If you don't get escapement goals,
3 if you fall below your goals, over a period of time
4 you're not even going to be able to subsistence fish.
5 So it's good to keep tabs on both of them. I know it's
6 not the interest of this panel to -- you know, their
7 focus is more on subsistence, but I don't think you can
8 -- you can't divorce the two as much as you'd like to
9 in some places. I think in that system that's one of
10 them just because you do have such a strong fishery
11 that goes on because of Frazer.

12

13 MR. HOLMES: Thank you, Heather. I
14 think that gives me a whole different feeling. Looking
15 at it, as you mentioned, in a holistic approach and
16 looking at things in terms of global warming and then
17 this being able to facilitate more realistic escapement
18 goals, even though they would be tough to achieve, at
19 least would give the biologist with the Department and
20 the Refuge an idea what's going on and, therefore, that
21 would really benefit subsistence.

22

23 I can recall back in the '60s and early
24 '70s when, let's say, Upper Station would freeze over
25 and there wouldn't be enough fish coming back four or
26 five years later to even have a fish fry on the beach
27 because when those shallow lakes are in the same -- and
28 the Aleutians. When it's really cold, they freeze over
29 and your survival is zip. It seems things are
30 gradually moving warmer and warmer and it would be
31 really important to understand those mechanisms,
32 particularly for these small ones, that are so
33 important for the village of Akhiok. So I see the
34 connection now and being able to compare it to Red
35 Lake.

36

37 As far as some of the other ones, ones
38 that are on Federal lands, I think a ghost of a chance
39 of them getting fertilized for such a small thing I
40 don't see that happening. So I think you pretty much
41 answered that question about prescription for lake
42 fertilization and future enhancement. That may or may
43 not come, but I don't think, from what you've said,
44 that's the focus of what you're trying to achieve.

45

46 Thank you so much.

47

48 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
49 Heather.

50

1 MS. FINKLE: Through the Chair. I
2 would just like to add -- I'm losing my train of
3 thought. This is Heather again. I lost my train of
4 thought. I'm sorry.

5
6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Do we have any
7 other questions or comments in regards to this.

8
9 MS. TRUMBLE: Madame Chair.

10
11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
12 Della.

13
14 MS. TRUMBLE: I guess I don't have
15 anything in regard to the speaker. I do have a
16 possible suggestion though. Can I continue forward?

17
18 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes.

19
20 MS. TRUMBLE: You know, I kind of
21 brought this up earlier, but technically we're three
22 regions. As I recall correctly, when we got into a
23 situation like this in the past, and it may have been
24 quite a number of years ago, but each of the regions
25 they select a priority. In this case, you're going to
26 have one from Bristol Bay, one from Kodiak and one from
27 the Aleutians and to move those three up to the one,
28 two, three and then anything beyond that would be my
29 recommendation at this time.

30
31 My concern in listening to the
32 discussion that somehow we've got to understand that we
33 have regions that we represent, but to also understand
34 we need to somehow maintain a whole. That in itself is
35 a problem. I think it's possible to achieve it. I
36 look at this from the standpoint technically I'm a
37 study for the Western Aleutians. Part of the problem
38 that we have out here is most of our subsistence take
39 is then under State regulations. In order to even try
40 to attempt to do anything under Federal, we don't have
41 the documentation that I think is needed. That was the
42 push behind doing some of the studies on the wolves and
43 this proposal that's on the table.

44
45 I understand and feel for everybody.
46 There's a limited amount of funds and it's frustrating.
47 Take it a step farther and discussions spend 80-90,000
48 to remove eight caribou off of an island out west when
49 there's so many other important things that we look at
50 and have to deal with moving forward, especially when

1 you have issues that involve climate change.

2

3 With that, I'd just kind of throw that
4 out there.

5

6 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Della.
7 Move along to the final.

8

9 MR. RIVARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
10 Don Rivard. The last proposal that we're going to talk
11 about is at the bottom of Page 77. This is 16-403.
12 It's ranked seven out of seven projects by the
13 Technical Review Committee. The project title is
14 Abundance and Distribution of Togiak River Chinook
15 Salmon.

16

17 This proposal seeks four years of
18 funding to conduct a mark-recapture study on chinook
19 salmon in the Togiak River Drainage using a combination
20 of spaghetti-tags, radio-tags, a float resistance board
21 weir and ground surveys. Additionally, this study will
22 attempt to correlate aerial counts to escapement
23 estimates to develop correction factors to be used in
24 future aerial index surveys.

25

26 This project would resume a recent
27 study completed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
28 Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office between 2009
29 and 2012. The latest funding was through the FRMP
30 project 10-402. There are concerns as to whether the
31 proposed methods can accomplish the objectives listed
32 in the investigation plan.

33

34 This proposal addresses one of the
35 Southwest Regional priority information needs listed in
36 the 2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Notice
37 of Funding Availability. This project as written
38 essentially resurrects previous work and proposes
39 nearly identical methodologies used by the U.S. Fish
40 and Wildlife Service from 2009 to 2012. The prior
41 project completed was unable to provide accurate
42 estimates of abundance due to complications in the
43 capture and recapture of marked fish. Therefore,
44 proposed objectives for this proposal may not be
45 achievable.

46

47 The cost to complete the study appears
48 to be excessive and the total proposed price across all
49 agreement periods is unreasonable. The investigators
50 did not identify or discuss the long term effects of

1 this study and establishment of aerial survey
2 correction factors to the management of chinook salmon.

3

4 Thank you, Madame Chair. That's all I
5 have.

6

7 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Okay. We can open
8 up the floor for any questions or comments and then we
9 can, for the record, state our recommendations or our
10 suggestions for ranking of these projects. Is that
11 where we want to go, to weigh in on them?

12

13 MR. RIVARD: Whatever you'd like to do
14 as a Council, yes.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I'd like to take a
17 quick break first if that is okay with everyone. Is
18 that all right? That was a lot. Okay. We'll take a
19 quick 10, 15-minute break. It is 3:46 on my watch, so
20 reconvene at 4:00.

21

22 (Off record)

23

24 (On record)

25

26 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: It is 4:02. Can
27 we get everybody back together here. We'll call
28 everybody back together and finish our discussions
29 here. We went over the 2016 Fisheries Resource
30 Monitoring Plan, the project ranking one through seven
31 here. I think, since we initially wanted to have all
32 seven projects shared with us and then we, as a RAC,
33 can discuss and make our suggestions for prioritizing
34 is where we're at. I think we've heard a consensus
35 that we'd like to see the Kodiak projects a little bit
36 higher in the ranking. Do we have any discussion on
37 the table as far as how we want to go ahead and present
38 this. Pat.

39

40 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. I'd like to
41 qualify your comment and say our RAC's priorities for
42 our area. If folks agree with me -- and I'll give you
43 my thoughts. I think that the Western Alaska salmon,
44 Della's subsistence survey, in my mind, looking at it
45 from our provincial point of view, would be number one.
46 Looking at the whole scheme of things as presented in
47 this table, the Bristol Bay salmon networks I would
48 give a two just because I live in the Kodiak/Aleutians.
49 However, looking at it in another perspective, there
50 are more subsistence folks there and that will probably

1 win out for number one overall.

2

3 I think number two in my mind for our
4 neck of the woods would be the ecological assessments,
5 number 401, because that would provide a broader
6 perspective than just having the time lapse in Akalura
7 because the limnology in smolt work, if you've got
8 little itty bitty skinny smolt coming out of Akalura,
9 you'll know that there's a problem and then that will
10 give grounds for broader research. So I would say 401
11 is my number two for our region.

12

13 Going back to the other side, then I
14 would put the studies for the Togiak River Salmon
15 Subsistence Assessment would be my number four overall.
16 But if you're looking at it just as the folks up in
17 Bristol Bay, they'll say 451, 453 are one and two. So
18 that dichotomy needs to be worked out.

19

20 I had some chat with the staff and it
21 sounds like they're hoping to try to at least evaluate
22 in the future some way to break things out that might
23 reflect more on what the RAC regions are rather than
24 the historical way their committee is done. So that's
25 my best guess, Madame Chair.

26

27 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Other
28 comments as far as prioritizing.

29

30 Coral.

31

32 MS. CHERNOFF: Yes, this is Coral
33 Chernoff. I guess I don't feel qualified to rank in
34 order from one through seven, but I would like it to go
35 on record that it seems like the issues that were
36 brought up in the two areas that are Kodiak's, 16-402
37 and 16-401, a few of the concerns that were brought up
38 got clarified here as to not really be concerned or we
39 addressed them. They just didn't seem to be fully
40 truthful statements. So I would like for that
41 information to go back and be looked at and then we be
42 reassessed. I would assume if those corrections were
43 made, that we would in fact move up in the ranking.

44

45 Thank you.

46

47 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Tom.

48

49 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chair. I guess
50 my concern is of all these projects that I've listened

1 to I didn't see any of them that really expressed a
2 shortage of subsistence use availability with the
3 exception of the ones from Kodiak. So I would
4 certainly like to see those moved up. Those two
5 projects both address a shortage of subsistence
6 activities for the village of Akhiok and I think we
7 should do whatever we can. The other projects, to me,
8 don't express a shortage or a concern for subsistence
9 users as the Kodiak ones do.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead.

12

13 MR. KRON: Madame Chair, Council. Just
14 a little bit of perspective.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Please identify
17 yourself.

18

19 MR. KRON: Tom Kron with OSM. Excuse
20 me. A little bit of perspective. OSM and the Federal
21 system is looking for this Council's perspective, your
22 understanding of the region and the resources. The
23 Technical Review Committee reviewed what they had in
24 front of them based on technical merits as they were
25 able to assess them. That process is done. So, again,
26 their process is different. It's separate from yours.
27 I think Don has provided you with that information.
28 Weigh in with your thoughts and values. It's not a
29 situation where you need to try to influence them to
30 change their votes because their votes have already
31 been cast.

32

33 The Staff Committee will look at it as
34 well. You have Dr. Chen here listening to the
35 discussions, so he will participate in that
36 development. Those three parts, the Technical Review
37 Committee Part, the Regional Council part, the
38 Interagency Staff Committee part, those three parts
39 will then be presented to the Federal Board in January
40 so they can weigh in and make decisions on which
41 projects get funded.

42

43 So, again, your process is separate
44 from the process that Don presented, but, again,
45 there's a lot of information there. So I'd weigh in
46 with your perspective on the importance and the issues
47 that have been discussed here.

48

49 Thank you, Madame Chair.

50

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.

2

3 Tom.

4

5 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chair. I guess
6 the concern that I would like to have put in there is
7 that these Kodiak projects are in there because of a
8 concern for subsistence shortage and I don't see that
9 in any of the other projects.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: So I think given
14 that information I would like to see us, as a RAC, come
15 up with our own ranking to be set forward and then also
16 including all of our comments that we've made through
17 this process to also be submitted.

18

19 MS. TRUMBLE: Madame Chair, this is
20 Della.

21

22 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Della.

23

24 MS. TRUMBLE: Tom and the Chair. You
25 know, thinking back, listening to this discussion, I
26 recall at one point -- and Pat may recall this also.
27 At one point in time way back when when we talked about
28 the Technical Review Committee making these
29 determinations to have some people from the RAC or the
30 people that it impacts directly at the table to clarify
31 some of these issues so that we don't do exactly what
32 we did today. That being part of it.

33

34 The other part, I think, Tom, is going
35 back to the issue in regard to the subsistence, effects
36 on the subsistence user. Part of the reason the
37 Aleutian or the Western one is in there for our region
38 and the four communities has to do with the fact that
39 there really isn't any good documentation showing that
40 these communities utilize for subsistence.

41

42 I'm going to use King Cove as an
43 example. King Cove, right next to Cold Bay and to
44 Izembek, right now it's hard for us to hunt any birds,
45 however the elders are actually getting birds from Cold
46 Bay from the sport hunters and all the Refuge can be
47 able to hunt murre of their limit for their
48 recreational use. We don't have anything against those
49 hunters, but just having some of that information on
50 how some of these resources are being distributed I

1 think is important.

2

3 We don't necessarily do a lot of the
4 subsistence fish over there or have anything in place
5 because -- you know, I don't know that we really can
6 look at how we can piece some of these together. So
7 that information would be helpful.

8

9 The other piece is listed on Sand Point
10 and the moose I think as a subsistence user in the
11 Pavlof sectors and how that is done. Then we've got,
12 of course, Nelson Lagoon and False Pass. I'm saying
13 when you don't see an importance or something to do
14 with the subsistence user, that clarification is why
15 that request is there.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Della.

20

21 Rebecca.

22

23 MS. SKINNER: Well, my proposed ranking
24 of these projects, starting from my lowest ranked one.
25 The pre-historical salmon abundance, so 16-404, I would
26 rank that as number seven. Primarily they haven't sold
27 me on why testing the core samples should take priority
28 over some of the living systems.

29

30 Number six would be 16-403, which is
31 the Abundance and Distribution of Togiak River Chinook.
32 A lot of my ranking there is based on just the high
33 dollar request for that project. I don't see that the
34 benefit from the cost is a very efficient use of funds.

35

36 Number five would be 16-451, Bristol
37 Bay Subsistence Salmon Networks. Again, reflecting
38 back on my questions and comments about how documenting
39 the networks of distribution of subsistence resources
40 will be used in the management of the resource. It was
41 asserted that it would be in the proposal, but it
42 wasn't specified how. When I asked direct questions,
43 there was no real explanation of how that information
44 could be used with management. So that's up to number
45 five.

46

47 I think four would be 16-453, Togiak
48 River Chinook Salmon Subsistence Harvest Assessment.

49

50 For the top three, I think I agree with

1 Pat's suggestion of 16-452, which is Western Alaska
2 Salmon as number one and the remaining two Kodiak
3 projects as being two and three, although, to me, I
4 think both of these should be funded partly because
5 16-402, which is using the time lapse camera, is a
6 fairly inexpensive project and I see some opportunities
7 for that project to work in conjunction with the
8 Southwest Kodiak Ecological Assessment if they both
9 have to do with Akalura Lake. I think one is focusing
10 on ecology, the other is looking at fish that are
11 actually coming through the system. I could see those
12 potentially working together.

13

14 But I do think that the Southwest
15 Kodiak Ecological Assessment 16-401 is very important
16 and I think that the comments we've heard today reflect
17 the importance of the Akalura system and the Olga Lake
18 system to subsistence users, particularly in Akhiok,
19 but also Old Harbor, Port Lions.

20

21 I also want to I guess note or
22 recognize the comments that Heather Finkle made about
23 how hard it is to separate commercial management from
24 subsistence management because if the fish have to swim
25 through the water and get past the commercial nets to
26 get up to the subsistence nets that are farther
27 upstream, that's a reality. And also some people take
28 their subsistence fish through a commercial fishery.
29 So they can note we're taking our 25 subsistence fish
30 even if the fish were caught on a commercial vessel.
31 So these two are almost inextricably intertwined.

32

33 So I was a little bit disturbed that
34 the report seemed to say, well, this is going to
35 benefit commercial so almost therefore we don't want to
36 fund it at all. I think fortunately or unfortunately
37 it's the same fish in the same area that are being
38 harvested by two different methods. But I do think
39 it's clear that these fish in these systems are
40 important to subsistence users.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you,
43 Rebecca. Do we have any other comments.

44

45 Go ahead, Mitch.

46

47 MR. SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Madame
48 Chair. I'd like to reiterate the importance
49 subsistence there. Again, the numbers have gone down
50 and the Olga Lakes area has been a big producer in the

1 past. It had like 150,000 escapement and it's been
2 steadily going down for years. Now we're down to
3 25,000. It is hard to delineate between commercial and
4 subsistence because the fish go by the commercial
5 fishing area to get up to Upper Station.

6
7 Once again, it goes back to the school
8 district. They have a program that is contingent on
9 where you go and how many will stay. It's usually two
10 days if you go qualify for lunches and books and stuff
11 like that for the school. A lot of subsistence users
12 take their whole families up there. It's a long drive
13 if you go by skiff.

14
15 These two, 401 and 402 are important.
16 Regardless if these have been already ranked by the
17 Review Committee, that doesn't stop us from questioning
18 that and we can make a recommendation to the Federal
19 Board in January.

20
21 Thank you.

22
23 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mitch.
24 I believe at this point for the record we are wanting
25 to set up our priorities and ranking as our RAC
26 recommendations to be sent forward. Rebecca had gone
27 over her ranking or how she sees things prioritized.
28 Do we have any other comments, questions or concern in
29 regards to what has been shared.

30
31 Does everyone concur.

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Pat.

36
37 MR. HOLMES: I don't know if I went
38 through my list for the whole region as presented in
39 this table. I think I'd probably qualify for Della
40 that the project 452 was her first one and that would
41 be my number one project. 451 would be my number two.
42 401 would be my number three. 453 would be my number
43 four. 402 would be my number five. 403 would be my
44 number six and 404 would be my number seven using this
45 table presented to us by Don. I suppose you could have
46 everybody fill it out that way. I think we're
47 definitely getting some consensus on what's number one
48 and number two.

49
50 Thank you, Madame Chair.

1 Oh, the one thing I would like to
2 qualify is on the Southwest Ecological Assessment. A
3 lot of that work, for those that haven't been involved
4 in it, if they're looking at the smolt in a system,
5 then that comes up as a red flag if something is really
6 wrong. So that could be in my mind higher priority
7 than 402, but it would give impetus for doing more work
8 in Akalura with a camera sequential to that because
9 you'd see, oh, okay, these little baby sockeye are
10 smaller than a stickleback in the lake, so we really
11 need to be tracking . It would give more assertiveness
12 for looking at the adults, but 401 would give one a
13 better view of things for more systems that could be
14 utilized for subsistence.

15

16 So that's kind of my ranking.

17

18 Thank you, Madame Chair.

19

20 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Further comments
21 in regards to the ranking that we want to present. I'm
22 not really sure of the formal process that we should
23 move forward with this. There has been quite a bit of
24 consensus as far as our top three priorities that we
25 would want to present and then for the remaining we all
26 probably have different ranking systems as well, but to
27 reflect all of our comments in that process.

28

29 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
30 Mitch.

31

32 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead,
33 Mitch.

34

35 MR. SIMEONOFF: I would keep 452 as
36 one, 402 as two, 401 as three and the others would be
37 contingent on how Bristol Bay wants them. We deal with
38 the projects that are close to home and let Bristol Bay
39 deal with the projects that are close to their home. We
40 can support them as long as we get our projects up
41 there. That's a suggestion we can make at the Federal
42 Subsistence Board in January.

43

44 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Mitch.

45

46 Don, you had a comment.

47

48 MR. RIVARD: Well, you can do whatever
49 your Council decided to do. You can do a formal motion
50 or you can just keep the comments the way you have

1 them. They're being captured by transcript. I've
2 written a lot of notes. I just wanted to point out
3 that the ranking that Pat did and Rebecca did they had
4 agreement on five of the seven. They've flipped their
5 second and fifth priorities. Other than that you've
6 got five out of seven that are the same. So I just
7 wanted to give you that information.

8
9 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: At this point in
10 time I'm not sure if anybody feels it necessary to make
11 a motion, but to feel confident and okay that all of
12 our comments have been captured and will be reflected
13 and carried forward. Does that sound good? Go ahead,
14 Rebecca.

15
16 MS. SKINNER: I have two questions.
17 What has been the historical practice? Have the
18 Councils usually come out with strong statements or
19 recommendations on these proposals on an annual basis?
20 That's question one which will help guide our decision
21 as to what to do right now.

22
23 My second question is when is our
24 opportunity to redo or weigh in on the information
25 priorities? What's the timeline for that? So if we
26 wanted to basically amend or update the list in time
27 for next year's funding announcement, what are our time
28 constraints?

29
30 MR. RIVARD: Through the Chair. This
31 is Don Rivard. A couple answers are that your priority
32 information needs, you can develop them at any time.
33 We'll be asking you again next year at this time for
34 you to give them to us. Any time you come up with a
35 priority information need that can be so noted for the
36 next round. Our next call is going to be for the 2018,
37 but that starts a year from now. We'll start putting
38 that together and making the announcement.

39
40 Your first question was what? I
41 forget.

42
43 MS. SKINNER: My first question was
44 historically do the RACs throughout the state usually
45 present, usually develop pretty explicit proposals or
46 recommendations for the funding of the proposals? So
47 right now we're talking about not doing kind of a
48 strong statement or making a motion or recommendation.
49 We're just going to forward the comments. I'm trying
50 to get a sense for historically what has this Council

1 and other Councils done in relation to the review and
2 recommendations around the funding of these proposals.

3
4 MR. RIVARD: Historically, through most
5 of what I've experienced in my 15 years with the
6 program -- and this has changed again this year. Up to
7 this call, up to this process now that we're in, you
8 would get a list and the TRC, their recommendation was
9 fund or do not fund. That's what you saw. And a lot
10 of what the Councils did, frankly, was they basically
11 went along with what the TRC recommended most of the
12 time. There wasn't a whole lot of discussion. It was
13 sort of we agree with this and you would have a formal
14 recommendation. In other words, you would make a
15 motion, second and it would be passed or not. If you
16 did have some disagreement, it would be so noted just
17 like you've done here now.

18
19 MS. SKINNER: A follow up to that.
20 Would we likely be more successful in having the
21 projects that we feel are important funded if we came
22 out with a strong statement or recommendation or are we
23 likely to be just as successful relying on the record
24 and the transcript and that our comments are being
25 captured and reviewed by the appropriate people?

26
27 MR. RIVARD: That's a little tough to
28 answer, but let me put it this way. If you had
29 consensus, if all of you agreed on the rankings that
30 you wanted to see, that would probably have a little
31 bit more weight if it's a formal motion. The comments
32 are going to be summarized and run by your Chair if
33 he's attending or whoever is attending for this Council
34 the Federal Board meeting in January. You'll have a
35 chance to weigh in again and make your case in front of
36 the Federal Subsistence Board.

37
38 So this is on record, this is what you
39 want and the Federal Subsistence Board will see those
40 comments no matter if they're presented or not by the
41 Chair, but having the Chair there and saying again the
42 importance to your Council these particular projects
43 for your region will just add strength to that. So you
44 don't necessarily have to have a formal motion passed,
45 but that's an option for you if you feel you'd like to
46 have that.

47
48 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Antone.

49
50 MR. SHELIKOFF: Antone with the RAC. I

1 would just like to rank or how I ranked it. I'll just
2 do the last three digits on these projects. 451, I put
3 it five. 453, number 6. 452, one. 404, three. 402,
4 number four. 401, number two. Then 403, number seven.
5 I concur on that.

6

7 MS. TRUMBLE: Madame Chair.

8

9 MADAME CHAIR BERNES: Yes, Della.

10

11 MS. TRUMBLE: It's getting late I know.
12 Mitch, maybe you can help me with this a little bit.
13 As a possible recommendation can we -- I appreciate
14 we're looking at 16-452 as one. I do. You have no idea
15 how much we do appreciate that. But looking at the two
16 Kodiak ones, the 16-402 and the 16-401, can the RAC
17 members from Kodiak say we want this one as number two
18 an this one as number three. I agree with, I think,
19 Mitch that I wouldn't rate the Bristol Bay ones because
20 I think the Bristol Bay RAC should be able to say which
21 is important in that order to them as a Council, would
22 be my recommendation. I think if we can come up with
23 the one and two and three, that we can make a motion to
24 that effect and allow Bristol Bay to make their
25 assessment.

26

27 MADAME CHAIR BERNES: Thank you, Della.

28

29 Rebecca.

30

31 MS. SKINNER: I have a question. Is
32 funding given by region? So are we -- like is there an
33 amount of money that would be allocated or a percentage
34 to Southwest? Are all of the proposals in Southwest
35 Region competing with each other?

36

37 MR. RIVARD: This is Don Rivard. There
38 are funding guidelines for each region and it's not
39 firm, it's not a set amount and that's all it's going
40 to be. There is some shifting back and forth between
41 regions depending on the relative importance of the
42 projects. So there is some of that.

43

44 First of all, we don't know yet the
45 exact amount we're going to get, so there's all sorts
46 of permutations that could occur. Just because
47 something -- I pointed this out to somebody earlier.
48 I'm just using this as an example. I'm not saying this
49 is going to happen. But if certain projects have been
50 designated for funding and there's only \$15,000 left

1 over, something like the one on number five that's
2 \$10,000 a year, that could be picked up even though
3 it's lower in ranking. It still has to meet the five
4 criteria and it has to be a strong project because
5 we're not going to fund a project just to fund it.
6 It's got to have some quality to it in order to be
7 funded.

8
9 So all those things are taken into
10 consideration; how much money is left over, if some
11 really good quality projects, there's only two or three
12 say in another region that really should be funded and
13 the rest not, then that money from that region if
14 there's some left over would get shifted over to other
15 parts of the state. So all that stuff occurs within
16 our office and make those determinations after
17 everything is weighed in and the Board makes their
18 decision.

19
20 Still the final decision is made by
21 Gene Peltola of our office, our Regional Director there
22 from Subsistence, because he's the Federal official
23 that has to sign his name to the bottom line here that
24 he's authorizing Federal funds to be dispersed. So he
25 still takes into consideration all those things and
26 makes a final decision.

27
28 MS. SKINNER: Okay. But the way the
29 funding picture starts is that Southwest basically is
30 getting 15 percent of Department of Interior funds
31 based on your current guidelines, so there is a kind of
32 set allocation of money that goes to Southwest and
33 depending how large that amount of money is, some of
34 these projects will not get funded because there's not
35 enough money to fund all of them. So, in essence,
36 these proposals are kind of competing for the same pool
37 of money. Although I'm understanding there is some
38 flexibility to shift between regions.

39
40 MR. RIVARD: You've captured that well.
41 Your understanding is correct.

42
43 MS. SKINNER: Okay. Given that, I am
44 not comfortable not ranking all of the projects.
45 Fortunately or unfortunately, we are part of the
46 Southwest Region. That is the system that is set up.
47 I think it would be irresponsible to not rank all the
48 projects because if we only rank the Kodiak or the
49 Kodiak and Aleutians ones, we're basically competing
50 against the projects from Bristol Bay. Without

1 actually ranking those projects or comparing their
2 value according through our lens, I think we're not
3 doing a service to the proposals that are specific to
4 our RAC region.

5
6 I think it is unfortunate that the RAC
7 region is different from this administrative Southwest
8 Region, but that is what we have to deal with.

9
10 MR. SIMEONOFF: Madame Chair, this is
11 Mitch.

12
13 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Go ahead, Mitch.

14
15 MR. SIMEONOFF: Didn't you say that
16 these projects are going to happen in 2016?

17
18 MR. RIVARD: Madame Chair. This is Don
19 Rivard. That is when they would start if they receive
20 funding from our program, if they're approved, yes.

21
22 MR. SIMEONOFF: If they are approved.
23 Okay.

24
25 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Mr. Schwantes.

26
27 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chair.....

28
29 MR. SIMEONOFF: Why don't we take
30 Western Alaska number one and 402 will be number two,
31 401 is number three and the rest just go down the line
32 four, five, six and seven. Put ours on top and Bristol
33 Bay's after that. Being responsible is good, but I
34 don't want to do Bristol Bay's work for Bristol Bay.

35
36 MR. SCHWANTES: Madame Chair.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Tom.

39
40 MR. SCHWANTES: Again, I've got to say
41 I think that we need to take a look at the fact that we
42 are in the Southwest Region whether we like it or not.
43 We have X amount of dollars for X amount of programs
44 and I think it's irresponsible of us to just say we
45 want our three programs to be number one, two, three
46 and forget about Bristol Bay.

47
48 MR. SIMEONOFF: No, don't forget about
49 them, just list them as four, five, six and seven.

50

1 MR. SCHWANTES: I would hope that
2 Bristol Bay would take a look at this and say, yeah,
3 maybe some of these Kodiak programs have a higher
4 priority than some of ours. I think it should be
5 incumbent upon us to do the same thing. How important
6 are these programs overall and then do a ranking of
7 them, including all seven, and go from there. Again,
8 I've got to go back to the Kodiak ones are the only
9 ones that I had seen today and heard from that actually
10 express a concern over loss of subsistence use.

11
12 Thank you.

13
14 MR. SIMEONOFF: That's a fact.

15
16 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you. Coral.

17
18 MS. CHERNOFF: I don't know if I missed
19 this somewhere, but we have these seven projects in
20 front of us. Do they decide like are we funding four
21 of these, do we have a certain pocket of money? Did I
22 miss that somewhere? How do they decide is there going
23 to be six funded or three funded or are they going to
24 put forth a certain dollar amount? Because these are
25 ranked, but some may not be funded, right?

26
27 MR. RIVARD: Correct. So again there's
28 guidelines for each region. This is what the guideline
29 is, the table on the left. That's what we've been
30 using for quite a while. Then the graph on the right
31 shows what it's actually been. So your guideline for
32 Southwest has been 15 percent. The reality, it's come
33 out to about 10 percent. You see that?

34
35 MS. CHERNOFF: Uh-huh.

36
37 MR. RIVARD: Your purple slice there,
38 that's about 10 percent of what historically has been
39 spent in Southwest Region. So it's a guideline and
40 this also demonstrates how things are shifting around.

41
42 There's a lot that goes on in the Yukon
43 and the Kuskokwim as you can imagine. You can see
44 those are the two biggest slices of the pie. They're
45 both recommended for 29 percent as a guideline and
46 they're both a little bit below that at 25 and 22
47 percent, I believe. So there is room -- the guidelines
48 are that. That's what we go with. When we find out
49 our final amount, we'll look at, okay, this is kind of
50 the guideline and they'll try to do that, but it's not

1 hard and fast, it's a guideline, not in concrete.

2

3 So then you start looking at what are
4 some of the real quality projects. Some of them are
5 really ranking high. You make sure you're able to
6 cover all those. There may be some that are ranked
7 really high in some regions that deserve to be funded
8 based on what the Technical Review Committee has said
9 and the funds will be shifted over.

10

11 MS. SKINNER: Okay. So I was wondering
12 historically is the amount the same every year? Has it
13 been the same every year? Because we have a total
14 number from 2000 to 2014. And when does that number
15 come out that they're looking at?

16

17 MR. RIVARD: Well, we're in right now
18 -- we're on the verge of a new fiscal year October 1st
19 and there's all sorts of factors that come into play.
20 If Congress were able to pass a budget on October 1st
21 for the entire year, we would then know our budget,
22 what we're going to get for the Fisheries Resource
23 Monitoring Program. If it's a series of continuing
24 resolutions, what they usually say is the guideline for
25 that is you can spend at last year's amount. So we at
26 least have some target that we're going with.

27

28 If they make some decision, you know,
29 we want all the agencies to cut back, you know, 2
30 percent, then some of that comes into play as well.
31 We're liable not to get an increase, but you never
32 know. There's been efforts in the past to cut back on
33 the program. Senator Murkowski came through last time
34 around or two years ago. I'm not sure when it was.
35 And she said, no, you will not cut funding for the
36 subsistence program.

37

38 So all those things can happen.
39 Hopefully we'll get a budget and we'll know what we
40 have. These projects, even though a lot of them are
41 four-year projects, in our agreements with everybody,
42 we say it's contingent on each year's funding. So if
43 Congress would come to us and say we're cutting your
44 budget in half for these projects, we would have to cut
45 back on the projects even though they've already been
46 approved for four years or we'd have to only fund half
47 of what we have, whatever the case may be.

48

49 So I hope that answers your question.
50 We don't know our budgets until Congress passes theirs

1 and then based on that we take and we do this as a
2 general guideline the percent that's going to each
3 region and it's not hard and fast. The reality is they
4 get shifted around.

5
6 MR. SIMEONOFF: This is Mitch. If
7 there's less funding, are they cut according to the
8 rank?

9
10 MR. RIVARD: I'm sorry, Mitch. I
11 didn't hear the -- are they cut according to what?

12
13 MR. SIMEONOFF: The projects,
14 depending on the funding, are they cut off according to
15 their ranking?

16
17 MR. RIVARD: Once we have the
18 projects.....

19
20 MR. SIMEONOFF: You cut off seven, six,
21 five, four and you cut them off that way?

22
23 MR. RIVARD: Well, we've been pretty
24 fortunate that we haven't had to do that, so I'm not
25 quite sure how they would, but there is some
26 prioritization. Usually that's a statewide thing.
27 There's a possibility that each project or some
28 projects could be cut back and we would talk with the
29 principal investigator and say if we give you a 10
30 percent cut this year, could you still do the project.
31 Most likely what would happen is internally we would
32 prioritize what projects ought to continue on based on
33 what budget we have and we would probably -- it would
34 be more likely that we would just stop some projects
35 when we no longer have the funding to fund all of them.
36 This is all hypothetical, okay. There's no hard-and-
37 fast rules with this. I'm just giving you some
38 scenarios.

39
40 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We'll go to
41 Rebecca and then Tom.

42
43 MS. SKINNER: So it looks like in the
44 2014 funding cycle there was \$2.7 million available.
45 Was that annually or was that for a two-year period?

46
47 MR. RIVARD: What that means is usually
48 it's for the first year of project funding.

49
50 MS. SKINNER: Okay. So right now it

1 looks like anticipated you have -- you're thinking
2 maybe \$2 million for 2016, so just mathematically 10
3 percent of \$2 million is \$200,000, so we're looking at
4 somewhere potentially between \$200,000 and \$270,000 in
5 funding that might go to the Southwest Region. So when
6 we're looking at funding these projects, I mean you
7 couldn't even fund 16-403 because it's 396 per year,
8 but you might be able to fund the Bristol Bay Network
9 project, the Kodiak project and the Western Alaska
10 project. I think it's helpful to keep those dollar
11 amounts in mind because that's approximately what you
12 have available according to the report we have in our
13 book.

14

15 MR. RIVARD: Madame Chair, may I ask a
16 question.

17

18 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, go ahead.

19

20 MR. RIVARD: Where are you getting the
21 \$2 million figure from?

22

23 MS. SKINNER: Page 69.

24

25 MR. RIVARD: I'm not sure where those
26 numbers are. I think when we -- that's how these
27 numbers change as we go along because I believe when we
28 did the call for proposals there might have been an
29 even amount, like \$4.7 million was for the call
30 statewide, so it does change as we find out more as we
31 get closer to the funding year.

32

33 MS. SKINNER: So is the \$2.7 million
34 for 2014 is that accurate or is the 2014 number
35 different as well?

36

37 MR. RIVARD: Well, if you look at --
38 the reason I come up with the \$4.7 million is that's
39 what's still being obligated for the 2014 proposal for
40 2016 and then what would be available for new starts,
41 so to speak, is the \$2 million.

42

43 MR. SIMEONOFF: Anticipated funding for
44 2016 is \$4 million.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tom.

47

48 MR. SCHWANTES: Don, through the Chair.
49 Correct me if I misunderstood you, but I think what I
50 heard you say was that there's a certain amount of

1 money for all of the regions and then that's split up
2 into -- the various regions will get a certain
3 percentage of that big pie. Then what I think I heard
4 you say was that we're going to anticipate funding
5 these particular projects, but if a project -- at some
6 point somebody makes this decision. If a project in
7 another region is deemed more important than a project
8 in our region, some of that funding from our region
9 could go to another region. Is that what I'm hearing
10 you saying?

11
12 MR. RIVARD: Yes, there could be that
13 and it could be the other way around too, where some
14 money that was -- if there's not enough -- I'll just
15 put it this way. Say there was -- I'm going to use
16 another region. I'll leave it unnamed. Another region
17 has five projects and they total a start-off of a half
18 a million dollars, okay. And that region was to get a
19 half a million dollars for their start-up money for
20 this year, right. But only three of those projects are
21 deemed really quality projects and out to be funded.
22 Just because there's five in a region doesn't mean
23 they're all going to get funded. So say those three
24 for \$400,000. There's \$100,000 left that can be
25 shifted over now to another region for funding other
26 projects in other regions. That can go back and forth
27 either way.

28
29 Again, this is just guidelines, but it
30 comes down to how much money is available and what are
31 the really quality projects that you want to make sure
32 get funded, so they're shifted and it goes on between
33 regions as far as funding goes.

34
35 MR. SCHWANTES: So my understanding is
36 that it's not just the quality of the project in our
37 region, but it's the quality of projects throughout the
38 state. At some point, somebody makes a decision this
39 program in a northern region is more important than one
40 in Southwest and the Southwest one isn't quite as
41 important, so that money could be shifted and vice
42 versa.

43
44 MR. RIVARD: That's correct. What you
45 don't see here are the actual scores that the TRC has
46 come up with for each project. You just see the
47 relative rankings among the projects in your region.
48 And I don't remember the scores. I was part of the
49 meeting, I saw it happen, but I don't remember the
50 scores and they're not to be shared. This is just what

1 you get as the relative ranks to one another.

2

3 Theoretically, all of these projects
4 could have scores that are one point difference. Okay.
5 The range might be 20 points. It could be five or six
6 points. Some of these projects might have kind of the
7 same score, but TRC still rank them according to what
8 they think is the most important that meets these five
9 criteria relatively to one another.

10

11 So you look at this and you see all
12 these projects. The best thing that you guys are doing
13 is you're providing your comments, what you think is
14 important. You don't have to get too wrapped up in,
15 well, this is seven versus five. I mean obviously
16 there is a difference there, but the differences might
17 not be all that big, you know.

18

19 So the fact that you're giving your
20 comments of what's important to your region, those are
21 more important than you trying to come up with your own
22 rankings because you're making your judgments known.
23 You all have unique experiences and knowledge that the
24 TRC doesn't have, nor necessarily will the Federal
25 Board because you're living and you're Federal
26 subsistence users within this region, so you have a
27 perspective that allows you to provide the comments
28 that you do.

29

30 MR. SCHWANTES: Thank you. Appreciate
31 that.

32

33 MR. SIMEONOFF: This is Mitch. You
34 guys have rated them. I would put the three from our
35 region as one, two and three and leave the rest for
36 Bristol Bay and leave the ranking out. Just say that
37 these are important to the Kodiak/Aleutians and they
38 should be up higher on the list. You know, it's not
39 easy, but it's something we got to do. We've got to
40 put ourselves up there first.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tom, do you have a
43 comment.

44

45 MR. SCHWANTES: Yeah, I -- again, I
46 guess I would just like to say certainly I would like
47 to see one of those two Kodiak projects listed as a
48 very high priority, in fact number one as far as I'm
49 concerned, because they relate to a direct correlation
50 between the amount of subsistence resource that's

1 available to the user.

2

3 Thank you.

4

5 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair, could I
6 introduce a new thought here.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Please, Pat.

9

10 MR. HOLMES: I'm wondering how other
11 regions approach this sort of thing and I'm wondering
12 if it might help us out -- I know earlier Don said that
13 they didn't get a lot of proposals from our RAC region.
14 I was wondering if it would be good for us to possibly
15 have a standing committee of members and then we could
16 communicate on the internet, talk with the agencies in
17 our respective areas and just try to go around and
18 stimulate folks applying more for this type of funding
19 so that we could give them reinforcement on the
20 importance of subsistence in our area.

21

22 I got the impression like the Southeast
23 RAC has all kinds of standing committees and I'm
24 wondering if, you know, some of the places in the
25 states councils don't have a group that goes out and
26 gives Fish and Game a kick in the tush or the Fish and
27 Wildlife people and say, hey, this village is darn
28 important, we've got some real problems, we really need
29 you to be looking for some research because both
30 agencies are going to be losing money hand over fist.
31 How do the other regions do it? Would a standing
32 committee be beneficial for our Council?

33

34 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any thoughts or
35 comments in regards to Mr. Holmes. Rebecca.

36

37 MS. SKINNER: Well, I guess I'm not
38 sure how I feel about the standing committee. I do
39 think we need a mechanism to really effectively
40 evaluate at a RAC level what our information and
41 priority needs are. I think as you read through these
42 materials and you see for the Southwest Region what the
43 list of priorities were, you can see why the Technical
44 Committee ranked the projects as they did.

45

46 So right from the get-go part of the
47 problem is we, as all of the RAC region inside of the
48 Southwest Region, I think, did not submit enough input
49 into that process. So if a standing committee related
50 to this issue -- and, Pat, I think I understand that's

1 not exactly what you were saying. You were talking
2 more about drumming up interest for proposals. But if
3 a standing committee could help on an ongoing basis
4 identify and then evaluate on an ongoing basis our
5 priorities, because I would expect those to change over
6 time, then I support that concept.

7
8 I do think there's other ways of going
9 about it other than a standing committee. But I do
10 think it's important that we have a structured approach
11 to this and that the entire Council is involved in the
12 discussions at some point, whether all the discussions
13 happen at the Council level or midway or toward the end
14 of the process. But I do think the whole Council needs
15 to be actively involved in articulating and documenting
16 what our priorities are for our RAC region,
17 understanding it fits within the Southwest Region.

18
19 MR. HOLMES: You said it better than I
20 could, Becky.

21
22 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tom.

23
24 MR. SCHWANTES: Yeah, I agree. I think
25 part of the reason from reading this material, part of
26 the reason why our projects were rated the way they
27 were rated is because we didn't -- they weren't clear
28 enough and we didn't really meet the criteria. They
29 weren't spelled out that this was actually a shortage
30 of subsistence resources. I think had we spelled that
31 out, then maybe we would have been ranked higher. So I
32 think we need to do a better job too.

33
34 Thank you.

35
36 MS. TRUMBLE: Madame Chair.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Della.

39
40 MS. TRUMBLE: I agree with what Rebecca
41 and Tom has said. You know, taking this a step
42 further, I have always had a problem with discussing
43 another region's issues without them at the table.
44 I've always felt we all have our own regions that's
45 being run, but in all due respect I've never felt
46 comfortable discussing another region's issues without
47 them at the table. You know, moving forward in this,
48 if we're going to be in with Southwest with Bristol Bay
49 -- and I know they have the same concern that we have
50 just expressed today and most likely are going to go in

1 the same -- spend hours doing exactly what we just did.
2 I think we need to come forward at some point in time
3 with a better mechanism when we're doing this.

4

5 MR. SIMEONOFF: And doing it as the
6 Kodiak/Aleutians and put our projects up forward and
7 let Bristol Bay deal with Bristol Bay. It's simple for
8 us. We're the Kodiak/Aleutians, we have three projects
9 and we need to get them up on the priority list. The
10 problem is we've got to deal with Bristol Bay and
11 Bristol is not here and we don't know how they're going
12 to do their projects and we have to come back to the
13 table because we are the Southwest Region where we're
14 combined. We have to come back to the table and hash
15 this out again because they're going to have a
16 different priority list than us.

17

18 That will be a good cause to have a
19 joint meeting. Right, Karen?

20

21 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Tom.

22

23 MR. SCHWANTES: I guess that's kind of
24 where I'm coming from. I guess, Don, I'd ask you the
25 question. Is there a way
26 when these projects are put together for those of us
27 within the Southwest Region to work together on these
28 before they're submitted and kind of come up with a --
29 I mean if we're all going to be submitting projects for
30 the same funding, is there a way for us to work
31 together?

32

33 MR. SIMEONOFF: There is a way. Get
34 them at the table.

35

36 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Don.

37

38 MR. RIVARD: Well, if you look again at
39 one of criteria is partnership and capacity. We
40 encourage as many partners as feasible or seems
41 appropriate for these projects. When a principal
42 investigator is deciding that he or she is going to
43 submit a proposal that addresses a priority information
44 need, they should be discussing with other parties kind
45 of refining what -- even though there's a priority
46 information need listed, that's not going to tell you
47 everything.

48

49 You should be going around and talking
50 to potential partners or affected parties so that you

1 have a better understanding of what the issue is and
2 you submit your proposal that way. So that's
3 encouraged. That can happen. I think to some extent
4 that did happen with the Southwest proposals, all of
5 them, including the three that came for your RAC
6 region, okay.

7
8 You all, any one of you or all of you
9 collectively could be involved as much as you are
10 willing to do so with the development of a proposal.
11 But part of it is you have to know who's going to
12 submit a proposal in the first place. We don't
13 necessarily know unless a principal investigator calls
14 our office and maybe wants some clarification. But
15 most of the time we don't know who's submitting a
16 proposal until it arrives the day of the deadline. You
17 know, we have a deadline and we don't know that one's
18 coming until -- most proposals come in the day of the
19 deadline.

20
21 You know, we can't provide any
22 information that way. We can't even say to any of you,
23 hey, there's a proposal being developed to address this
24 issue, you may want to talk to somebody about that
25 because we don't even know it's coming.

26
27 We get a lot of proposals from the
28 State and I think we'll continue to do so, the Alaska
29 Department of Fish and Game, because their funding is
30 going south a little bit. I don't know to what extent,
31 but it seems to be heading that way. For the most
32 part, they submit very good quality proposals to our
33 office. So I think always being in touch with the State
34 folks, like Heather, like Tyler Polum that's doing the
35 Buskin project right now and Darren, who you're going
36 to hear from, was doing Afognak. I mean it's always
37 good to be communicating with those folks just to see
38 what they're up to.

39
40 Maybe even encouraging certain people
41 to submit a proposal that you think would be a very
42 qualified principal investigator. So that's
43 encouraged. We want the best quality proposals coming
44 to our office as possible so it makes it difficult for
45 us to distinguish between highly qualified ones. When
46 they hit these five priorities really well, these five
47 criteria, they're going to be ranked high, okay. Part
48 of it is the cost benefit because our funds are
49 limited.

50

1 What we're trying to see is -- and I
2 think one of the criteria is, you know, if it's over
3 \$100,000 or something it gets -- as it gets higher in
4 price, it gets a lower ranking. Part of that is to
5 encourage partnerships and other funding sources to
6 come in so that our program is maybe paying a portion
7 of a project and not being asked to fund the whole
8 thing, okay. So it not only lowers the cost, but it
9 also probably increases partnerships because you need
10 more funding partners.

11
12 So all those things are coming into
13 play and they're coming into play more heavily as we go
14 along. These weren't stressed as much, but they will
15 be from now on. People are going to really have to
16 show that they're meeting these five criteria. The
17 better they do that, the more likely they're going to
18 get a high ranking, a high score from the Technical
19 Review Committee.

20
21 MR. SCHWANTES: Thanks for that
22 clarification, Don.

23
24 MADAME CHAIR BERNES: Thank you.
25
26 Rebecca.

27
28 MS. SKINNER: So if I understood the
29 question, the question did not relate to partnerships
30 and specific proposals. I think the question was more
31 of a process question, can we have some sort of joint
32 meeting or interaction with the other RACs, which is a
33 different level than the proposal information that you
34 just shared. So that would be, I guess, my
35 suggestion/question, can we explore having some sort of
36 a joint conference or collaborative review process or
37 something. I don't know what that would look like.

38
39 The second thing I wanted to say is I
40 just want to make it clear that in my ranking of the
41 projects I was not just ranking the Kodiak projects on
42 top or our region's projects on top because they're in
43 our region. I ranked them on top primarily because
44 they deal with living systems, living fish, shortages
45 of fish and subsistence users not having access,
46 potentially not having access to fish. To me, those
47 kind of data gathering and data monitoring efforts do
48 take priority over information that's nice to have, but
49 it's not going to immediately impact management of a
50 resource and the continued viability of the resource

1 and access of our subsistence users to the resource.

2

3 So it clearly looked like what I did
4 was I took the region projects on top, I just want to
5 make sure, and I think it is reflected in my comments,
6 that that is not how I evaluated the projects. I had
7 other criteria that I was considering as I ranked
8 those.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you.

13

14 Karen.

15

16 MS. DEATHERAGE: Madame Chair. In
17 reference to Rebecca's input about having a joint RAC
18 meeting or a RAC meeting to get together, we have
19 actually an excellent opportunity coming up for that at
20 the all-Council meeting that's going to be held this
21 winter. One of the proposed agenda items under
22 business is revisions to FRMP. There you go. And then
23 the other idea is there are a few slots open for
24 additional workshops that can be held concurrently
25 throughout the week that we're going to be meeting.
26 And if you wanted to set up a meeting with other
27 Councils in your region on that, there's a possibility
28 we could get that set up for you.

29

30 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I think that would
31 be appreciated. Thank you. Yes.

32

33 MR. KRON: Just weigh in a little bit
34 here, Madame Chair. Tom Kron with OSM. Again, as Don
35 said, we don't know what's going to happen during the
36 coming fall and winter and spring with budgets coming
37 out of Congress. We don't have any control of that.
38 We don't know if we're going to have a series of
39 continuing resolutions for short periods of time or if
40 they're going to make a decision and fund us for the
41 whole year.

42

43 So, again, it's unclear when the
44 decisions will be made about what projects to start,
45 when the start will be, but based on years past, likely
46 the decision would be made in the late January/February
47 timeframe. It might be made later depending on
48 funding. Again, this all-Council meeting coming up in
49 Anchorage, the decision on FRMP projects may have been
50 made before then. I just don't know. So just keep

1 that in perspective. Thanks.

2

3 MR. SIMEONOFF: That funding could come
4 after the all-Council meeting in Anchorage?

5

6 MR. KRON: Either after or before. I
7 think most likely, Mitch, it would come before.

8

9 Thank you, Madame Chair.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes, Karen.

12

13 MS. DEATHERAGE: For clarification,
14 this all-Councils meeting opportunity would actually be
15 for future proposals and for future collaboration with
16 other Councils in your region, in the Southwest region.
17 Because, as Tom said, it's likely the projects would be
18 funded prior to that meeting, which is now scheduled
19 for March 7th or the week of March 7th.

20

21 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Okay. I think we
22 probably need to go back to our original question on
23 the table in regards to the 2016 draft Southwest Region
24 Fisheries Resource Management Plan. I heard two or
25 three different ways to address this. One would be to
26 rank them as our RAC priorities to be presented along
27 with our comments and to make a motion for that. I've
28 also heard just to leave our comments and let them
29 stand alone. Three, to just promote the projects that
30 directly impact our region and then leave Bristol Bay's
31 up to them.

32

33 So I think I'm looking to the rest of
34 the Council members here to ask how we want to move
35 forward with this and make that happen. Yes, Tom.

36

37 MR. SCHWANTES: I think we've talked
38 about this enough.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Yes.

41

42 MR. SCHWANTES: I think they know what
43 our feelings are and I don't think we need to go
44 forward with a motion. I think if we let our comments
45 stand, I think we've made it pretty clear how we feel
46 and why we feel that way. To me, I think that will
47 suffice.

48

49 Thank you.

50

1 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Mr. Holmes.

2

3 MR. HOLMES: Madame Chair. I made a
4 little table here. I got everybody's down but Tom's or
5 maybe I got his and put them in the wrong place, but I
6 just kind of rated what people said and then as their
7 thoughts changed. So I think we could just go with the
8 transcripts and we could pass this to Karen, I'll pass
9 it to Tom and he can put his rank on the numbers
10 because everybody knows everybody's philosophy now. I
11 think that is probably well said.

12

13 I don't know if we need to on my
14 thought on a standing committee, but it would be good,
15 I think, for us to communicate with each other and try
16 to come up with a list, just an email thing on what we
17 think are important issues in our respective parts of
18 our region. I think it probably behooves us all to
19 talk to the different agencies involved in our area and
20 take the hints and comments that Don gave us on
21 shooting for multiple agencies contributing multiple
22 funds, types of capacity building sort of concepts as a
23 way to have a more sellable product.

24

25 I'm certainly going to recommend to
26 anybody I run into that's a grant-monger that relates
27 to what we're trying to do with our Council to get a
28 copy of the transcripts and plow through them every
29 time to see what our Council feels are important
30 issues. Because I can see some things like out in
31 Della's area there's really only one fairly accessible
32 sockeye system, a crossover on the Cold Bay side on the
33 Refuge.

34

35 At one time the Department had a
36 monitoring thing and another time, let's see, FRED
37 Division monitored for a while. FRED Division is gone.
38 They even had a hatchery there at one time. You know,
39 we've got multiple agencies down there, but that little
40 system over there had a Federal project for a while
41 that was funded, I think, maybe even from OSM. But
42 that's the only place folks down there have other than,
43 you know, the commercial fisheries.

44

45 So I think that, you know, the proposal
46 to do that subsistence research down on the Peninsula,
47 that's going to be identifying a lot of things coming
48 up that potentially could be used by folks trying to
49 get grants to build better knowledge on fisheries
50 resources and I think we can probably prod the wildlife

1 managers in the different areas to start thinking about
2 it too because their funds are coming short.

3
4 I think we made a lot of progress
5 today. My blood sugar is running so low I'm just going
6 to quit talking.

7
8 Thank you, Madame Chair.

9
10 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Any other
11 questions or comments.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Thank you, Don,
16 for your time. A lot of time.

17
18 MR. RIVARD: And the item almost got
19 passed over on the agenda.

20
21 (Laughter)

22
23 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: I was just
24 thinking about that. I was like how did I almost miss
25 this one. It's so important. Really, my notes are
26 written all over the place here. But thank you so
27 much.

28
29 With that, I think, would everyone like
30 to adjourn until tomorrow. We're at 5:30.

31
32 MR. SCHWANTES: Okay.

33
34 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: We can reconvene
35 at 9:00 a.m. Does that sound good.

36
37 MR. SIMEONOFF: We're recessing.

38
39 MADAME CHAIR BERNS: Recess, recess.
40 Reconvene at 9:00 a.m.

41
42 Thank you, Mitch and Della.

43
44 MR. SIMEONOFF: Okay. Come back to
45 this tomorrow.

46
47 (Off record)

48
49 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 2 through 147 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the KODIAK/ALEUTIANS FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I taken electronically by our firm on the 29th day of September, in Kodiak, Alaska;

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

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 15th day of October 2015.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/18