

1 WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5
6
7 VOLUME II

8
9 Community Hall
10 Galena, Alaska
11 November 4, 2015
12 8:15 a.m.

13
14
15 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

16
17 Jack Reakoff, Chairman
18 Ray Collins
19 Timothy Gervais
20 Don Honea
21 Pollock Simon
22 Darrel Vent

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28 Regional Council Coordinator, Melinda Burke

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Galena, Alaska - 11/4/2015)

(On record)

MS. BURKE: For those on the phone, this morning we are going to be starting with Proposal WP16-41, change in harvest limit for dall sheep in Units 24A and 24B.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Jeff Rasic was here for the Park Service on the black bear proposal and the sheep proposal, so we might have to.....

MS. BURKE: Okay. How do you feel about taking 42.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. We can do 42.

MS. BURKE: Okay. Sounds like 42. 42 is on 147.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the Council is seated. We'll bring the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council meeting back to order. And so the Proposal on dall sheep for the Gates of the Arctic is -- the Resource Manager Chief is here. We'll wait for him to show up for that one.

We're going to go to this moose Proposal WP16-42. And Lisa -- is Lisa here. She was here.

MS. BURKE: Oh. She'll be here in one second.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. Lisa's in the loo.

(Laughter)

MS. BURKE: Let's stare at her real awkward when she comes out.

(Laughter)

MS. BURKE: And to let the folks online know as well, we're going to be having about 20

1 government students from the Learning Academy that are
2 going to be joining us this afternoon. They've been
3 studying a little bit of ANILCA. They've had our
4 meeting materials. They've been looking at dual
5 management in the regulation book. So their government
6 teacher will probably bring them down somewhere around
7 1:30, right after lunch. So it will be great to have
8 those students here in the room with us. I understand
9 there's kids from Barrow all the way down the
10 southeast, so it will be great to have that
11 participation with us here in the room today.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And so we're
14 going to start with 16-42, Lisa.

15
16 MS. MAAS: Oh, okay.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Because we don't
19 have the Park Service here for the.....

20
21 MS. MAAS: For 41.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: For 41.

24
25 MS. MAAS: Okay.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right. Thank
28 you, Mr. Chair, Members of the Council. For the
29 record, my name is Lisa Maas and I'll be presenting a
30 summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal 16-42,
31 which begins on page 147 of your RAC book.

32
33 Wildlife Proposal 16-42, submitted by
34 Gary Hanchett of Bettles, requests opening a winter
35 moose season in Unit 24B remainder.

36
37 Specifically, the proponent requests
38 that the winter season in Unit 24B remainder mirror the
39 current winter season for that portion of Unit 24B
40 downstream from and including the Henshaw Creek
41 drainage. The proponent states that expanding the area
42 of Unit 24B with a winter moose season would increase
43 harvest opportunity and that the impact to the moose
44 population would be minimal given the small number of
45 Federally qualified subsistence users in the area.

46
47 The moose density in Unit 24B is low,
48 but typical of Interior Alaska moose populations.
49 Overall, the population is considered stable. Surveys
50 on the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge indicate high

1 bull/cow and calf/cow ratios over the past 15 years.
2 However, recruitment is lower than expected, mostly
3 likely due to predation. Over 95 percent of the
4 reported moose harvest in Unit 24 occurs under State
5 regulation between September 1 and September 25th.
6 Local residents only account for about 20 percent of
7 the total moose harvested under State regulations. On
8 average, only three moose per year are harvested in
9 Unit 24 by Federal permit in fall and winter hunts
10 combined.

11
12 Adopting this Proposal would increase
13 hunting opportunity, enabling Federally qualified
14 subsistence users who are unsuccessful in the fall to
15 harvest a moose during the winter in Unit 25B
16 remainder. No impact to the moose population is
17 expected as the bull/cow ratio is high and the increase
18 in harvest is expected to be very small.

19
20 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
21 support WP16-42.

22
23 And I'd just like to refer you to page
24 152 for a map of the affected area.

25
26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Lisa. Does
29 any Council Members have questions on the Proposal.

30
31 (No comments)

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so this is
34 described on page 152. Go ahead, Darrel.

35
36 MR. VENT: Yeah. Just a quick question
37 there. Is this under an intensive management area?

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's very close to
40 the intensive management area, but it's just to the
41 north of it. The State is doing an intensive
42 management that doesn't go all the way up to Bettles.
43 It's up to around the Henshaw drainage.

44
45 And I think you might have a map there,
46 Seth, of actually where that IM area.

47
48 MR. WILSON: Oh. I don't have that on
49 me.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Come on up to the
2 mic there. Maybe you could just give us a general
3 description.

4
5 MR. WILSON: Seth Wilson, Department of
6 Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence. I don't have a
7 map of the IM area on me, but because we can't do it on
8 Federal lands, it's State lands only. And it extends
9 about up to the Henshaw Creek. Going upstream of
10 Allakaket and Alatna and downstream I think almost to
11 Kanuti River. It's a very small area and it's only on
12 State lands.

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrel.

15
16 MR. VENT: Who would be using this area
17 to hunt? I mean which -- I mean would it be Allakaket
18 or Bettles?

19
20 MR. WILSON: Definitely Allakaket.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Proposal would
23 extend to the north of and east of the Henshaw drainage
24 up -- it shows a larger area on page 52, but all those
25 white lands are State or Native Corp lands. The only
26 area that this would actually affect -- you see the
27 Henshaw drainage there -- would be those colored lands,
28 which are Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge lands that
29 are south -- correction -- southwest and south of
30 Bettles.

31
32 And then there's a little block of BLM
33 lands near the Dalton Highway corridor straight to the
34 east. It's kind of a pale, pale color. That's
35 actually where the Bettles Road goes is through that
36 BLM land. That's the area that this hunt would
37 actually -- and so we've gone back and forth on this
38 Proposal. On this extension. The State of Alaska has
39 been very adamant about not having that extension, but
40 it's only for qualified rural residents.

41
42 Before 19 -- correction -- 2001 or
43 whatever it was, there was a State hunt that went on
44 all State lands north of the Koyukuk River. And it
45 went up the Wild River drainage. And so people were
46 driving in from the Haul Road on the Winter Road into
47 Bettles and they killed 17 cow moose on the Wild River
48 drainage in about a three-day period. The Koyukuk
49 River Advisory Committee was screaming for the State to
50 stop that hunt. And so that's when that hunt got

1 closed.

2

3

4 And then the Western Interior has
5 wanted a winter hunt primarily for Bettles -- or
6 correction -- for Allakaket, Alatna because their moose
7 harvest was so low. And so we had various types of
8 hunts to try and get a -- get some kind of winter
9 opportunity.

9

10

11 The State finally came to the table in
12 2010 and we got a joint State and Federal hunt below
13 the Henshaw drainage. So the problem -- so everything
14 to the south of the Henshaw drainage and west and east
15 of the Henshaw drainage is all open. The State and the
16 Federal lands all the way down to the Unit 26C. And so
17 people don't have to worry about where the Federal
18 lands are on the current winter hunt. If this Proposal
19 was to pass, the hunters would only be able to use the
20 areas -- which the winter trail goes from -- you see
21 Allakaket, Alatna. It goes almost straight over there
22 to Bettles. And so it goes across the hills through to
23 the Henshaw drainage. So that area -- that colored
24 area of the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge would be in
25 that hunt area. So it's an extensive part of the trail
26 actually is in that. Then the Bettles winter road is
27 in that. A BLM portion over towards -- but the hunters
28 would have to know where that land starts and where
29 that land ends. That's what this Proposal would do.

29

30

30 So Tim.

31

32

32 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair, does that
33 include all this National Park Service land up between
34 Bettles and Wiseman also then?

35

36

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: These -- yes. I
37 guess under this Proposal it would include those lands
38 up into the Park. But they're so distant from the
39 community of Bettles that the likeli -- and it's a
40 bulls only hunt. It has to be an antlered bull from
41 December 15 to December -- or correction -- April 15.

42

43

43 They possibly could use that portion of
44 the Park, but it's very unlikely that anybody's going
45 to go. Because this area in the John River drainage is
46 really tough to get to. And this area in the lower --
47 off along the 24A boundary over there towards the
48 Dalton Highway corridor below Wiseman is also really
49 hard to access and very low density. It's kind of more
50 tundra until you get up into the hills and so it's not

1 very many moose there. In the winter especially. The
2 moose move up into the hills. So the main hunting
3 would be around this -- between Bettles and Allakaket
4 what -- what this Proposal would affect. Because it's
5 relative close to Bettles.

6
7 So at two year -- when was that. Four
8 years ago. Two years ago. Well, 2012 cycle, the State
9 of Alaska had a Proposal to eliminate the hunt because
10 there was no participation out of Bettles. And we
11 repealed that portion because the area biologist was
12 having a problem with that extension. And so this
13 Council repealed that area to the north of Henshaw
14 Creek. But we're getting a request from another member
15 of Bettles that says that they -- he, in particular --
16 Gary Hanchett wants to be able to hunt that -- on that
17 winter hunt for bulls. And so we're getting another
18 request. And so this Council has to decide whether
19 that is agreeable.

20
21 So other comments from the Council on
22 the Proposal.

23
24 Pollock.

25
26 MR. COLLINS: Well, it looks like
27 there's no biological reason. And it does give an
28 opportunity. And it would be.....

29
30 MS. BURKE: Mic.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I've got Pollock
33 here. Pollock -- go ahead, Pollock.

34
35 MR. COLLINS: Oh, yes, go ahead.

36
37 MR. SIMON: Yeah. We have opportunity
38 for taking of bull moose during the winter. But one
39 bull moose taken. It's hard to hunt moose in the
40 winter. And bull moose meat is kind of tough and no
41 fat, so we don't do much hunting for moose in winter.
42 If it was cow season, we would try to take a cow. But
43 bull moose no. Right now there's more moose after the
44 intensive management on the wolves, taking wolves and
45 so everybody has meat in the freezer right now. Yeah,
46 if there's an opportunity to take moose in the winter
47 time we'll take it, so thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So you had a
50 comment, Ray.

1 MR. COLLINS: Well, it's one of those
2 situations I think where there's no biological reason
3 not to allow it. And the harvest would be very low.
4 People can choose whether they wanted to go or not.
5 It's only affected two. So it does create another
6 opportunity that -- I think I would support it for that
7 reason.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: One of the primary
10 reasons to stay with the State to the cycle before was
11 there was a sunset on the State and Federal hunt. And
12 I didn't want to jeopardize the hunt on the State side.
13 But the Board of Game has now implemented the winter
14 hunt as a permanent regulatory -- or semi-permanent.
15 There's no sunset on it. And so did the Federal
16 government -- Federal hunt.

17
18 Go ahead. You've got a comment, Lisa?

19
20 MS. MAAS: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21 I'd just like to expand a little bit on the proponent's
22 discussion or rationale for the Proposal.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

25
26 MS. MAAS: And he states that local
27 residents frequently engage in winter travel for this
28 area for trapping and wood cutting and visiting other
29 remote allotments, so it sounds like the opening it as
30 a winter moose season, he wouldn't just be going out
31 moose hunting. But he'd be cutting wood or trapping or
32 doing other activities. And he saw this as an
33 opportunity if he was unsuccessful in the fall hunt to
34 get a moose during the winter hunt. And also some
35 allowing improved access to areas that are accessible
36 in the winter and not other times of the year.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The other aspect of
39 the cycle before was there was Teshekpuk caribou coming
40 into that area and wintering right there. And so my --
41 I never want to shoot a moose in winter if I can get
42 caribou in winter. And that's because that's a
43 resource that's not going to stay. And so now the
44 Teshekpuk herd has -- in 2013 started into huge
45 decline. And so now they're not anywhere as close to
46 Bettles. And so I don't even know if they'll even see
47 a caribou now for possibly several years. There's no
48 telling. So now the need for winter moose hunting has
49 increased because of the decline in the Teshekpuk and
50 Western Arctic herd.

1 So that's just a discussion on the
2 Proposal.
3
4 Any other comments on the Proposal.
5
6 (No comments)
7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we'll go down
9 through the list here. And so did we get any Tribal
10 comments from Evansville, Allakaket.
11
12 (No comments)
13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Alaska Department of
15 Fish and Game. Are you on the phone this morning,
16 Jill?
17
18 MS. KLEIN: Hi. Good morning. Yes,
19 this is Jill. Right now the Department's preliminary
20 recommendation is to oppose the proposal. I mean it's
21 based on that there would be increased regulatory
22 complexity. And the area biologist had mentioned that
23 there wasn't a harvestable surplus but it wasn't
24 increasing in the area.
25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, I'm not --
27 confused about that. Because the -- what's the
28 bull/cow ratio there in 24B, Lisa?
29
30 MS. MAAS: The bull/cow ratio has
31 ranged from 46 to 70 bulls per cows over the past 15
32 years. And again the harvest under the Federal winter
33 hunt has averaged about three moose per year.
34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So yeah, I'm a
36 little confused about the -- there's harvestable moose
37 bulls. And that the winter trail from Bettles to
38 Allakaket goes over those hills, which a lot of moose
39 ringing the Kanuti Flats, they still on those hills,
40 especially if they don't have very deep snow. And so
41 if somebody from Allakaket or Bettles was traveling on
42 the winter trail, they would have a higher rate of
43 encountered in the hilled part that you see in the
44 northwest portion of the Kanuti National Wildlife
45 Refuge lands.
46
47 So the State is opposed to the
48 Proposal. Do we have any Kanuti National Wildlife
49 Refuge position, Vince?
50

1 MR. MATHEWS: Vince Mathews,
2 Subsistence Coordinator for Kanuti, Arctic, and Yukon
3 Flats. We don't have a position, but I need to respond
4 to the concern by the State on regulatory complexity.

5
6 One of my charges and my duties was to
7 reduce the complexity of the hunts in that area.
8 Currently, if this doesn't pass, when I issue permits
9 in Allakaket, they have to get -- if they want a wide
10 range of hunting opportunity, they have to get the
11 winter permit. They have two Federal permits, one
12 north, one south. And a State permit. And then when I
13 was issuing those permits my eyes opened quite wide
14 because they talked about they had a lot of allotments
15 in the area that didn't have the winter hunt. And
16 early on we didn't think there was that much interest
17 in that area. So those are factors that are there.

18
19 So I'm a little confused on the
20 complexity because now if this passed they would only
21 have to get one Federal permit, if I got it correct,
22 and one State permit. And so that would reduce, from
23 my opinion, the complexity of the regulations.

24
25 And you've already pointed out that
26 there was valid concern about when it was opened up to
27 the State and State access. And you pointed out also
28 that the hunt -- potential hunt pressure on this is
29 quite low. I think the records reflect -- and she
30 would know better, Lisa, like two hunters out of
31 Bettles would want it.

32
33 And then of course someone mentioned
34 it. This is what I call an insurance policy. You
35 know, if you're not able to get a moose in fall, this
36 is an opportunity. Not as desired as a fall moose, but
37 an opportunity. And that's what this Council has been
38 working on.

39
40 So no position on this actually on
41 this, but from the Refuge.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Kanuti is
44 ambivalent to the Proposal?

45
46 MR. MATHEWS: Well, if Lisa's on line,
47 I've been bouncing around. But when I met with Mike
48 and Lisa earlier, it was like we have no concern about
49 it. But I don't know if I want to say that they have
50 no position or neutral. I just think that they're

1 letting it play out at your level and then of course at
2 the Board level.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So thanks,
5 Vince.

6

7 So that was the Federal Agency comment.

8

9

10 And no Tribe comments that I know of,
11 Melinda.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And there's no other
16 Regional Councils that have C&T for this, except the
17 Western Interior Regional Advisory Council. The
18 Koyukuk River Advisory Committee has not met this fall
19 to visit this Proposal. The Gates of the Arctic
20 Subsistence Resource Commission has not met at this
21 point and will meet next week. And possibly will take
22 this Proposal up.

23

24 Summary of public comments. Have we
25 gotten any written comments.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any public testimony
30 on this Proposal.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I don't see any.

35

36 And so the Chair will entertain a
37 motion to adopt Proposal 16-41.

38

39 MS. BURKE: 42.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: 42. 42. Oh, yeah.

42 And so.....

43

44 MR. GERVAIS: So moved.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So moved. Do we got
47 a second. Do I have a second.

48

49 MR. SIMON: Second.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Pollock.

2

3

4 So Council discussion. And any
5 discussion from the Council on the Proposal.

6

7 Don.

8

9 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Boy,
10 this is working good today.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah.

13

14 MR. HONEA: But I just -- I guess I
15 mean I -- some of these Proposals I'd like to leave it
16 with you guys. I mean not knowing whether on the books
17 you had this hunt before. And so I -- it's kind of
18 interesting that we don't have anything from Allakaket
19 or anything. Or I mean I -- not knowing the history of
20 this area, I just generally would leave that to you
21 guys.

22

23 I mean I guess it's actually at the
24 call of the Refuge Manager. And if they also are
25 neutral, I see nothing detrimental about this Proposal.
26 I mean the take seems to be kind of minimal. And like
27 we say, I mean if Allakaket could benefit or
28 surrounding villages could benefit from this hunt, the
29 people that didn't get anything this past fall, that
30 would be great.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Don.

33

34 Any other comments.

35

36 Darrel. Oh. I'll let Darrel go here
37 first. Go ahead.

38

39 MR. VENT: Yeah. It seems like that we
40 -- you know, like you said, we didn't go to the Fish
41 and Game meeting or didn't get any comments from the
42 villages of Allakaket or Alatna. But this Proposal was
43 made from someone that was in Bettles, but it seems
44 like it would benefit the people of Allakaket if they
45 knew about it. So maybe if this passes, so this
46 information get to those villages.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There are people
49 from Allakaket that travel the winter trail from
50 Bettles to Allakaket. They would have -- Allakaket,

1 Alatna people would actually have opportunity to
2 encounter bull moose on that winter trail. And so
3 that's -- they would have to know where those Federal
4 lands are and where they end when they're getting just
5 below old Bettles there. They'd have to know where
6 those lands are ending.

7

8 You had a comment, Tim?

9

10 MR. GERVAIS: I had a question. Does
11 there Koyukuk River AC have a position on this?

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: They haven't had a
14 meeting yet this fall. We're having a meeting on
15 December 3. And on my conference call. They've cut
16 our budget way down. We can only have one meeting.
17 And so we'd prefer to have that face-to-face meeting
18 closer to the Board of Game meeting later on. So we're
19 mainly having a fisheries meeting is what we're having.

20

21 So any other comments from the Council.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: At this point, I'm
26 favoring this Proposal now. And the justification
27 would be primarily because of the decline in caribou in
28 the declining opportunity to harvest winter meat. The
29 bull/cow ratio is real high and now we have -- the
30 winter hunt is in place without a sunset. The harvest
31 from Allakaket and Alatna, which is a much larger
32 population, has been very low on the winter hunt.
33 Primarily because it's not cows. It's bulls. And
34 you've got to have an antlered bull. So there's a long
35 period in the winter where by December 15, 60 percent
36 of bull moose have lost antler, according to Glenn
37 Stout, our area biologist. And so you only have 40
38 percent of the bulls that you would encounter would
39 even have antler at that time of the year, even at the
40 opening of the season.

41

42 And then they begin growing antler
43 after the vernal equinox in March and so they begin to
44 get soft antler. And so they're again legal. So you
45 would have an opportunity for about 40 percent of the
46 moose population up through the first of the year,
47 first of the middle of January. Then you'd have about
48 another 20, 30 percent would start to show antler in
49 the end of the season. And so there's two periods of
50 time when antlered moose would be available. So the

1 number of moose, even though you've got 60 bulls per
2 100 cows, there's only about -- at any one time there's
3 no more than 20 to 40 percent of the moose that
4 actually have antler. And so that has a limitation on
5 harvest. And so -- and then the Federal lands are
6 limited near Bettles and Allakaket, Alatna.

7
8 And people from Wiseman could use this
9 hunt, but where moose are at in the Park area there,
10 it's a real tough country to hunt moose, especially
11 bulls. Bulls stay higher. They're bigger and they
12 stay higher in elevation than cows. Cows with calves
13 stay lower in elevation because they've got baby cows.
14 So bulls are way up there at the tree line. They're
15 safe up there. You're not going to go up there to get
16 them. So the likelihood of people from Wiseman
17 actually participating is very low. Because we spend a
18 lot of time hunting moose in the fall time.

19
20 And so I'm in favor of this Proposal at
21 this time primarily because the winter opportunity for
22 caribou has declined and in likelihood may not return
23 for a while. And so I don't see the bull/cow ratio is
24 adequate. So I think there's a harvestable surplus.

25
26 Any other comments from the Council.

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 Discussion.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 MR. VENT: Question.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.
37 Those in favor of Proposal WP16-42, signify it by
38 saying aye.

39
40 IN UNISON: Aye.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

43
44 (No opposing votes)

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you on the phone
47 this morning, Carl?

48
49 MS. BURKE: He's going to try to be on
50 at about 11:00 or noon.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. All right.

2

3 So 42 is adopted.

4

5 So we can go back to 41, the sheep
6 proposal.

7

8 MS. MAAS: All right. Thank you, Mr.
9 Chair. Members of the Council. For the record, my
10 name is Lisa Maas. And I will be presenting a summary
11 of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal 16-41, which
12 begins on page 136 of your RAC book.

13

14 Wildlife Proposal 16-41, submitted by
15 the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource
16 Commission, requests changing the harvest limit for
17 those portions of Unit 24A and 24B within Gates of the
18 Arctic National Park from three sheep to three sheep
19 not to exceed one ewe. And to rescind the sheep
20 sealing requirement for this area.

21

22 The proponent states that restricting
23 ewe harvest within the Park will ease the current sheep
24 population decline and enhance recovery. The proponent
25 also states that transporting horns to Fairbanks to be
26 sealed is an extreme burden on Federally qualified
27 subsistence users and that there is no management to
28 this requirement since there is no horn size
29 restriction in these Units.

30

31 In 2010 the stipulation to comply with
32 State sealing requirements was clarified in the handy-
33 dandy. Sheep populations across the Brooks Range
34 declined following the severe winters of 2012 and 2013.
35 Surveys of the Itkillik Preserve within Gates of the
36 Arctic National Park indicate sheep populations
37 declined over 60 percent between 2012 and 2014.
38 Recruitment during this decline has been extremely low,
39 while the proportion of rams has increased due to the
40 declines in other cohorts. Most of the reported sheep
41 harvest in Unit 24 occurs under State regulation.

42

43 Sheep harvest within the Park boundary
44 is limited to residents of Unit 24 residing north of
45 the Arctic Circle and residents of Allakaket, Alatna,
46 and Hughes. Most harvest within the Park is by
47 residents of Anaktuvuk Pass, which has a 60-sheep
48 community harvest quota. It is difficult to know how
49 much harvest occurs.....

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And in Wiseman.
2 Wiseman is a resident zoned community for the Gates of
3 the Arctic Park. You want to.....
4
5 MS. MAAS: Right. Aren't you north of
6 the Arctic Circle?
7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh.
9
10 MS. MAAS: Yeah. Residents of Unit 24
11 residing north of the Arctic Circle.
12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.
14 (Affirmative) So Allakaket.....
15
16 MS. MAAS: So Wiseman's included in
17 that.
18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Allakaket is also
20 north of there.
21
22 MS. MAAS: North of the Arctic Circle?
23 Okay.
24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Whatever.
26
27 (Laughter)
28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I just want to make
30 sure that you're noting that.
31
32 MS. MAAS: Sure. Thanks.
33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.
35
36 MS. MAAS: It is difficult to know how
37 much harvest occurs under the regulation in question,
38 but it is assumed to be low. Adopting this Proposal
39 would restrict sheep harvest to one ewe, which could
40 improve recruitment and facilitate recovery.
41 Eliminating the sealing requirement would decrease the
42 regulatory burden on Federally qualified subsistence
43 users.
44
45 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
46 support WP16-41, with modification to require a Federal
47 registration permit. A Federal registration permit
48 eliminates any ambiguity associated with State sealing
49 requirements and provides harvest data useful in
50 management.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Lisa.

4

5 Any questions on the Proposal.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: At the Gates of the
10 Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission level we have
11 been asking for -- there's no harvest data for the Park
12 because there's been no harvest reporting basically
13 since the '90s. And so for years and years and years
14 we've been trying to get harvest reporting. Now
15 they're having a -- the Park Service is using a
16 questionnaire -- mail out questionnaire. But in
17 reality, harvest from Bettles, Wiseman, Allakaket,
18 Alatna, possibly Hughes is completely undocumented.

19

20 And so that's why harvest for dall
21 sheep for Wiseman don't reflect what the actual take is
22 because we kill sheep inside and outside the Park.
23 Some can be in the Dalton Highway corridor permit, the
24 Federal permit, and some can be in the Park, which is
25 undocumented.

26

27 Before when -- from the '80s through
28 the mid-'90s, Tim Osborne, the area biologist here, had
29 a harvest report card and you got three harvest
30 tickets. And so when you killed a sheep in the Park,
31 you punched out. And so that's how that was accounted.
32 And then we sent the harvest tickets in. That was
33 eliminated in the late '90s and then they went to a
34 registration. So they sent out to the vendors and you
35 filled in your license number and you got a
36 registration number. But then they may or may not send
37 a questionnaire. And then they quit doing that. So
38 now the State has decided that harvest was so low in
39 the Park that they didn't care.

40

41 And so I think that the registration
42 permit -- it may be slightly more burdensome for
43 subsistence users to get the permit, but it documents
44 the harvest. And when you're going to the Federal
45 Subsistence Board or the Board of Game, you've got to
46 have harvest information. If you don't have harvest
47 information, the managers don't think there's any
48 harvest and they want to allocate. If it's other than
49 Park -- hard Park lands -- if they're Park Preserve or
50 Refuge lands or any BLM lands, then those resources are

1 thought to be unharvested and are allocated to other
2 user groups. So it's very important to have moose
3 harvest reporting, sheep harvest reporting, caribou
4 harvest reporting because it protects your use is what
5 that actually does.

6
7 And so I've been saying that at a lot
8 of meetings. And people think well, they don't want to
9 talk about it. Well, you don't want to brag in your
10 community, but you should at least tell the managers to
11 protect your use. That's a very important thing. So I
12 do agree with the modification for harvest report.

13
14 And the sheep sealing thing, that was
15 -- nobody had the slightest clue you were supposed to
16 get sheep sealed from the Park because of -- what are
17 they going to plug this ewe horn that's this big or a
18 little teeny ram. It's like nobody knew that. But
19 then the OSM clarified that. They found -- researched
20 and for the Federal permit that we had for the Dalton
21 Highway corridor, they decided that we didn't have to
22 have those sealed. But the Park sheep had to be
23 sealed.

24
25 So we want to eliminate the sheep
26 sealing requirement on the Park lands. And so this
27 would be specific to this particular area.

28
29 So any other -- that would be my
30 discussion on the Proposal.

31
32 Any other comments on the Proposal from
33 the Council.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll go to the
38 State, Jill.

39
40 MS. KLEIN: Hi. This is Jill. So the
41 Department's preliminary recommendation for Proposal
42 16-41 is to support it. And it's interesting listening
43 to what folks are saying with respect to the sealing.
44 An important aspect seems to be able to get the data.
45 Like you saying, for this data.

46
47 So the preliminary recommendation was
48 to include the State sealing requirements, but maybe,
49 you know, after hearing from all of you, they'd be open
50 to the Federal harvest permit.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, currently the
2 -- in the harvest -- the Federal registration permit
3 for the Dalton Highway corridor in 24A actually --
4 which was a State Proposal that the State of Alaska
5 submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board does not
6 require sealing. And so -- and maybe the State didn't
7 realize that. But this -- all this would do is
8 basically make a blanket area for hunting in that
9 central Brooks Range where sheep don't have to be
10 sealed.

11
12 We could stipulate unless take removed
13 from the Unit, which the State of Alaska has something
14 to that effect, but I don't think that any or many of
15 these sheep would be removed from the Unit. So that's
16 not currently under the Federal registration permit
17 stipulation. So I don't see any problem with the
18 modification that the OSM has developed.

19
20 So that's the State's comment.

21
22 Federal Agency. Jeff, are you going to
23 speak to us? Jeff Rasic's here from National Park
24 Service.

25
26 MR. RASIC: My name is Jeff Rasic. I'm
27 the Chief of Resources for Gates of the Arctic National
28 Park. We're in support of the aims of this Proposal.
29 It imposes a conservative measure by restricting the
30 number of ewes as part of the bag here, which we think
31 is appropriate in light of the declines in the sheep
32 population in the Brooks Range in the last few years.
33 And it also eliminates this burdensome sealing
34 requirement of, for example, folks from Allakaket
35 having to fly to Fairbanks to have horns sealed.

36
37 So those are good steps and we're in
38 support.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

41
42 Any questions for the Park Service.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The sheep I see
47 have declined dramatically. And the chronology is a
48 little bit different than what the managers are
49 actually -- the sheep were very low historically from
50 marked hunting in the central Brooks Range in the

1 teens, '20s, until the 30's, when the mining industry
2 started to dry up and the market hunting was
3 eliminated.

4
5 Then the sheep population increased
6 dramatically through the late '50s and '60s. And then
7 1961, the State of Alaska increased the bag limit to
8 two rams. My dad killed two rams. And that was they
9 flew over the Brooks Range and went, oh, my gosh.
10 There's a lot of sheep here. So my dad got -- we lived
11 at Bettles and he got two rams.

12
13 And the sheep population was very high.
14 There was predator control. They had both hunting
15 permits and there was easy winters for many years in
16 the central Brooks Range. Then in 1976 is when the
17 sheep population started to -- it was really high and
18 we got deep snow years started. And then the sheep
19 population started declining. And coinciding with the
20 high hare population, wolves were raising big litters
21 of pups. And the sheep were in hardship and the wolves
22 started really working on the sheep.

23
24 And the other factor is the golden
25 eagle started increasing from the -- they stopped the
26 use of DDT and the eagles were crushing all their eggs.
27 And the golden eagle population started exploding on
28 that high hare population at the same time as the wolf
29 population was exploding. So the predation factor
30 started pushing the sheep down in conjunction with deep
31 snow. They started to stabilize. Then we got some
32 deep snow years in the early '90s. They tapered down
33 again. They started to slightly recover.

34
35 And now 2013 just really knocked them
36 on their nose. That late spring of 2013 did bad, bad
37 things to the sheep population. And 2013 there were no
38 lambs. They killed all the yearlings. The year before
39 there had been a bunch of yearling survival. And 2014,
40 last year I watched 37 ewes. They had one lamb. And
41 so the fecundity for the -- the recovery rate lags for
42 two years. And it happens with moose. And it's been
43 documented moose of Koyukuk.

44
45 But now the hare population has
46 increased. The golden eagle numbers have dramatically
47 declined. And I'm not sure what that is, but I don't
48 see nearly as many golden eagles. And they're a major
49 predator of sheep lambs. And I've watched golden
50 eagles kill 90 percent of sheep lambs in the early

1 '90s. I watched 35 ewes have lambs. Most of them had
2 lambs and by one week post-lambing, these move off
3 these lambing clips, there was like two lambs left.
4 They killed most of the lambs.

5
6 So now the golden eagle numbers have
7 declined. We've had disease, but it's not -- there was
8 rabies in the Chandalar for wolves and the wolf numbers
9 are not that high. And so now the -- this year I see
10 lots of lambs. And they're large lambs. And they look
11 nice and healthy, but we do still have to be
12 conservative with the ewe harvest at this point. And
13 so that's the reason to reduce the subsistence harvest
14 of ewes.

15
16 And so that's the bigger picture of my
17 TK or whatever you want to call that of the dall sheep
18 population, which is not documented because most of the
19 sheep have not been really documented in the central
20 Brooks Range. It wasn't until we started requesting
21 sheep surveys on the south slope of the Brooks Range in
22 2002 is when the State of Alaska started actually doing
23 sheep surveys in the central Brooks Range with the BLM.
24 And so it was in conjunction to -- a reaction to a
25 proposal that we had to go to a drawing permit for non-
26 resident hunters on 24A and 25. That's where that
27 sheep survey's actually -- where any kind of data
28 started coming from.

29
30 And I'm a proponent of getting data to
31 track these populations. So having said all that, that
32 was supplementary information to the record.

33
34 Go ahead, Jeff.

35
36 MR. RASIC: Yeah. If I could just add
37 a few other comments based on what you just relayed to
38 us.

39
40 Yeah. We recognize this gap in the
41 information about harvest in the region, so we're keen
42 to fill that gap and collect harvest data. We've had
43 Staff spend time in Allakaket, particularly is a
44 community that would be affected by this change, and
45 they're not in favor of a Federal permit, so there's a
46 bit of an obstacle there. And we've discussed creative
47 ways to solve that with maybe a community liaison who
48 could collect that harvest data.

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Some way of

1 collecting data because it protects the subsistence
2 use. And so whether it's the registration permit for
3 the other communities or registration permit for
4 household survey by the Park Service, one of the two.
5 We need to have this harvest data because it protects
6 the subsistence use.

7

8 Because when Jeff Rasic's gone, your
9 subsequent managers don't know what happened. There's
10 no long term memory unless it's actually documented.
11 So we need to have that.

12

13 Would you be in favor of household
14 surveys for sheep, Pollock?

15

16 MR. SIMON: Yeah. A house-to-house
17 survey would be okay, I guess. But I wanted to talk a
18 little bit about the history of hunting in the
19 mountains.

20

21 Up by Alatna River, it's about 150
22 miles, 200 miles by boat. And traditionally our people
23 have hunted sheep up in the mountains for years. In
24 1940s, 1950s my father and my grandfather, you know,
25 before outboard motors they poled up the Alatna River
26 and spent a couple of months hunting sheep. And due to
27 not much meat around Allakaket those days, there's no
28 moose and not much caribou. So they have to hunt sheep
29 in the summertime. They left -- they'd go in July and
30 come back in August, make raft and we don't have to go
31 up and hunt sheep these times now, but I have two sons
32 that want to keep up the tradition of going up into the
33 mountains and looking for sheep, you know.

34

35 The take of sheep is pretty low in
36 Allakaket and Alatna, and Hughes. Not every year does
37 the boys go off to hunt. Their take is pretty low, but
38 now with this proposal, our take is reduced to one ewe.
39 We traditionally take three, if any sick, but due to
40 the population crash of sheep, it will again restrict
41 the subsistence side. I feel like it's being
42 restricted again because of low numbers of sheep.

43

44 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pollock.

47

48 I do want it understood that, you know,
49 if this Proposal is adopted that when the sheep begin
50 recovery and we get good numbers of cohorts that we

1 will return back to the original three ewe or any sheep
2 limit. But this is an interim measure to protect the
3 sheep population, is the primary reason for this
4 Proposal.

5

6 And so any other comments, Jeff?

7

8 MR. RASIC: No. I would just sort of
9 reemphasize that we've -- we spent time in the
10 communities here, especially Allakaket, and there's
11 pretty strong and vocal opposition to the Federal
12 permit. We take that seriously. We don't want to take
13 away one burden in terms of bureaucracy and reporting
14 and replace it with another one. So we're ready to
15 defer to what the communities want to do and listen to
16 the RAC and other community input.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. I think that,
19 you know, there's different household surveys could be
20 -- this could be in conjunction with different
21 household surveys. Seth's doing survey all the time
22 here.

23

24 Do you want to come to the mic there,
25 Seth? Just stay right there.

26

27 MR. WILSON: Thank you, Chair. Seth
28 Wilson, Department of Fish and Game. And I -- yeah. I
29 do want to make the room aware that I have been doing
30 big game surveys for the past five years. It's part of
31 the Intensive Management Project that we have been
32 doing up there. And it does document the use and
33 harvest of sheep.

34

35 And I don't really have anything to add
36 except to reiterate what Member Simon said there, is
37 that the harvest is -- it's fairly low. One, two or
38 three each year. But it's sustained. Every year
39 people go. And it includes the Park lands, the Alatna
40 River, the -- I think the John River and also the
41 Dalton corridor.

42

43 What I do want you to consider is that
44 this year is the last year for these household surveys
45 because of funding. And, you know, it's sort of my
46 consideration I would like to see them continue because
47 we've been removing wolves. And of course this is all
48 moose-related. We've been removing wolves. I'd like
49 the surveys -- the harvest surveys continued at least a
50 couple of years past this project. And if we could do

1 that, you know, it would be pretty simple to document
2 sheep take.

3

4 But just doing a household survey for
5 sheep itself would be kind of burdensome. We'd have to
6 talk about it. Because only three, four or five
7 households each year hunt sheep, so it wouldn't make a
8 whole lot of sense to survey a whole community. Yeah.

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, I was just
10 wanting to use your data in the interim until your
11 project ends. And then the Park Service would pick up
12 what those communities that typically just register
13 with the license vendor. And then you come by later on
14 in the winter sometime and ask how many sheep you got.
15 That's all we really need. So that it protects the
16 communities. You know, like there's got to be harvests
17 coming up from Hughes sometimes, too, and, you know, we
18 need to have that documented so that we can protect
19 those subsistence uses.

20

21 That's the main reason I'm -- yeah, it
22 sounds like a bummer to get surveyed, but you need to
23 have data. Because when you go to the Federal Board or
24 the Board of Game and they're like oh, there's no
25 harvest of sheep. It's like hold it. The data's lost
26 or they're not taking it or there's some problem.
27 That's where you get a twist. That's where at the
28 Board level documenting this harvest is very, very
29 important.

30

31 You got a comment there, Lisa.

32

33 MS. MAAS: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 I'd just like to state that from the OSM perspective,
35 we understand the Federal registration permit might be
36 more burdensome than not having one, but we see that as
37 a compromise. That it's much less burdensome to get a
38 permit versus transporting horns to Fairbanks.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm fully in favor
41 of the permit for Wiseman, Bettles, Coldfoot, or many
42 -- not Coldfoot, but any other community that's used to
43 using permits. Bettles, Wiseman -- no problem. But
44 the down river communities household surveys. So the
45 modification could be Federal registration permit or
46 household survey. That's the modification that this
47 Council can modify the Proposal, the modified language.

48

49 And so any other comments on that from
50 the Agency, Lisa.

1 MS. MAAS: Sure. I guess I can't speak
2 for sure about this, but just from -- if you'll turn to
3 page 18 in the handy-dandy where it clarifies sealing
4 requirements. And it also is a little unclear because
5 we're talking about a national park and State
6 regulations don't really apply to national parks, but
7 on page 18, it says unless a Federal permit is
8 required, a person who takes a dall sheep in Units 24
9 must possess as State harvest ticket and comply with
10 the requirements of that ticket, including any sealing
11 requirements. And again I'm just not sure how if we
12 only required household survey data, how that would --
13 under reg -- you know, the regulations, how that would
14 affect the sealing requirement.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, this Council
17 can request the Federal Board to amend that language to
18 include registration with either a harvest ticket or
19 household survey. And so we can amend the Proposal to
20 say that so that they change the handy-dandy. Because
21 some people don't want to have these harvest tickets
22 and that type of reporting. And there's many hunts
23 where they survey the households. And so the amended
24 language could read with Federal registration permit --
25 which it's a registration. You know, you could have
26 people -- I'm going to go sheep hunting -- to sign up
27 to go. You're registered. And then the reporting part
28 of it is what the -- that's what the Department wants
29 is -- or the OSM wants is the harvest data. And so how
30 that's collected, that can be changed. The Federal
31 Board can change that.

32
33 So this Council can amend the language
34 to read with a Federal registration permit that's
35 collected with harvest ticket or household survey. I
36 think that would satisfy the Federal program.

37
38 What do you think, Chris?

39
40 MR. MCKEE: This is a -- I would say I
41 don't know. I hate to give kind of a wishy-washy
42 answer, but I've never seen a Board kind of modify that
43 kind of requirement as a -- I understand what you're
44 saying and I understand that it would, you know, kind
45 of be the best of both worlds, but I don't -- I can't
46 recall off the top of my head where the Board has made
47 that kind of modification. So I'd have to go back and
48 do a little bit of research on that.

49
50 MS. MAAS: Well, in my understanding --

1 I'm sure you know more than I do about this, but the
2 State conducts the household surveys. And I just am
3 unclear how the Federal Subsistence Board could mandate
4 household surveys are conducted. Because OSM does not
5 conduct household surveys.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Agencies -- I've
8 known of many Agencies that conduct household surveys.
9 Federal Refuges and so forth will do household surveys.
10 Because when we did the Koyukuk Moose Hunter Working
11 Group Plan, 40 percent of moose are reported. The
12 majority of moose that are taken aren't reported.
13 There's a -- well, there's a 40 percent fudge factor
14 they called it.

15

16 And so household surveys are used by
17 various agencies. Not the OSM, but agencies. So the
18 Park Service in this case because these are Federal
19 Park lands could do the survey. Or if it's moose,
20 Kanuti will do the survey. But it's not OSM doing the
21 survey -- the household survey.

22

23 Chris.

24

25 MR. MCKEE: Yeah. Again -- and I
26 agree. I mean it's done by a variety of agencies. And
27 my only question that I don't know about is whether the
28 Board could change that as a requirement for kind of a
29 replacement for reporting. And so I'm just not sure of
30 that. I'll have to check.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This Council can
33 request the Board to do that.....

34

35 MR. MCKEE: Certainly, yes.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:in the modified
38 language. And this would be compatible with the wishes
39 of the community. And so we want to go along with the
40 wishes of the community to not have harvest tickets.
41 And so that's -- I think that would be better in the
42 long run.

43

44 And so we'll make that request in the
45 modification to the language and to the Board.

46

47 Go ahead, Ray.

48

49 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, Mr. Chairman. Has
50 any effort been made to work with Anaktuvuk, since

1 that's the one community that doesn't want it. To
2 bring somebody in the community to gather that
3 information and report instead of having somebody else
4 come in their households? The State had something like
5 that at Lime Village at one time. There was a moose
6 season there. They were allowed 40 moose and all they
7 had to do was report it. And somebody gathered the
8 information in the community and sent it in. And as
9 you said, it protects their use. And maybe some
10 funding from the Park or somebody could see or work
11 with the village council there to set up a situation
12 like that where they would do that. But somebody would
13 have to go in and sell the reason for it, is to protect
14 their subsistence use or document their subsistence
15 use.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Or the Anaktuvuk
18 hunt at Snow Slope Borough that's collecting the
19 information for the Park Service. And so there's
20 another like an agency is collecting the information.
21 So this has already been established in the Gates of
22 the Arctic already, this household survey for the dall
23 sheep part of it.

24
25 Do you want to expand on that, Jeff?

26
27 MR. RASIC: Yeah, I would. Yeah.
28 Exactly. The North Slope Borough has assisted with --
29 it's a community harvest in Anaktuvuk for one, so it's
30 a little bit separate from this Proposal. Same basic
31 issue. The North Slope Borough is assisted with
32 harvest survey, community survey in the last few years
33 and that program came to an end and we've been working
34 with a working group in Anaktuvuk Pass to report and
35 collect this harvest data. So it's evolving, but we're
36 doing exactly what you described. Having a community
37 led effort to collect this data.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Would the National
40 Park Service be inclined to pay the Tribal --
41 Allakaket, Alatna Tribal Councils to collect the
42 harvest data for dall sheep?

43
44 MR. RASIC: Yes. Something like that
45 would be a good solution.

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So there is
48 mechanisms that could be implemented that are similar
49 in Federal regulation, like for Anaktuvuk Pass harvest
50 data collection.

1 The -- and what is OSM's opinions the
2 community harvest for Anaktuvuk Pass -- those people
3 have to have their sheep sealed. Chris?

4
5 I don't think so. And so -- see, the
6 subsistence users didn't know we had to have sheep
7 sealed in the Park. That was not something that we
8 were aware of. And so they would technically have to
9 have their sheep sealed over there in the Park. And so
10 we should comment to the Federal Board that there's a
11 need for harvest reporting -- for community harvest
12 reporting and the elimination of the requirement for
13 sheep sealing not only in the described -- this
14 Proposal, but also in the current. Because I don't
15 think anybody in Anaktuvuk Pass is getting sheep
16 sealed. I know that's not happening. They're not
17 going all the way to Fairbanks with sheep horns. And
18 so this does not have to be onerous on the subsistence
19 users. This is a regulatory glitch. It's just not
20 fitting in with subsistence practices.

21
22 And so we can describe the Proposal
23 that there needs to be a harvest reporting, whether
24 through registration permit with harvest tickets or
25 household surveys, it's up to the Federal Board and OSM
26 to decide how those are going to be -- but we do not
27 have to have a sealing requirement on the Gates of the
28 Arctic sheep because there's no horn size requirement.
29 There's no need for it. That's a sport regulation.
30 That's where that comes from. That comes from the
31 State of Alaska sporthunting regulations for full curl.

32
33 And so the record should reflect that
34 this Council is opposed to having horn sealing
35 requirements for subsistence uses in the Gates of the
36 Arctic Park and that -- but harvest data needed to be
37 collected, whether through household survey or through
38 a registration permit, depending on the community.

39
40 Jeff.

41
42 MR. RASIC: Yeah. I just wanted to add
43 that one of our wildlife biologists, Kumi Rattenbury,
44 is on the phone. And she's one of the people who's
45 spent a lot of time, along with Marcy Okada, our
46 subsistence coordinator in these communities. So she
47 can answer detailed questions about how reporting is
48 working in Anaktuvuk Pass and what kind of feedback
49 they've heard from communities like Allakaket.
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Are you still
2 there, Kumi?

3
4 MS. RATTENBURY: Yes, Mr. Chair. I'm
5 still on the phone. For the record, this is Kumi
6 Rattenbury, I'm with the National Park Service in
7 Fairbanks. And we spent some time in Allakaket last
8 winter and have had multiple meetings in Anaktuvuk over
9 the past couple of years since the decline was first
10 noticeable in the summer of 2013.

11
12 So there have been community meetings.
13 Also meetings with the village council and the city
14 council. And informally there are a group of hunters
15 that we also meet with. And the reporting over them is
16 basically just a collective, you know, consensus on
17 what they know has been harvested in their community,
18 separating ewes and rams. So it's not attached to any
19 particular hunt in the community, but it's more this is
20 -- this is what the community has harvested at this
21 point during the hunt. Their hunt lasts from July 15th
22 to December 31st. So we'll be getting some more
23 updates now that the season has progressed, but the
24 last two years that we've done that and the year before
25 that in 2013, (indiscernible) did a household survey.
26 We received good data, I think. And so I think it
27 helps us and for people not to feel like they -- what
28 they are individually harvesting is attached to their
29 name in that process.

30
31 When we met with the Tribal Council in
32 Allakaket, they were interested in having a liaison do
33 some things similar within their community.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And Anaktuvuk Pass
36 residents are not sealing dall sheep horns under the
37 community harvest hunt?

38
39 MS. RATTENBURY: No. And that's where
40 it gets a little bit weird because the sealing
41 requirements for Unit 26 are different than the sealing
42 requirements for Unit 24. So 24 is any rams and 26 I
43 think is any rams where there's a horn size
44 requirement. And they're not -- they're not sealing.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So currently
47 subsistence users are caught in the crossfire here.
48 And so the mandate of the Federal Board under ANILCA --
49 the regulations are should have the least burden on
50 subsistence users. And so this horn sealing

1 requirement should be stricken from the Federal program
2 unless they have specific horn requirements for the
3 dall sheep in specific units. And so those dall sheep
4 that are taken in the Park don't have horn requirements
5 except for the -- I think it's 26B Killik Preserve has
6 a seven-eights horn requirement.

7
8 But right now what we're talking about
9 is 24 Proposal. And so it is to amend the language.
10 Let the Federal Board sort it out. Let OSM sort it
11 out. This is what the Council wants. This is what the
12 Council needs for the communities. And let the Federal
13 Board -- and we'll speak to that at the Federal Board
14 level. Let me talk to the Board about it.

15
16 So we've covered that enough. Thank
17 you, Jeff. And identified a glitch in the program.

18
19 And so there's no other -- we have no
20 idea what North Slope Regional Council has done on this
21 Proposal. Koyukuk River hasn't met on this one. And
22 the SRC -- it's an SRC Proposal -- or Gates of the
23 Arctic SRC.

24
25 We don't have any public comments on
26 the Proposal, Melinda.

27
28 MS. BURKE: Mr. Chair, you will find on
29 page 146 one written public comment that speaks to this
30 Proposal. This comes from Miki and Julie Collins, who
31 live in Lake Minchumina. They comment on this
32 Proposal. Quite a few of these Proposal align State
33 and Federal regulations. Unless contraindicated for
34 south biological reasons, these are supported. It is
35 onerous to keep track of what is allowed where and how
36 and when, and everything you can do to help ease this
37 burden is appreciated. Regs have become much more
38 complicated. 16-41 is supported. It does not make
39 sense to pay hundreds of dollars in airfare to fly to
40 Fairbanks to get your horns sealed. Simplified
41 regulations are emphasized, Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I appreciate Miki
44 Collins in Lake Minchumina. And so.....

45
46 MR. COLLINS: She's on the Denali SRC.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. Ray?

49
50 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. She is on the

1 Denali SRC. And we've had sheep proposals, so that's
2 why they're following these I think.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Regional Council
5 recommendation.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The chair will
10 entertain a motion to adopt Proposal 16-41, with
11 modified language to include a harvest ticket -- where
12 is that OSM language. Let me find that. Yeah. Let's
13 see. Excuse me. To -- with modified language to
14 require no more than one ewe, by Federal registration
15 permit or -- inserting the language or community
16 household survey. And where is this language about
17 horn sealing requirement. Oh. That's in the original
18 Proposal. Or community harvest survey. That can
19 either be on a house-to-house survey or the community
20 is contracted, but one way or another community harvest
21 survey. By Federal registration permit or community
22 harvest survey.

23

24 Is that clear, Chris? Does that
25 suffice?

26

27 (Nods affirmatively)

28

29 And we'll speak to the Federal Board
30 about that when we talk to them about the Proposal.

31

32 Is that language fair to the Council.

33

34 MR. GERVAIS: Yes.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do we have a motion.

37

38

39 MR. GERVAIS: So moved.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved by Tim. Do we
42 have a second.

43

44 MR. VENT: Second.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded.

47

48 Further discussion on the Proposal.
49 We've spent a lot of time on this. Any further Council
50 discussion.

1 (No comments)
2
3 MR. HONEA: Question.
4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.
6 Those in favor of the Proposal, signify it by saying
7 aye, as amended.
8
9 IN UNISON: Aye.
10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.
12
13 (No opposing votes)
14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And we've had Sidney
16 Huntington come to visit.
17
18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: He can't hear. So
19 I'm his secretary.
20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. He can't. All
22 right. We always enjoy Sidney coming to the mic. He
23 -- they're going to write stuff for him and he's going
24 to talk to us. And I wanted to wish Sidney happy
25 birthday. He turned 100 this -- 100 years old this
26 spring -- summer.
27
28 MR. HUNTINGTON: Hello. You're the
29 experts. I wanted to talk to you. I'm a champion of
30 the resource all my life.
31
32 (Microphone distortion)
33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We appreciate Sidney
35 coming to every meeting we've had here in Galena. He's
36 a very respected elder in the whole Koyukuk and Central
37 Yukon Region. And we really appreciate all the work
38 he's done all those years on the Board of Game for this
39 area and the high populations of moose and animals that
40 we have in the central part of the State of Alaska, the
41 interior of Alaska. And so this Council always enjoys
42 hearing what Sidney has to say.
43
44 The words of wisdom on fishery and game
45 management.
46
47 Thank you, Sidney.
48
49 (Applause)
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And we'll go to a
2 break, Melinda.
3
4 (Off record)
5
6 (On record)
7
8 MS. BURKE: For the record, on the
9 teleconference who -- if you identified yourself
10 yesterday, that's fine. Anybody brand new or any
11 Council Members on the phone.
12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim wanted a
14 clarification on that last Proposal that we just
15 passed.
16
17 MS. BURKE: Okay.
18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Tim, do you want
20 to state your question again on 16-41?
21
22 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, Mr. Chair.
23
24 MS. BURKE: Folks, sit down, please.
25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Sue's got a
27 gavel. Eastern Interior.
28
29 So go ahead, Tim. You had a question
30 on 16-41?
31
32 MR. GERVAIS: All right. Thank you,
33 Mr. Chair. Yeah. I just wanted some more information
34 on why the Federal permit wasn't appropriate for
35 certain communities in the affected area.
36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The primary reason
38 is there's harvest by traditionally is not -- you don't
39 talk about harvest. And so you don't want to be like
40 having your name attached to stuff like that. That's
41 why community harvest household surveys go a lot better
42 in a lot of communities. Because the hunters don't
43 feel comfortable about having their name attached to
44 harvest. So the household surveys for certain
45 communities are the most beneficial to derive the
46 information that the managers want. And for certain
47 communities like Bettles or Wiseman, we're used to
48 having harvest reports. And so we can fill out cards
49 and we can send those in the mail and so that's not a
50 problem.

1 So the Subsistence Management Program
2 has to be sensitive to cultural differences in how
3 harvest is recorded. The Subsistence Division has
4 realized that a long time ago. And they've utilized
5 household surveys for decades, as far as I know.
6 Probably 30 years or something like that in various
7 places. And so that's why I was pushing for
8 modification to include the -- all they need to know is
9 the sex and how many sheep are killed in the Park.
10 That's all they really need to know. And so who killed
11 or all that, that doesn't really matter. As long as
12 they came from the resident and communities that have
13 eligibility to hunt there. That's all they really need
14 to know.

15
16 And so the Federal Board is going to
17 have to tailor this to the cultural needs of the
18 subsistence users for this hunt. And that's why that
19 language -- why I was -- that's what's going around in
20 the back of my mind as I'm talking.

21
22 Does that answer your question, Tim.

23
24 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Thank you for
25 covering that.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have any
28 further comments on that harvest reporting for
29 Allakaket, Pollock, since you live there?

30
31 MR. SIMON: Yeah. That community
32 harvest report rather than filling out that harvest
33 ticket when we get -- I usually get the harvest ticket
34 to get a moose. And this winter give me all that paper
35 and that portion is set to tear it off and this portion
36 you're supposed to return and mail it back after
37 hunting season. When I put that piece of paper on the
38 table or on the shelf someplace and while I'm away
39 somebody cleaned house and just threw it away in the
40 trash. And that Agency keeps writing to me. They're
41 where's your harvest ticket. We need to know if you
42 hunted. So for that reason I'd like to see that
43 community report better.

44
45 It works better for me. Thanks, Mr.
46 Chair.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pollock.

49
50 So I think that answered that question.

1 And so Melinda.
2
3 MS. BURKE: Yes, Mr. Chair. I think we
4 will finish up with Lisa's Proposals.
5
6 You're 34, too, right?
7
8 MS. MAAS: 34 and 29/30.
9
10 MS. BURKE: 34. Oh, yes. Oh. We
11 didn't do 29/30. Yes. Let me.....
12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I thought we did
14 those. Go ahead, Lisa.
15
16 That was the Bettles moose hunt one.
17
18 MR. VENT: Yeah.
19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So go ahead, Lisa.
21
22 MS. MAAS: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 For the record, my name is Lisa Maas. And I will be
24 presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife
25 Proposal 16-29/30 which begins on page 174 of your RAC
26 book.
27
28 Wildlife Proposal 16-29, submitted by
29 the Nushagak Fish and Game Advisory Committee, and
30 Wildlife Proposal 16-30, submitted by the Togiak Fish
31 and Game Advisory Committee, requests that the caribou
32 season in Unit 9B and portions of Unit 17 be extended
33 from August 1 to March 15 to August 1 to March 31st.
34 This is a crossover Proposal because residents of Lime
35 Village and Stony River have a customary and
36 traditional use determination for caribou in portions
37 of Unit 17.
38
39 The proponents state that the requested
40 change would increase opportunity for Federally
41 qualified subsistence users and would reduce regulatory
42 complexity by aligning State and Federal regulations.
43
44 In February 2015, the Alaska Board of
45 Game extended the closing date of the State caribou
46 season from March 15 to March 31 in order to improve
47 access due to difficult travel conditions. The
48 Mulchatna caribou herd peaked at 200,000 animals in
49 1996, declining to 30,000 animals by 2008, the most
50 recent population estimate. Bull/cow ratios have been

1 below management objectives of 35 bulls per 100 cows
2 since 2001 and calf/cow ratios and recruitment are
3 moderate, but seem to be improving.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What are the
6 bull/cow ratios currently, last data?

7

8 MS. MAAS: All right. So on page 183,
9 table one, it lists the total bulls per 100 cows. And
10 over -- I mean it looks like there's a range of about
11 13 to 23 over the past ten plus years.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. That's bad.
14 Okay. Go ahead.

15

16 MS. MAAS: Over the past five years,
17 reported harvest has averaged 350 caribou per year,
18 which is well below management objectives. Federally
19 qualified subsistence users harvest the majority and
20 the hunt has been closed to non-residents since 2009.
21 Since 2007, an increasing proportion of the harvest has
22 occurred in February and March. Adopting this Proposal
23 would increase harvest opportunity for Federally
24 qualified subsistence users and decrease regulatory
25 complexity by aligning State and Federal seasons. No
26 impact to the Mulchatna herd is expected as reported
27 harvest has been well below management objectives,
28 indicating the herd can sustain in increase in harvest.

29

30

31 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
32 support WP16-29, with modification to remove the
33 regulatory language and delegate authority to the
34 Togiak National Wildlife Refuge manager to set hunt
35 parameters via delegation of authority letter only.
36 And to take no action on WP16-30.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I wanted to go back
41 to that bull/cow -- those are percentages. Those are
42 not actually ratios. It says 15.2 bull percent. See,
43 that's how the Department of Fish and Game has
44 camouflaged that bull/cow ratio. And so.....

45

46 MS. MAAS: There's lots of columns in
47 that table. So the very first column in the table, if
48 you look at the top it says total bulls per 100 cows.
49 And then when you go to the righthand side, it has
50 total bulls percent.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, okay.
2
3 MS. MAAS: So it's percent and the
4 ratio.
5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, okay. That's
7 still very poor.
8
9 MS. MAAS: Sure.
10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so I.....
12
13 MR. COLLINS: But it's increasing.
14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Slowly increasing.
16 The bull/cow ratios that dropped down -- when they
17 started to go below 30, that's when the herd starts to
18 decline. When they got down to 14 bulls per 100 cows
19 in '05, '06, they went into reproductive failure.
20 Because that -- when you broke it out, it came down to
21 one large bull per 100 cow. And so the herd got vastly
22 over-harvested on the bull component. The herd crashes
23 on its nose. Shifting breeding to small bulls that
24 then wore themselves out and went into winter kill
25 factors because they're not supposed to be breeding.
26
27 And so this herd is in recovery still.
28 And I want the Council to understand that this herd is
29 -- the bull/cow ratio is still far below management
30 objective by ten bulls per 100 cows of 35. And I'm
31 concerned about this herd's recovery rate with
32 increasing harvest. That's what I'm -- especially of
33 the bull component, you know.
34
35 Go ahead, Lisa.
36
37 MS. MAAS: Sure. It looks like this
38 season -- I mean it's extending it 15 days, but for at
39 least portions of Unit 17 it's a may be announced
40 season. So this -- for 17A, the season may be closed
41 by the Togiak manager. And then for Unit 17A remainder
42 and 17C remainder, it's a may be announced season.
43
44 I just wanted to point that out as that
45 might help limit the harvest and just -- again this is
46 -- it's already a State regulations to the 31st.
47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So this is -- most
49 of these are any caribou, but no more than one bull in
50 17A. So I -- you know, I'm real concerned about the

1 bull. That's what my opinion -- I'm very opinionated.
2 My opinion is that the Mulchatna herd got wiped out
3 because they killed off all the bulls. They had
4 massive amounts of air taxis flying all kinds of
5 hunters into there and the wound loss rate was
6 unbelievable.

7
8 I talked to people that hunted in
9 those. In the early 2000s, there was dead caribou
10 laying all around the lakes where the hunters were.
11 There was 13 camps on one lake and there was dead
12 caribou laying everywhere. They were shooting through
13 bulk here. Oh, and they had five caribou bag limit.
14 Just blazing away at long range. All kinds of bad
15 things happened to the Mulchatna bull population.

16
17 I'm concerned that this bull population
18 is not recovered to where it can sustain a lot of bull
19 harvest. And so, you know, the way caribou are, the
20 bulls especially in January and February, they start
21 aggregating. So all the bulls get in one bunch. And
22 so you see all the bulls together. And so if you have
23 a two caribou limit, you're going to kill two caribou.
24 But, you know, they're going to be bulls.

25
26 And so I would like to see no more than
27 one of these to be bulls where they have two caribou
28 limits, you know, in 17A remainder and 17C. There's
29 some real problems. There's some real biological
30 problems. And I want this Council to be aware that
31 this Mulchatna herd -- Carl was discussing that at our
32 last meeting. About the concern for this Mulchatna
33 herd being vastly reduced. Not migrating nearly as
34 far. Not feeding nearly as many communities. And its
35 recovery rate is currently at 30,000.

36
37 Is that what the.....

38
39 MS. MAAS: That's correct. That was in
40 2008, which is the most recent population estimate.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And why isn't there
43 any more recent biological data? That's a long time
44 ago. They don't survey the herd. Nobody cares about
45 this Mulchatna herd anymore. I feel that there needs
46 to be more recent harvest data.

47
48 And so this Proposal's a shot -- "a
49 shot in the dark." Because we have no idea what the
50 trajectory of this herd is. And the bull/cow ratio is

1 still very low. And so I don't know that there's
2 biological footing for the OSM to support a Proposal
3 with that documentation of low bull/cow ratio and a
4 30,000 herd that used to be 200,000 15 years ago. And
5 so I'm a little concerned about the Mulchatna and its
6 recovery.

7

8 And I feel that Refuge System and the
9 State of Alaska should do a survey. Western's being
10 surveyed every year because it declined dramatically.
11 And that they can when they get survey conditions
12 that's conducive to doing that.

13

14 But I'm inclined to oppose this
15 Proposal. Because I don't feel that there's enough
16 data to support additional harvest opportunity,
17 especially for bull caribou on the Mulchatna herd. The
18 quicker we get those bulls back, you know, there's
19 pheromone synchrony. Caribou calf timing is critical.
20 They calve at specific dates so that they're eating
21 tussock blossoms. And so if you have small bulls, the
22 harassment rate is a lot higher. The estresses are
23 kicked back. And bad things -- biological bad things
24 happen to caribou.

25

26 And so I'm concerned that this is too
27 soon to advance harvest opportunity, especially for
28 bull caribou. And so I have concerns about this
29 Proposal. I'm just saying those on the demonstration
30 of the Proposal.

31

32 Do we have any Tribal comments on this
33 Proposal, Melinda.

34

35 MS. BURKE: (Shakes head negatively)

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Alaska
38 Department of Fish and Game. Are you there, Jill?

39

40 MS. KLEIN: Hi. Yes, this is Jill.
41 The preliminary recommendation from the Department on
42 Proposal 29 was to support it because it would align
43 the State and Federal regulations. And right now the
44 State does go through the March 31 date.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Didn't catch
47 that part.

48

49 So if -- so then I will have to support
50 this if it's -- the State season's already open. But I

1 will state to the State -- I will comment to the State
2 that I'm concerned about this caribou herd. I don't
3 see enough data.

4
5 And you can bring that back to your
6 office, Jill.

7
8 That there's not enough data on this
9 herd. We need a census of the herd. We need more
10 current bull/cow ratios. And I'm very concerned about
11 where that caribou herd's trajectory went to into the
12 decline for bulls and the recovery. And that's -- we
13 basically are -- the Boards -- Federal and State Boards
14 are making decisions outside of biological parameters.
15 They have no current data on that herd. They have --
16 this herd still might be 30,000. We have no idea what
17 it is right now.

18
19 And so I'm -- but I would have to
20 support alignment with the State on this Proposal, but
21 I am concerned about this herd. And I want the record
22 to reflect that.

23
24 Does the Council understand my
25 concerns.

26
27 Tim.

28
29 MR. GERVAIS: Yes. Lisa, what's the --
30 where did you say the harvest was?

31
32 (Phone interruption)

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Let's pause for one
35 second. We have the -- the call dropped, I think.

36
37 Yeah. The call dropped off. Yeah.
38 We'll let her dial it back in.

39
40 Technical difficulties. So we'll let
41 -- get the call back up.

42
43 MS. BURKE: Do you want me to read what
44 the Eastern Interior RAC did? Or the Y-K. I'm sorry.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: YK-Delta? Yeah. Go
47 right ahead.

48
49 MS. BURKE: Mr. Chair, Council. The
50 YK-Delta met and discussed this Proposal. They support

1 WP16-29, with modification as suggested by OSM. They
2 believe this Proposal would provide for increased
3 subsistence opportunity. The local AC's are comprised
4 of Federally qualified users and have the detailed
5 knowledge necessary to propose regulations that meet
6 local needs. There's no conservation concern and the
7 Proposal would benefit subsistence users.

8

9 Because of action on WP16-29, the
10 Council took no action on WP16-30.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So yes, I'm not
13 opposed to subsistence use. But there is -- there's
14 already State opportunity there.

15

16 MS. BURKE: Okay. We're connected.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But I'm also --
19 would disagree with the YK-Delta's analysis and OSM
20 that there's no biological concern. I don't have --
21 see any data to support that statement at all. There's
22 no survey data. There's no composition data.

23

24 Do you have a comment, Lisa?

25

26 MS. MAAS: Well, I was just going to
27 reply to Tim's question.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. Go ahead. Go
30 right ahead.

31

32 MS. MAAS: So the harvest objectives
33 from the State is 2,400 to 8,000 caribou. So I mean
34 the minimum harvest objective is 2,400. And over the
35 past five years, an average of 350 caribou per year
36 have been harvested. So that's a pretty big
37 difference, 350 versus 2,400 as the harvest objective.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The harvest
40 objectives were set before the herd declined. That's
41 where those are coming from.

42

43 MS. MAAS: Yeah. There's been several
44 changes to the har -- or the population and harvest
45 objectives. The most recent in 2009, the population
46 objective was 30,000 to 80,000 caribou. So currently
47 -- I mean the most recent population estimate is
48 30,000. And again that's several years old. But that
49 is within the very lower estimate of the population
50 objective.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, they have to
2 have high harvest objectives to maintain IM. They're
3 under intensive management. And so that's why that's
4 like that.

5
6 But no, this was the template of how to
7 destroy a caribou herd. Shoot all the bulls and see
8 what happens. It's like with an 80,000 harvest
9 objective of a 200,000 member herd. That's a crazy
10 number. You can't kill half the caribou. They're not
11 that reproductive.

12
13 So the Department of Fish and Game and
14 the Board were derelict in the management of the
15 Mulchatna caribou herd. It was a template of how to
16 wreck a caribou herd. They're a low reproductive
17 animal. They have one calf. They don't have twins.
18 If they have a bad winter, they don't have a calf the
19 next year.

20
21 This was the template of how to wreck a
22 caribou herd. I was very -- and I'm still very unhappy
23 with the Department of Fish and Game's management of
24 the Mulchatna herd. Oh, it was hoof rot. It was
25 lightning. It was all kinds of crazy ideas of why that
26 herd crashed. No. We destroyed the bull/cow ratios
27 and we watched the herd go into the toilet.

28
29 And I'm concerned that the Federal and
30 State managers do not have current harvest data -- or
31 correction -- population data of population and
32 composition. And the composition is what we need to
33 have. And so we need to have that. And I want that as
34 an action item on our Annual Report, that we need to
35 have that harvest data for the -- or correction -- the
36 composition and population data for -- developed for
37 the Mulchatna caribou herd.

38
39 Having said that, we'll continue on.
40 You've touched a sore point under my saddle about this
41 Mulchatna herd.

42
43 (Laughter)

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Because what that
46 did is it took the caribou away from the Western
47 Interior Region. They used to migrate into the Western
48 Interior Region. They're crossing the Kuskokwim River
49 to the north of Aniak. There's beautiful caribou
50 country to the north of Aniak. Those hills are covered

1 in lichen. They're getting all the way up to McGrath
2 and then oh, we shoot them all out. And now nobody's
3 seen a Mulchatna caribou on the Kuskokwim River for a
4 long -- I mean maybe in the foothills right on the
5 border, but not for a long time now.

6
7 Wiping caribou herds is bad for
8 subsistence users because they -- larger herds spread
9 over vaste regions and they feed more people of rural
10 Alaska.

11
12 So we had the YK-Delta's comments to
13 the Advisory Committees. This was Advisory Committee
14 Proposals.

15
16 Is there other Advisory Committees that
17 commented on this, Melinda?

18
19 MS. BURKE: Not that have been relayed
20 to me, Mr. Chair.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. And did
23 the Lake Clark Subsistence Resource Commission visit
24 this Proposal. This is in part of their area.

25
26 Go ahead there, Lisa.

27
28 MS. MAAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
29 just wanted to mention that -- well, 2008 is the most
30 recent photo census. A presentation by the area
31 biologist in 2015 suggested the population may now be
32 around 26,000. And I don't really have any more
33 information on that, but it was just a presentation
34 that the area biologist gave.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, that's bad
37 news.

38
39 MS. MAAS: But I'm not sure how he came
40 up with that suggestion.

41
42 MR. GERVAIS: Is that Jim Wellington?

43
44 MS. MAAS: Barton. N.L. Barton.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Wellington retired.
47 The last meeting we saw him here in Galena three or
48 four years ago, that was his retiring. And so he
49 wanted to bail out after that Mulchatna fiasco.

50

1 (Laughter)
2
3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so 26,000. How
4 does the Board of Game increase the harvest opportunity
5 when they have a declining herd with a terrible bull --
6 did he have any idea what the bull/cow ratios were in
7 his presentation?
8
9 MS. MAAS: That's all the information I
10 have.
11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. We need
13 biological information. This is just all by guess and
14 by golly. We can't be going there. This Council's
15 demanding. We did it on the -- in the Innoko Flats.
16 We wanted moose bull/cow ratios. We need to know what
17 those bull/cow ratios to assess the health of these
18 herds. And we need biological information on the
19 Mulchatna caribou herd.
20
21 So that's in our Annual Report. Is
22 that agreeable to the Council.
23
24 (Council nods affirmatively)
25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So okay. Any
27 summary of written comments.
28
29 (No comments)
30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No written comments.
32 Public testimony. Nobody from that far down.
33
34 (No comments)
35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the Regional
37 Council recommendation.
38
39 The Chair will entertain a motion to
40 adopt Proposal 29, because that's what the YK-Delta
41 adopted was Proposal 29.
42
43 MS. BURKE: Yes.
44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And took no action
46 on 30.
47
48 MS. BURKE: Yes.
49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And we'll take

1 action on 29. My intention is to support the Proposal,
2 but with reservation.

3
4 So.....

5
6 MR. COLLINS: I so move.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So moved by Ray.

9
10 MR. VENT: Second.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Darrel.

13
14 Discussion on the Proposal.

15
16 Tim.

17
18 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. If we're saying
19 they're getting the information that the current herd
20 size is 26,000, then it's still in decline. That's 12
21 percent less than the 2009. So I can't support
22 increasing the season length when we're still trending
23 downward in the herd size. And without a better
24 estimate of the herd size and an update on the bull/cow
25 ratio. So I'm going to oppose this Proposal.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

28
29 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman, I'm
30 supporting it because it's for subsistence users and it
31 -- the season has already been lengthened by the State.
32 So we're not extending it. We're just allowing
33 subsistence users to match what the State already has
34 in place. If we want to reduce the season, we would
35 have to go to the State Game Board and have a proposal
36 there to shorten it, see what I mean.

37
38 So for that reason I'm -- I can't see
39 denying subsistence users, even though they're not
40 separated I guess, to say that they shouldn't -- it's
41 already in the State regs.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There's a State
44 regulation already.

45
46 This would -- basically would apply to
47 the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, Lisa? Those would
48 be the primary Federal lands?

49
50 MS. MAAS: Yeah. I believe that's

1 correct. And again, I mean this is C&T because Lime
2 Village and Stony River have customary and traditional
3 use for this area. And I don't think includes most of
4 17A. I don't think they have C&T for 17A.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It wouldn't really
7 affect our subsistence users that far to the west in
8 17A.

9
10 So you're supportive of the Proposal.

11
12 Any other comments.

13
14 Don.

15
16 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
17 know, I just actually don't feel comfortable. So if we
18 -- if it came down to voting this, I'd just as soon
19 wait for our Council Member from Aniak to -- for his
20 take on this. Because, you know, some of them just --
21 I'd just as soon defer it to Region. But this one,
22 because of its crossover thing, I think it's vital that
23 we get Carl's input on this. I just don't feel
24 comfortable in making any decisions when, you know,
25 Carl knows the area. He -- you know, he's given
26 reports on the Mulchatna caribou herd before. And this
27 directly affects that area and I'd just -- you know,
28 without his input, I'd rather defer or wait or postpone
29 till he gets online, if that's -- that's just my
30 comment.

31
32 Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: When was Carl going
35 to call in?

36
37 MS. BURKE: He was hoping by about
38 11:00 or noon. But Ray's got to get back to Anchorage
39 for the School Board.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, I see.

42
43 MS. BURKE: The large School Board
44 meeting.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

47
48 MS. BURKE: So we're going to lose
49 quorum in less than an hour.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And the State
2 has an open season on 20 -- or correction -- 17A.
3 Hunters can still hunt under the State season, correct?

4
5 MS. MAAS: Yes. That's correct.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so this does not
8 preclude any harvest opportunity. This just aligns
9 with -- but I will -- I'm going to vote for the
10 Proposal, but I'm going to speak that I have distinct
11 reservations because there's a lack of data. The last
12 estimate -- estimate by guess and by golly by the area
13 biologist that the herd has declined by 12 percent.
14 And there's a real need for the Federal and State
15 managers to develop a current population and
16 composition.

17
18 And so that will be reflected in the
19 justification for -- but since the harvest opportunity
20 is already provided by the State hunt, that doesn't --
21 it will not preclude hunters from hunting on 17A unless
22 there's a closure. And with YK-Delta's -- probably has
23 considerably more C&T use in the 17A than we do, it's a
24 weighted situation at the Federal Subsistence Board.

25
26 So that's my position.

27
28 MS. BURKE: Mr. Chair.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

31
32 MS. BURKE: Thank you so much, Lisa,
33 for reminding me. I do -- Donald Mike transmitted --
34 right before I left, he transmitted the Bristol Bay's
35 action on this Proposal.

36
37 Bristol Bay RAC supported WP16-29 and
38 took no action on 30 based on action taken on 29. The
39 RAC supported the Proposal as recommended by OSM. The
40 Nushagak AC and the Lake Clark -- I think it's Lake
41 Clark SRC support the Proposal also. That was the
42 action for 29 and 30, Mr. Chair.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like this
45 Council to transmit a letter to those Regional Advisory
46 Councils in the Lake Clark SRC stating our reservations
47 because of the population data is not present since
48 2008. There's been some estimates. And the estimate
49 was decline. And there's no composition. So I want
50 those Councils and the SRC to understand that there's

1 real biological concern for this Mulchatna herd. We're
2 not out of the woods. This thing is still auguring
3 downward.

4
5 And so I -- you know, the Federal
6 government again cannot follow the State of Alaska into
7 the hole. The Federal government followed the State
8 into the demise of the Mulchatna caribou herd by
9 maintaining high harvest on a declining bull/cow ratio.
10 And so the managers at OSM and the Refuges need to
11 understand there's -- the State of Alaska is trying to
12 cover their tracks on what happened to this herd. And
13 we can't act like there's nothing -- everything is
14 fine. Nothing is fine yet. There's no data that
15 supports that the population is fine. There's need for
16 real conservation on this herd.

17
18 And so I would like a letter
19 transmitted to those other Regional Advisory bodies and
20 the Lake Clark SRC about the real realities of what we
21 know about this herd. Because this highly affects
22 what's going to happen in the Western Interior Region.

23
24
25 So any further discussion.

26
27 Don.

28
29 MR. HONEA: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
30 Chair. So you are supporting this Proposal, with the
31 OSM modifications?

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes. With -- and
34 with the caveat that I -- you know, certain members of
35 the Council have distinct reservation about expanding
36 use of this herd when we have no biological data. And
37 I'll speak to the Board -- Federal Board about this
38 issue at the table.

39
40 Any further discussion.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 MR. GERVAIS: Question.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question's been
47 called. Those in favor of the Proposal, signify it by
48 saying aye.

49
50 IN UNISON: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim.
2
3 MR. GERVAIS: I'm opposed.
4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Got one
6 opposition. And the record will note that.
7
8 And so -- Melinda?
9
10 MS. BURKE: Yes, Mr. Chair.
11
12 Do you want to do 34 while you're up
13 there, Lisa?
14
15 Okay. Lisa's got one more Proposal and
16 then we'll move on to Palma's. So we will do WP16-34.
17 It can be found on page 210 of your Council books.
18
19 MS. MAAS: All right. Thank you, Mr.
20 Chair, Members of the Council. For the record, my name
21 is Lisa Maas. And I will be presenting a summary of
22 the analysis for Wildlife Proposal 16-34, which begins
23 on page 210 of your RAC book.
24
25 Wildlife Proposal 16-34, submitted by
26 Leonard Landlord of Mountain Village, requests closure
27 of Federal lands in that portion of Unit 18 west of
28 Mountain Village to the harvest of all big game by non-
29 Federally qualified subsistence users.
30
31 Big game species found in the area with
32 open hunting seasons include black bear, brown bear,
33 moose, and wolf. This is a crossover Proposal because
34 residents of Holy Cross have a customary and
35 traditional use determination for black bear in Unit 18
36 and all Western Interior residents have a customary and
37 traditional use determination for wolf in Unit 18.
38
39 The proponent states that non-local
40 sporthunters interfere with subsistence hunts on
41 traditional hunting grounds and requests the closure to
42 non-Federally qualified subsistence users. There are
43 no conservation or over-harvesting concerns for black
44 bear, brown bear or wolves in Unit 18. The moose
45 population is very high and there is concern that the
46 population will outgrow the habitat resulting in a
47 population crash. Report of moose harvest has
48 increased steadily over the past 15 years in response
49 to the growing moose population. Similarly, the
50 proportion harvested by non-local residents has also

1 steadily increased.

2

3 This Proposal does not meet any of the
4 criteria for a closure outlined in the Board's closure
5 policy. Additionally, closure of the moose hunt to
6 non-local residents could hasten a population crash.

7

8 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
9 oppose WP16-34.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Lisa.

14

15 And so are there Tribal comments on
16 this Proposal.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Alaska Department of
21 Fish and Game comments, Jill?

22

23 MS. KLEIN: This is Jill. The
24 Department's preliminary recommendation on Proposal 16-
25 34 is to oppose it.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you.

28

29 Did the Advisory Committees in that
30 area meet on this Proposal.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any public comments.
35 Written comments.

36

37 MS. BURKE: No public comments, Mr.
38 Chair. But I do have action from the Yukon-Kuskokwim
39 Subsistence RAC.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

42

43 MS. BURKE: For WP16-34, they are
44 opposed to this Proposal. There is no conservation
45 concern with moose in the area. Unless there is
46 increased harvest there could be significant habitat
47 degradation due to exceeding carrying capacity.
48 Subsistence users are satisfying their needs. There is
49 a concern regarding the continuation of subsistence
50 uses as the moose population is allowed to increase to

1 the point where habitat is impacted and productivity of
2 the moose is decreased, Mr. Chair.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

5

6 And so Regional Council recommendation.

7

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And the Chair will
12 entertain a motion to adopt WP16-34.

13

14 MR. GERVAIS: So moved.

15

16 MR. COLLINS: Second.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved and seconded.

19

20 Discussion. I agree with the YK-Delta
21 RAC and the OSM conclusion. The need to harvest the
22 moose population in the YK-Delta is imperative because
23 I watched the North Slope moose population explode in
24 the '60s and '70s. And then it crashed hard on its
25 nose when they over-browsed the habitat. And so once
26 the habitat is degraded, then it's hard for the moose
27 to recover. Like now they're bumping along. They get
28 -- it doesn't support.

29

30 And so I don't want to see the YK-Delta
31 because it spread quite a bit of use away from the
32 Western Interior Region. The YK-Delta now has a lot of
33 moose harvest and it moves -- there used to be a lot of
34 hunters coming upriver to hunt in the Western Interior.
35 Now they're hunting closer to home. And so it's better
36 for everybody. And it's best to suppress that moose
37 population because they don't have the predator load to
38 suppress that at this point.

39

40 And so I'm opposed to Proposal 16-34.

41

42 Any other comments from the Council.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrel.

47

48 MR. VENT: Call for the question.

49

50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.

1 Those in favor of Proposal 16-34, signify it by saying
2 aye.

3

4 (No aye votes)

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed, same
7 sign.

8

9 IN UNISON: Aye.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the Proposal
12 fails.

13

14 So thanks so much, Lisa. You're doing
15 a good job.

16

17 MS. MAAS: Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for coming to
20 work for OSM.

21

22 Palma.

23

24 MS. INGLES: Good morning, Mr. Chair
25 and Council Members. For the record, my name is Palma
26 Ingles and I'm from OSM.

27

28 Mr. Chair, with your permission, I'd
29 like to go ahead and cover WP16-35 first, which is on
30 232 of your meeting book.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead.

33

34 MS. INGLES: Okay. Proposal WP16-35
35 was submitted by Martin Nicolai of Kwethluk. If this
36 Proposal is adopted, the people hunting black bears or
37 brown bears in Unit 18 would be allowed to use an
38 artificial light, such as a flashlight, when hunting at
39 a den site.

40

41 When he was young, the proponent's
42 family traveled to squirrel camp close to Kilbuck
43 Mountains. They went there in April for about a month.
44 And bears were harvested not only for food, but also
45 for the hides and other parts of the bear to be used
46 for handicrafts and things like that. They also made
47 skin boats that carried the family back to Kwethluk at
48 the end of their hunt. This activity is well
49 documented in ethnographic accounts.

50

1 The proponent says that some people
2 continue to harvest wildlife in the Kilbuck Mountains.
3 And he said to his knowledge that only certain hunters
4 go out and harvest bears from the dens. It is done
5 when there's a lot of snow in the springtime. And some
6 go up into the mountains behind the village. But he
7 also noted that there is not much snow in the past
8 year, so they're not getting up to these den sites.

9
10 He said it is a customary practice for
11 the hunter to use a flashlight so he can see the bear
12 in the den. And much like the discussion we had
13 yesterday for WP16-40, this is a safety issue. They
14 want to be able to use a light when they're hunting the
15 bears in the den.

16
17 So just to give you a little bit more
18 background.

19
20 Using an artificial light when taking a
21 brown bear or black bear at a den site was illegal in
22 State and Federal regulations until 2008. In 2008, the
23 Board of Game allowed the use of artificial light to
24 take a black bear at a den site in an area that
25 included Unit 19A, in the middle Kuskokwim River
26 drainage.

27
28 In Unit 18, bear habitat is primarily
29 in the Kilbuck and Andreafsky Mountains. And black
30 bears also stay in forested areas along the main Yukon
31 and Kuskokwim River corridors in the eastern portion of
32 Unit 18. This has been documented in ethnographic
33 accounts that people hunt denning bears during the
34 winter months in a traditional use pattern. And some
35 hunters continue this practice when meat is needed or
36 if the hunters have experienced necessarily a food
37 shortage of other animals and need to hunt a den bear.

38
39
40 So during periods of adequate snow
41 cover, access to bear hunting areas is by snowmachine.
42 Black bears are considered a source of food on par with
43 moose, caribou, and other wild resources. In
44 communities such as Aniak, Chuathbaluk, and Kalskag,
45 black bear meat in fact continue to be an important
46 part of the local diet. Brown bears harvested for food
47 remain part of the contemporary subsistence pattern in
48 some of the predominantly Yupik communities in and
49 adjacent to Unit 18. Brown bear harvesting is a
50 specialized pursuit that is concentrated in certain

1 villages and within certain families.

2

3 People's participation in the house-to-
4 house harvest surveys reveal that the communities that
5 are situated adjacent to the Kilbuck Mountains have the
6 higher harvest of brown bears, especially in Akiachak,
7 Eek, Kwethluk, and Tuluksak. Hunters prefer to harvest
8 brown bears within a couple of weeks after the bears
9 emerge from dens in the spring. Brown bears are
10 sometimes hunted while they are still in their dens.
11 For example, Kwethluk hunters know the location of
12 brown bear dens and bear trails that have been used
13 year after year to get to these bears.

14

15 So the effects of this Proposal would
16 be one, there's very specialized hunters that are
17 actually -- from what we know, that are actually
18 hunting the bears at their den sites. The hunters
19 consider the use of an artificial light, such as a
20 flashlight, for hunting a bear at a den site to be a
21 safe and efficient method to get the bear out of the
22 den. It's likely that hunters have used flashlights
23 for this purpose since flashlights became available.

24

25 A census of bears in Unit 18 has not
26 been conducted, which is true for many of the animals
27 that are used in the rural areas of the State. And the
28 biological effects of adopting this Proposal cannot be
29 evaluated at this time due to the lack of data.

30

31 Harvest limits or seasons can be
32 limited to conserve bear populations if necessary and
33 the use of artificial light probably won't increase the
34 amount of people going in to hunt bears in the den. If
35 this Proposal is not adopted, people using artificial
36 light or a flashlight to harvest a bear at a den site
37 could be cited for using an illegal method.

38

39 So the OSM preliminary conclusion is to
40 support WP16-35, with the modification to include a
41 headlamp or a handheld artificial light.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, thank you,
44 Palma.

45

46 MS. INGLES: Thank you.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's a
49 straightforward Proposal.

50

1 And any questions about the Proposal
2 from the Council.
3
4 (No comments)
5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No.
7
8 Are there any Tribal comments.
9
10 (No comments)
11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Alaska Department of
13 Fish and Game comments, Jill?
14
15 MS. KLEIN: This is Jill. The
16 Department's preliminary recommendation on Proposal 16-
17 35 is to support the Proposal.
18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Federal Agencies.
20
21 (No comments)
22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: YK-Delta comments.
24
25 MS. BURKE: The Council?
26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The YK-Delta Refuge.
28 It says Federal Agencies. They're the Refuge manager.
29
30 (No comments)
31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any Advisory
33 Committee comments.
34
35 (No comments)
36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Regional Advisory
38 Council actions.
39
40 MS. BURKE: Yes, Mr. Chair. The YK-
41 Delta Council discussed WP16-35. They are in support
42 unanimously. There are few residents that participate
43 in harvesting bears from their dens, but it is an
44 important subsistence activity for those individuals.
45 There are no conservation concerns and the use of
46 artificial light provides a measure of safety to
47 hunters. The modified language suggested by OSM is
48 unnecessary.
49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My comment to that

1 is that there was confusion in the public what an
2 artificial light is. And I think that the OSM language
3 actually clarifies what we're actually talking about.
4 Flashlight -- handheld flashlight or headlamp. Not
5 like a spotlight or a yard light or something else.
6 It's -- so I think that that language that OSM has
7 developed clarified that. So I will -- I like that.

8

9 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

12

13 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. I agree. The
14 headlamp actually leaves both hands free, too, so I
15 think it's a safer way if they choose to do that as
16 opposed to flashlight.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Right. So
19 that was YK-Delta's comment.

20

21 Any written comments other than the
22 proponent.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And it's a Regional
27 Council recommendation. The Chair will entertain a
28 motion to adopt Proposal 16-35.

29

30 MR. SIMON: So moved.

31

32 MR. HONEA: Second.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved and seconded.

35 Discussion.

36

37 Tim.

38

39 MR. GERVAIS: Question. You're
40 adopting the Proposal with the modified OSM language?

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes. The language
43 clarifies for the public what actually can occur and
44 there's no gray area then. So I think that's best.

45

46 Go ahead, Don.

47

48 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
49 guess that we're actually just in a sense supporting
50 the one -- well, I mean Eastern -- I believe Eastern

1 Interior had the exact same language or something. I
2 mean to me, it's just a safety issue. Safety -- a
3 health kind of a concern. And I would support it. But
4 I was just wondering what's the difference between the
5 one the Eastern in language. Is it just the headlamp
6 kind of thing?

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 MS. INGLES: Through the Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Palma.

13

14 MS. INGLES: I believe the first one
15 just dealt with black bears. And this one is both
16 black bears and brown bears. But basically the
17 language is the same and they are similar Proposals.
18 They were put in by two different people.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any further
21 discussion by the Council on the Proposal.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 MR. GERVAIS: Question.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.
28 Those in favor of Proposal 16-35, as modified by OSM to
29 stipulate you may use a headlamp or a handheld
30 artificial light when taking bear at a den site,
31 signify it by saying aye.

32

33 IN UNISON: Aye.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

36

37 (No opposing votes)

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Palma.

40

41 MS. INGLES: Thank you.

42

43 Okay. For my next Proposal, I'm going
44 to give you an overview of WP16-36. And I'm doing that
45 before 33 because WP16-33 makes sense after we look at
46 36. So you'll find that on page 250 of your book.
47 Okay.

48

49 Proposal WP16-36 was submitted by the
50 Office of Subsistence Management and requests changes

1 to the existing boundaries for Unit 18, Unit 19, and
2 Unit 21. This proposal was submitted to align the
3 Federal Unit boundary descriptions with the boundaries
4 the Alaska Board of Game adopted when it changed the
5 boundaries for Unit 18, 19, and 21 at their 2014
6 meeting.

7

8 I've provided you maps that show you
9 what -- the way we have it listed is Federal at this
10 time and then the proposed change to that.

11

12 Before the State boundaries were
13 changed, public testimony noted that the old boundaries
14 were very confusing. People who hunted in the area and
15 law enforcement wanted boundaries established using
16 recognizable landmarks to delineate more easily where
17 the boundaries were. The State wanted the boundaries
18 also based on the landmarks and features that could be
19 identified so everybody knew where they were.

20

21 If this Proposal is adopted, the Unit
22 boundaries for 18, 19, and Unit 21 will be changed,
23 establishing new boundaries using recognizable
24 landmarks. This Proposal would make the boundary
25 descriptions for these Units as listed in the Code of
26 Federal Regulations consistent with the State unit
27 boundaries, reducing regulatory complexity and by
28 making the unit descriptions the State under -- the
29 same, excuse me, under the State and Federal
30 regulations. If this Proposal is adopted, there should
31 be no impacts to the wildlife populations. There may
32 be impacts to subsistence users, but these impacts are
33 being addressed in WP16-33.

34

35 OSM preliminary conclusion is to
36 support Proposal WP16-36.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The map I have only
39 shows one boundary description.

40

41 MS. BURKE: Does it say then or now.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It just says
44 proposed boundaries.

45

46 MS. BURKE: Proposed. Here's new.
47 Now. You got both, Ray.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. Now and new.
50 Okay. Yeah. So this -- and we talked about this Aniak

1 with the local people when we were down there.

2

3 So any questions about the boundary
4 description change from the Council presentation.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. Any
9 Corporation, Tribal comments.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: ADF&G comments,
14 Jill.

15

16 MS. KLEIN: This is Jill. The
17 Department's preliminary recommendation is to support
18 Proposal 16-36.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Federal Agencies.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Native Tribe,
25 Village.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Other Regional
30 Council actions.

31

32 MS. BURKE: Yes, Mr. Chair. The YK-
33 Delta Council discussed this Proposal at their meeting.
34 They unanimously support it to align Unit boundaries
35 with the State of Alaska regulations, reduce complexity
36 of regulations, and reduce opportunity for enforcement
37 issues. There was however a question regarding the
38 effect of moving Kalskag out of Unit 18, which has come
39 up time and time again at that meeting, Mr. Chair.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So was there
42 any written comments on this.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And did anybody call
47 Kalskag specifically about this Proposal, Palma?

48

49 MS. INGLES: Mr. Chair, Kalskag is the
50 one -- they put in WP16-33, which we will cover next.

1 So Kalskag is fully involved with this.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

4

5 And so the Chair will entertain a
6 motion to adopt WP16-36.

7

8 MR. HONEA: So moved.

9

10 MR. SIMON: Second.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved by Don and
13 seconded by Pollock.

14

15 Discussion on this boundary change.
16 This is basically a housekeeping Proposal. And -- oh.

17

18

19 Come up to the mic there, Ken. I
20 didn't see you back there. Turn your mic on.

21

22 MR. CHASE: Well, I have a -- just a
23 question on it's referring to 21, but it has on this
24 thing 21E. And 21E is the one that's affected, not all
25 of 21. It's just 21E. That's boundaries to Unit 18
26 and 19.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Let the record
29 reflect that it's 21E, is where the boundary change is.

30

31

32 Any other comments on it.

33

34 MR. CHASE: We did not take this up in
35 our Advisory Committee, but I don't see any problem
36 with it.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. It's a State
39 regulatory change with local people wanting to have
40 more clarity about landmarks. And so this is a
41 positive direction. And we had a lot of comments about
42 this when we were in Aniak last year or two years ago,
43 I think it was.

44

45 So thank you.

46

47 The motion is on the floor. Further
48 discussion by the Council.

49

50 (No comments)

1 MR. VENT: Call for the question.
2
3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.
4 Those in favor of Proposal WP16-36, signify it by
5 saying aye.
6
7 IN UNISON: Aye.
8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Proposal was
10 adopted.
11
12 Palma.
13
14 MS. INGLES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
15 now to answer your question about Kalskag, I will cover
16 briefly WP16-33. Proposal 16-33.....
17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Which page is that
19 on.
20
21 MS. INGLES: I'm sorry. That's on page
22 203 of your book.
23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.
25
26 MS. INGLES: Okay.
27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.
29
30 MS. INGLES: Proposal 16-33 was
31 submitted by the Village of Lower Kalskag, and requests
32 that Lower Kalskag be added to the current customary
33 and traditional use determination for caribou and moose
34 in Unit 18.
35
36 And so as I had discussed a few minutes
37 ago, Proposal 16-36 was requesting that the boundaries
38 be changed to align with the State description. If we
39 do that, then Kalskag becomes part of a different Unit
40 than they're currently in. And so the Community of
41 Lower Kalskag is now in Unit 18 under the Federal
42 regulations, but they would be moved and become part of
43 Unit 19A under the new regulations.
44
45 So mainly what they're asking for -- we
46 talked to the proponents within Kalskag. What they're
47 asking for is if we do change WP16-36, they just want
48 to be able to continue to hunt where they have always
49 traditionally hunted. And so if we adopt WP16-36, then
50 Lower Kalskag will be located in that -- in 19A. And

1 they want to continue.

2

3 The Federal Subsistence Board has never
4 addressed Lower Kalskag's customary and traditional use
5 of moose in Unit 18. And the original Federal
6 customary and traditional use determination for moose
7 in Unit 18 was adopted in 1990 from the State of
8 Alaska. The Community of Lower Kalskag traditionally
9 hunted in Unit 18 and when the State changed the Unit
10 boundary in 2014 the community under State regulations
11 became part of 19. So this, as you can see, this has
12 been part of a lot of the discussion over the last
13 couple of years because it is confusing. Are we state,
14 federal. How is this going to work out.

15

16 So in 2009, 97 percent of the
17 households surveyed in Lower Kalskag reported using at
18 least one subsistence resource within that area. And a
19 report concluded by Fish and Game highlighted the
20 importance of moose in Lower Kalskag. They noted that
21 moose was a common theme as they interviewed people and
22 respondents talked about the importance of sharing
23 moose, using moose, hunting moose. Traditionally, it's
24 part of the culture.

25

26 A survey of respondents in Lower
27 Kalskag reported using a total of 1,263 square miles of
28 land for subsistence harvest, with the majority of the
29 subsistence activities taking place within 20 miles of
30 the village itself. Village residents have harvested
31 resources in Unit 18 and Unit 19A, as well as in Unit
32 21E.

33

34 So the effects of this Proposal would
35 be that it would align, you know, everything. If we
36 changed 16-36 then 30 -- with this Proposal, people in
37 Kalskag would be able to continue to hunt where they've
38 always hunted. Adopting Proposal WP16-33 should not
39 have a major impact on other subsistence users or put
40 added pressure on the moose and caribou population in
41 the area because people in Lower Kalskag currently hunt
42 moose and caribou in what's now Unit 18. If Proposal
43 WP16-36 is adopted, changing the boundaries, and if 16-
44 33 is not adopted, the residents of Lower Kalskag would
45 no longer have a place that they traditionally hunt.

46

47 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
48 support WP16-36.

49

50 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Palma.
2
3 So I understand their plight. And so
4 -- yes. So do we have any Tribal comments from Lower
5 Kalskag on that.
6
7 (No comments)
8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And Alaska
10 Department of Fish and Game comments, Jill.
11
12 MS. KLEIN: This is Jill. The
13 Department's preliminary recommendation is to support
14 Proposal 16-33.
15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.
17
18 And are there any YK-Delta Refuge
19 comments.
20
21 MS. BURKE: Yes, Mr. Chair. On WP16-
22 33, they are in support of this Proposal. There's
23 clearly a long term and consistent pattern of use of
24 caribou and moose in Unit 18. The Community of Lower
25 Kalskag is closely associated with the Community of
26 Kalskag, which has a positive C&T determination for the
27 harvest of caribou and moose in Unit 18, Mr. Chair.
28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.
30
31 And the Advisory Committee.
32
33 (No comments)
34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I know the -- what
36 do they call that. The Middle Kuskokwim Advisory was
37 working on this issue. And I know they were supportive
38 of this boundary change. That was part of our meeting
39 in Aniak.
40
41 So public testimony.
42
43 (No comments)
44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments.
46 Written testimony.
47
48 (No comments)
49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Regional Council

1 recommendation. The Chair will entertain a motion to
2 adopt WP16-33.

3

4 MR. SIMON: So moved.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved by Pollock.

7

8 MR. VENT: Second.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Darrel.

11

12 Any further discussion.

13

14 Thank you, Don.

15

16 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17 Under discussion, I just see -- I mean looking at the
18 proposed boundary, it's kind of ironic if you will I
19 guess to the only change on that proposed boundary was
20 including Lower Kalskag, so I guess they must have been
21 working in conjunction with OSM or whatever to -- I
22 mean to all of a sudden come up with this one. But I
23 support it.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 MS. INGLES: Through the Chair. Just
28 to answer your question, Don, this is following the
29 State change in the boundaries. So that's what we're
30 trying to do, is align ourselves with what the State
31 already has in place.

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: When we were down in
36 Aniak there was a lot of discussion about the lines --
37 the old lines were more straight and didn't align with
38 any kind of geologic feature like lakes or rivers or
39 creeks or whatever. And so the people there were
40 wanting to have a boundary that they could identify in
41 the field. And so that's why the boundary sort of 21E
42 sort of from Paimiut, it sort of snakes along certain
43 drainages and then -- and Lower Kalskag sort of fell
44 out of the picture when it followed those features.

45

46 So I am supportive of the Proposal
47 along the same line of justification as the YK-Delta.

48

49 Any further comments, discussion.

50

1 (No comments)
2
3 MR. HONEA: Question.
4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question's
6 called. Those in favor of the Proposal 16-33, with the
7 noted justification, signify it by saying aye.
8
9 IN UNISON: Aye.
10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed, same
12 sign.
13
14 (No opposing votes)
15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Palma.
17
18 MS. INGLES: Thank you.
19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have another
21 Proposal there?
22
23 MS. BURKE: No.
24
25 MS. INGLES: That's the end of them.
26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. That's it?
28
29 MS. INGLES: Thank you.
30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.
32
33 MS. BURKE: Unless you'd like to rehash
34 anything or -- no. Thank you, Council and Staff. That
35 was a lot of really awesome work on a lot of really
36 complex proposals.
37
38 I think I can echo the sentiments of
39 the Council when Lisa's a really great biologist and I
40 think she's a really great addition to the Western
41 Interior team. So that's great.
42
43 We're going to be losing Mr. Collins
44 here in a few minutes. He's got a School Board meeting
45 to go to in Anchorage. Many of the Council Members
46 wear many, many, many hats. So I wanted to give Ray an
47 opportunity to have any closing comments before he
48 leaves.
49
50 And I just quickly -- also while Ray is

1 still here, I wanted to review our draft list of the
2 Annual Report items for 2015 and see if there was
3 anything else that had come to mind for Mr. Collins in
4 the last couple of days.

5
6 Let me just scroll through my many
7 pages of notes here and find that, Mr. Chair. Just
8 give me one second. All right.

9 So for the draft 2015 Annual Report
10 from the Western Interior Council to the Federal
11 Subsistence Board, there is a co-management topic is
12 number one. Federal program should explore a co-
13 management system for the Yukon, such as being explored
14 for the Kuskokwim. Number two, Tim had brought up a
15 question about specifically addressing the Secretary of
16 Commerce and Interior regarding subsistence users not
17 getting their fair share of available fish. The third
18 item that we added today was the need for composition
19 and population data development for the Mulchatna
20 caribou herd.

21
22 So those are the three topics that we
23 have on our draft list so far. No need to finish those
24 all out, but it's always good to get as much as we can
25 on the record and in my rough notes and start work on
26 that as early as we can. So I wanted to give Mr.
27 Collins the opportunity.

28
29 If there was anything else before you
30 leave, sir, that you wanted to add to this list.

31
32 MR. COLLINS: No. I think that that
33 pretty well covers it. I'm not sure. There should be
34 something in there about the king salmon recovery
35 efforts and so on. I think you'll be -- I don't know
36 if you'll be looking at that a little later or talking
37 anymore about fish, but I think that's an important
38 issue, that we keep working on the rebuilding of those
39 stocks.

40
41 And I know for the Kuskokwim, I'm going
42 to be pushing for like a four year reduction in the
43 harvest so that we can allow those escapements to get
44 out. Because they fish -- we've done it for two years
45 now. And if we did it another three you'd have a five-
46 year block. And that would take care of the four and
47 five year olds. At least they'll start coming back
48 then. If you stop too soon, you'd make a bump in a
49 couple of years, but you wouldn't be covering the whole
50 time they're spending in the ocean there. So you might

1 give some thought to something like that if -- when
2 you're dealing with those issues.

3

4 The other one that I've had an ongoing
5 one and I don't think it's coming up in our Proposals,
6 but is that we need to be delegating to the managers to
7 be able to adjust winter seasons when the weather or
8 whatever prevents them actually taking advantage of
9 those winter seasons. Sometimes we've had a five day
10 or a ten day and this is on the State level, but if the
11 Federals are matching those. And nobody can go out.
12 We haven't given them an opportunity. And I think that
13 ANILCA means that we give them an opportunity to
14 harvest game when possible.

15

16 So that's all the thoughts I had on
17 that. Let's see. What was there. I think that pretty
18 well covers it.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My intention of co-
21 management is to allow the Kuskokwim Pilot Project to
22 plan out, work out the bugs. Because they're working
23 through the bugs on the Kuskokwim. And then once
24 they've implemented their plan, then look at
25 implementing a plan on the Yukon River that's similar,
26 to get more people opportunity to be involved in the
27 management on the Yukon. But the Kuskokwim plan is not
28 finalized to the point where we need to follow what has
29 happened. We need to have it finalized before we can
30 actually, but we want the Federal Board to be aware
31 that we're interested in that style of management on
32 the Yukon River at least in the Western Interior
33 portion of the Yukon.

34

35 MR. COLLINS: I do have one more on the
36 king salmon harvest. I know you've authorized the use
37 of live box over here where you can sort out and
38 release the kings. You might allow the retention of
39 jack salmon because they don't contribute anything to
40 the spawning and that would give people a sample of
41 king salmon. And they make good strips, too, those
42 little jacks. They're still rich and so on.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

45 (Affirmative)

46

47 MR. COLLINS: So some thought might be
48 given to that. I don't know if we've got a Proposal or
49 if we're dealing with fishery now, but at some point we
50 might think about putting that in.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Gerald, we need to
2 have you come over here to the mic for a second.
3 Here's our fisheries in-season manager -- assistant in-
4 season manager, your title. Go ahead.

5
6 MR. MASCHMANN: Yes. For the record,
7 I'm Gerald Maschmann. I'm the Assistant Federal In-
8 Season Manager for the Yukon River. I work for Fred
9 Bue, as most of you probably know who Fred is. So.....

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Ray's interested
12 in when there's live boxes on wheels, having a
13 retention of jacks -- king -- chinook. Is that within
14 your management prerogatives? Or.....

15
16 MR. MASCHMANN: I don't know. It might
17 be within Fred, as the Federal Manager's prerogative.
18 I'm not sure the State managers could do that unless
19 someone put in a Proposal to allow that. And then you
20 get into -- we've got to make sure we define what is a
21 jack and a length requirement. So.....

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Right.

24
25 MR. GERVAIS: I've got a question for
26 Gerald.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead there, Tim.

29
30
31 MR. GERVAIS: Gerald, as a biologist,
32 what do you consider a jack to be? Is it an age class?
33 And what is its -- can it spawn?

34
35 MR. MASCHMANN: I think I consider, you
36 know, the four-year old males to be the jacks. And
37 there's been some studies to show that maybe there's a
38 length limit to that definition, but again we'd have to
39 look at the literature and -- you know, to figure out
40 what will we want to call a jack or what the fishermen
41 would decide they want to call a jack or what would be
42 an acceptable length limit to allow. So that would
43 probably be hashed out at the Proposal phase.

44
45 MR. GERVAIS: And would a four year old
46 spawn?

47
48 MR. MASCHMANN: They spawn. They try
49 and get in there and get what they can get, I suppose.
50 So yeah.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So it appears that
2 that would be a Proposal process. That's not something
3 that can be in-season adjustment. So just for our
4 information.

5
6 Thank you.

7
8 MR. MASCHMANN: Yep.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And Tim.

11
12 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. I had a question
13 of Ray. If he could just give us an overview of how
14 the people in the Kuskokwim are looking at the king
15 salmon management from this past season. Just to help
16 us review how they feel about it.

17
18 MR. COLLINS: Well, there is concern on
19 the lower river because the best drying weather is
20 early on. But they did buy in to allowing the no
21 fishing. And most people complied with that. There
22 was a few people that -- there was two-inch net
23 required down there and some people were using that in
24 drifting and were getting kings. And they were allowed
25 to keep those because they were using a four-inch net
26 during that time. They're not supposed to target
27 kings, but some were able to do it. That was the only
28 problem that came up with it. Other than that, it
29 seemed to be working.

30
31 But it is causing a hardship down there
32 because they're losing some of the best drying weather.
33 And then they can -- they were allowed to keep some
34 incidental. And those village quotas helped some where
35 they could go out and take a sample of fish. And the
36 harvest was fairly low. I think the total was about
37 18,000 out of the run was taken of kings over the whole
38 thing, either incidental catch later when they went to
39 the six-inch when the silvers came in after most of the
40 kings were gone.

41
42 And then including those village
43 allowance down there. But there was a problem between
44 the State and the Federal because the Federal lands
45 down there were able to do it. And some of them -- as
46 Greg mentioned, they did catch some and sent them up
47 river to Nikolai, Telida, and so on. But that's all
48 State waters up there. And so they didn't have an
49 opportunity to catch fresh ones out of the river up
50 there with that -- the State didn't have any allowance

1 for a village harvest.

2

3 And we'll have to look at that when the
4 Fish and Game meets in McGrath and see if we can come
5 in with a Proposal, too, maybe on the State level that
6 would speak to that. Because once the fish get up to
7 McGrath, the only ones affected is just McGrath,
8 Nikolai. And the harvest is fairly low, so they should
9 be able to set a quota or something and allow some
10 harvest out of that when they get there.

11

12 MR. GERVAIS: And do you feel like the
13 Kuskokwim Working Group is kind of leaning towards what
14 you're talking about with the -- letting the whole like
15 seven years segment of salmon pass through with severe
16 conservation?

17

18 MR. COLLINS: Well, I don't know if we
19 can get the seven, but we may be able to go up and --
20 if we go for another three or four. But that will take
21 cooperation from down river, where there is -- and it
22 depends on what the returns are. I don't know what
23 they're predicting for returns next year. But we did
24 see a real change in the number of big fish that were
25 showing up, up river.

26

27 And it's interesting. And as I
28 mentioned, the Salmon River, the weir that they put in
29 finally -- they didn't have a weir there before.
30 Aerial surveys even this year were a little over 2,000,
31 but the actual escapement number through the weir was
32 6,800. So it was -- so the aerial surveys only count
33 about a third of what is actually the escapement in
34 there. And that's giving a good check. I'm glad
35 they're doing both because it does give us a way to
36 measure then the aerial as opposed to the weir. And
37 I'm hoping they're going to -- I think they're planning
38 to continue that weir for a while so we see what
39 happens.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can you lobby hard
42 for first pulse protection on the chinook -- Kuskokwim
43 chinook runs. You know, the first pulses is where
44 most of the up river fish are going to go.

45

46 MR. COLLINS: Right. And that's what
47 I've been arguing for years. And they finally bought
48 into that down river and allowed them to go by, yeah.
49 And it worked out in the numbers we see.

50

1 They've already tagged and checked them
2 so they know how many days it takes to get from the
3 Bethel Test fishery up to there. So we have those
4 numbers of how long it takes to travel. So they can
5 match that now with when they're showing up in Salmon
6 River to know when they were going by Bethel.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other questions,
9 Tim?

10
11 (No comments)

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any final comments,
14 Ray?

15
16 (No comments)

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I see Donlin's here.
19 Do you have comments? Ray has got to leave, so if
20 you've got Donlin comments you should say those right
21 now.

22
23 MR. BUE: Mr. Chairman, this is Fred
24 Bue, Fish and Wildlife Service.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Fred. Go
27 ahead.

28
29 MR. BUE: Yeah. I just apologize I'm
30 not there so I can't see interaction in the room, but I
31 just wanted to add one more to -- while Ray was still
32 there. Was Fish and Game -- the Board of Fish Proposal
33 115. That's actually a proposal that intends to -- or
34 seeks to do such as Ray said, was to release small king
35 salmon in the Yukon River drainage out of fish wheels.
36 I don't know if that's something that you'll be taking
37 up later. If Board of Fish Proposals or not, but that
38 is out there. People can look at it and discuss it.

39
40 Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Proposal 115 to
43 retain small king salmon. Did you get a length
44 measurement?

45
46 MR. BUE: They suggest 25 inches. And
47 so I would guess that Fish and Game would do an
48 analysis and present that in their comments to the
49 Board of Fish.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. This Council
2 probably would be in favor of Proposal 115, but when we
3 get to the State Proposals we'll take your comment.

4
5 Ray?

6
7 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. And I think the
8 length would be the easiest way to do that rather than
9 -- you can't figure out the age and so on because even
10 if it's a little older fish, if it's that small,
11 genetically it's not contributing that much. We want
12 to get the size up anyhow, so taking those smaller ones
13 out should have a positive effect on them.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Okay.

16
17 Any final comments. Got any pressing
18 comments about Donlin? Or.....

19
20 MR. COLLINS: No. Donlin's been
21 working pretty hard to try to do a good job, I think.
22 They've been keeping the communities informed and so
23 on. We do have some concern about that gas line when
24 it goes through because it's going right along the base
25 of the hills, which is the big game country. That's
26 where all the moose move back and forth and so on. And
27 the right-of-way when it's done, because of people
28 being able to fly into Farewell and use four-wheelers,
29 they even charter them in there. They can use that
30 right-of-way. It'll be open once -- it won't be a road
31 I guess per se. They'll allow the -- just brush it
32 periodically. But it's going to allow hunting pressure
33 in 19C out there that isn't present now.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And so Donlin
36 will give us a presentation later on. But I wanted to
37 capture your comments on the record while you're still
38 here.

39
40 And so any final comments at all? And
41 you're leaving in a couple of minutes here?

42
43 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. I've got to get
44 down there and check in.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah.

47
48 MS. BURKE: Should we take a little
49 break?

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. We'll take a
2 little break now.
3
4 (Off record)
5
6 (On record)
7
8 MS. BURKE: We'll have Stewart Cogswell
9 come up to the mic and cover this item.
10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Where did Pollock
12 go. Oh, there he is.
13
14 Page number again, Melinda?
15
16 MS. BURKE: Mr. Chair, I have a handout
17 and also -- did you beat me?
18
19 MR. COGSWELL: 348.
20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: 348 in your book.
22 348 for the next presentation.
23
24 Pollock's at the loo.
25
26 MR. HUNTINGTON: Yeah, Jeff. This is
27 Orville Huntington.
28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks a lot,
30 Orville.
31
32 We're going to the Resource Monitoring
33 Program right now.
34
35 Waiting for Pollock to come up to the
36 table.
37
38 We're on page 348 for this.
39
40 So go ahead, Stewart.
41
42 MR. COGSWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
43 My name is Stewart Cogswell. I am the Fisheries
44 Division Chief for the Office of Subsistence
45 Management.
46
47 And I'd like to introduce myself. I
48 was up here yesterday, but I -- I'm new. I've been in
49 Alaska for about a year. I worked for the Fish and
50 Wildlife Service for almost 24 years now. Most of that

1 time was spent in Green Bay, Wisconsin, at a fisheries
2 office. I did a lot of trout stream restoration and I
3 also worked with a lot of the Tribes throughout the
4 Midwest building capacity. So that's what I've been --
5 that's what I was doing for 24 years. And I did a
6 detail to Alaska in Bethel in 2013. Kind of fell in
7 love with the resources and issues. And convinced my
8 wife to move up here, so here I am.

9

10 So all right.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Welcome aboard.

13

14 MR. COGSWELL: Thank you. I'm here now
15 to talk about the Fisheries Resource Monitoring
16 Program. And I brought a few new ideas to the program
17 when I moved up here and so I'd like to go through that
18 and just explain the program. I want it to be very
19 open -- FRMP a very open process. And then we'll go
20 into the recommended projects that were ranked by the
21 Technical Review Committee.

22

23 So I want to read the definition of the
24 mission of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.
25 The mission of the Monitoring Program is to identify
26 and provide information needed to sustain subsistence
27 fisheries on Federal public lands for rural Alaskans
28 through a multi-disciplinary collaborative program. So
29 that's the mission.

30

31 Before we go any further I just want to
32 thank Staff. This FRMP program is a huge endeavor.
33 And we have -- I just want to say their names. OSM
34 fisheries staff, Kay Larson-Blair, Don Rivard, and
35 Karen Hyer. And the Anthropology Division, Jennifer
36 Harden, Pippa Kenner, Palma Ingles, and Jeff Brooks did
37 the initial analysis and was a big team. And then we
38 have a Technical Review Committee. It's made up of
39 three folks from ADF&G. Two Forest Service, two Park
40 Service, one BLM, one BIA, one Fish and Wildlife
41 Service, and two folks from OSM. That's the senior
42 technical experts that review the Proposals.

43

44 There was 44 Proposals this year -- 45.
45 One was not deemed appropriate for the program. It was
46 habitat restoration. But the 44 Proposals, some of
47 those Proposals are very thick. So the entire TRC had
48 to read each one and evaluate it. So it's an awful lot
49 of work and it's a huge time commitment to do this
50 accurately and to do a good job. So I want to thank

1 the Fisheries and Anthropology Division from OSM and
2 the TRC for all the work they put into this.

3
4
5 handout?

So Melinda, did we hand out the

6
7 MS. BURKE: Uh-huh. (Affirmative)

8
9 MR. COGSWELL: Okay. So I'm going to
10 go -- there's a lot of information in the book. The
11 FRMP section runs from pages 348 to 426. I'm going to
12 go through fairly quickly. A lot of this you can read
13 on your own, but I want to explain what we did.

14
15 So if you turn to page 350, there's a
16 pie chart and a bar graph. The pie chart just shows
17 where -- I want this to be open. So I wanted to show
18 everyone where the money was going. So this -- the pie
19 chart shows from the history of the FRMP where the
20 money went. And it's about -- since it's inception
21 there's been \$103 million that have gone out through
22 the FRMP. And that graph just shows you who has
23 received that money.

24
25 And then I believe there's been 431
26 projects funded. And the bar graph just shows you who
27 -- what agency has received those.

28
29 The next page goes on to talk about the
30 regional allocation guideline. The table 1 on the top
31 of page 351, this is the guidelines that were set up
32 when the program was initially developed. It's just a
33 guideline. And it's just -- it won't follow it
34 exactly, but it is a guideline to provide a way to how
35 we're going to split up the money between the regions.

36
37
38 And then I actually wanted to show you
39 a graph of how that money was split up. So in this
40 region -- or let's just take the Yukon or the
41 Kuskokwim. The Kuskokwim has 29 percent of the funds
42 available each year and they've received 25 percent.
43 So it's close, but not exactly. If you -- table 1, you
44 know, you can see that Kuskokwim gets 29 percent. You
45 go down to the pie chart, the green piece of the pie,
46 it's about 25 percent. So that's just an example of
47 where the funding's going.

48
49 Okay. If you'd turn a page to 352, the
50 FRMP funds fisheries projects and social science

1 projects. And this just shows you the difference. I
2 wanted to -- it's kind of a two-thirds, one-third.
3 It's kind of an in-house ratio we use to fund the
4 different projects. Again, it's just a guideline and
5 it doesn't have to be exact. So you can see there's
6 been 125 -- HMTEK is Harvest Monitoring Traditional
7 Ecological Knowledge and SST is Stock Status and
8 Trends. That's your fisheries proposals.

9

10 So we're going to move on to page 355.
11 355, I just want to quickly go through the policy and
12 funding guidelines.

13

14 Number one, projects. The project is
15 for four years -- or up to four years. You can put a
16 project for four years of monitoring.

17

18 Number two, we don't want to duplicate
19 existing projects.

20

21 Number three, we want the majority of
22 funding to go to non-Federal agencies.

23

24 Number four, long term projects will be
25 considered on a case by case basis. I can also
26 interject there high cost projects will be considered
27 on a case by case basis.

28

29 And then number five, activities that
30 are not eligible for funding. One is habitat
31 protection restoration. Anything with hatcheries, B.
32 C is contaminant assessments. And D, projects that the
33 whole purpose of it is outreach. That's not -- those
34 are outside the focus of this program.

35

36 So now we're going to go to the handout
37 that Melinda just gave you. It should say step one,
38 proposal development on the top.

39

40 Does everyone have that.

41

42 (Council nods affirmatively)

43

44 MR. COGSWELL: Okay.

45

46 So I'm trying to make this as simple as
47 possible. And we devised -- the whole process from
48 start to finish is six steps. So I just want to go
49 through those. And two of the steps are very important
50 to the RACs. This is where the RACs -- we want to have

1 a lot of involvement.

2

3 So in step one, proposal development is
4 one of those steps that the RAC -- it's very important
5 to the RACs. So this is a little bit new process and
6 we'll work through it. I've briefed several folks on
7 it, but this is the starter. This is where we start.
8 And it's very important that the RACs be engaged at
9 this level. And that is proposal development.

10

11 So number one is OSM will assist --
12 Office of Subsistence Management will assist Regional
13 Advisory Council with priority needs development. That
14 has happened in the past and I believe at the All-
15 Council meeting in March we'll have another
16 developmental session to review that and actually get
17 the current priority needs on there. So that's very
18 important. That drives, you know, the questions we're
19 trying to answer.

20

21 Number two, the investigators. The
22 folks that are running the projects work with the RACs
23 to develop proposals. This is kind of a change. I
24 think it's best to work throughout the year and not
25 just, you know, hurry up, rush. And you've got the
26 principal investigators putting in proposals that you
27 may not even know about. They get the priority needs,
28 but you don't have intimate knowledge of what they're
29 putting in and able to tweak it a little bit to meet
30 those specific needs that you have.

31

32 So we're going to send out -- well,
33 I'll get to that in a second. But the idea we need to
34 work throughout the year. I don't want the FRMP to be
35 an every two year process. I want it to be all the
36 time. We have projects ongoing and we're developing
37 projects. So no one's blind-sided. Everyone knows.
38 And then when you see the projects you know more what's
39 in them instead of just a title. Because right now
40 you're seeing titles and you may think that's a great
41 project, but you don't know the details of it. The
42 intimate details. Is it a good project.

43

44 So -- and number three. This December
45 OSM is going to be sending out a flyer to our mailing
46 list. It's 600 people. It's to all the RACs, all the
47 Alaska Native organizations, researchers across the
48 country. We have a huge list of folks. Letting them
49 know the FRMP program, you need to be engaged now. The
50 notice of funding availability -- that's the call for

1 the proposals -- goes out next November-ish. So we
2 have roughly a year to start researching those
3 proposals to get them fine tuned so they're ready to
4 go.

5
6 So we'll send that out in December.
7 And then at the All-Council meeting, OSM will be
8 putting on a training for the FRMP. There's some new
9 stuff. Maybe some misunderstanding. But we want
10 everyone to know exactly what the FRMP is, how you can
11 engage, and what's it take to get a successful
12 proposal. So we really want to work hard to have a
13 really good training so everyone knows, ident -- assist
14 with principal investigators. Tying them in at the
15 RACs as best we can. We can't do it all, but we're
16 going to assist with that process.

17
18 So that's step one, is proposal
19 development. The RACs really need to be involved with
20 that and to interject their concerns with the
21 particulars about those priority information needs.

22
23 Step two, that's the next page, is
24 proposal submission. Number one, a complete project
25 package needs to be submitted on time. Complete is
26 bold and time is bold. We'll no longer be taking
27 incomplete proposals or projects that aren't on time.
28 The funding levels in the FRMP are very tight,
29 declining a little bit. We received \$4.3 million of
30 proposals. We have about \$2 million to \$2.2 million
31 worth of funds available. We're still working out the
32 final budget. So we're not able to fund all the
33 requests we get in, so it's imperative that we fund
34 those projects that are ready to go. Just because a
35 project has a title that's a priority need, you know,
36 you've got to look -- dig a little bit to make sure
37 that there's good science, that investigators are
38 respectable and have a great track record, and the cost
39 is effective, and their building capacity.

40
41 So if only one of the -- so I'll go to
42 number two. Those are the five criteria that all
43 projects in FRMP are judged on or ranked. So the first
44 one is strategic priority needs. We want proposals to
45 have a subsistence nexus and to meet -- to be
46 addressing the priority needs of the Councils.

47
48 Two is scientific technical merit.
49 That's why we have 12 experts in different disciplines
50 looking at all the projects so they know exactly what's

1 in there and they can -- everyone has different
2 opinions and they really zero in. Is this a
3 technically sound project.

4
5 Investigator ability and resources.
6 You have to have the ability to do the work that you
7 proposed. And you have to have a good track record.
8 If you've stumbled before we'll help out, but if -- you
9 know, we don't want folks that are stumbling and not
10 getting the data that we need to continue funding those
11 investigators.

12
13 And partnership capacity. This is a
14 big thing with me. We need to be building partnerships
15 and capacity. As long as I'm here we will focus on
16 that and we will -- there needs to be -- you have to
17 try to build capacity. When every proposal that we
18 need because that's a major component of the FRMP. So
19 we're going to hold people accountable for building
20 capacity.

21
22 And cost benefit. There is not
23 unlimited resources. We have to make things as cost
24 effective as possible. If you have a really high
25 budget, your chances of getting funded may not be as --
26 even if it's a good project.

27
28 Again, you have to have all five of
29 those. Kind of have to be in balance. If you meet one
30 of those, you're probably not going to get funded. Or
31 your chances of getting funded go down. And we don't
32 want to fund projects that aren't ready to go. So in a
33 couple of months when we make a decision, those folks
34 will learn about their projects that may not have
35 gotten funded. They will know exactly what they need
36 to work on to get that up to speed. And especially if
37 it's a priority need, they will know that the analysis
38 analyst outlined the different areas where that project
39 needs to be beefed up a little bit.

40
41 But if it's not ready to go, it's kind
42 of sort of a waste of time to fund it. So we really
43 want to focus on that.

44
45 Okay. So step three. Next page is
46 proposal evaluation. Again, I think I've talked a lot
47 about these already. We want to prioritize high
48 quality projects. We want to enhance the program and
49 make it the best it can be. Assure program
50 transparency. I will always fight to make sure that

1 everyone knows exactly how the projects are being
2 ranked. And the process I want to be open.

3
4 Identify and fund high quality research
5 projects. You know, again that subsistence nexus. And
6 we need to maximize funding opportunities. I'm really
7 going to stress partnerships. Because in limited
8 funding you've got to look for partners to get things
9 done. So working together with State, Federal, and
10 Alaska Native organizations or non-governmental
11 organizations is going to be imperative as we move into
12 this new funding climate.

13
14 The next page, step three, proposal
15 evaluation continued. So I changed a few things.
16 There's a couple of key modifications I made to the
17 process. One is specific guidelines for assessing how
18 and whether a proposed project has addressed each of
19 the five criteria. In the past it's been a high,
20 medium, and low. I put actually a numerical value
21 within each criteria. So it had to meet a threshold of
22 each one. That makes it more objective. So it's not
23 as subjective. I wanted to eliminate some subjectivity
24 from this process.

25
26 Number two is receiving a single
27 consolidated review from each participating agency.
28 There was some concern that different agencies had more
29 than one person the TRC and that was a bias of some
30 sort. So I just eliminated that. Each agency gets one
31 vote. For OSM, for instance, we have two folks on the
32 TRC. We get one vote. The Forest Service has two
33 folks on the TRC. They get one vote. ADF&G has three
34 folks on the TRC. They get one vote.

35
36 And the last one was requiring that
37 agencies recuse themselves from providing reviews for
38 projects involving their agency. You don't get to rank
39 your own projects. So if OSM puts in a project or
40 ADF&G puts in a project, they don't get a rank. The
41 other folks rank their projects. So I thought that was
42 very key to having -- you know, to eliminate any source
43 of bias or, you know, perceived bias that could be in
44 the program. So nobody gets to rank their own
45 projects.

46
47 Moving on to step four, proposal
48 ranking. So when the proposals come in, they're
49 submitted. The TRC ranks them and that become a draft
50 Monitoring Plan. They are evaluated on those five

1 criteria and the final score with each project
2 determines its rank. So you'll see a ranked list of
3 projects from one through whatever. All the projects
4 received a rank. None were -- of those 44, every one
5 was ranked. So we use those same criteria for every
6 project in every region so we're consistent across all
7 Advisory Councils.

8
9 So step five, so this is where we're at
10 today. This is very important. This is the other step
11 where RACs really need to provide input. And at the
12 end of my presentation this is what we're going to do.
13 I'm going to ask for comments.

14
15 So number one, the RACs need to review
16 the ranked list of proposals you receive from the TRC
17 and provide comments to accompany proposals. There's
18 two parts to this. One is the TRC rankings and two are
19 your comments. They're equally important. The TRC has
20 all the information. You don't have all the
21 information to rank them. They have all the
22 information, you know, to do an in depth review. So
23 that's a ranking. But your comments are equally
24 important and both parts will go to the Board.

25
26 So and what we -- I'm just giving you
27 examples of things you can provide comments on. Do
28 they align with the priority needs. Are these
29 proposals meeting your needs. You know, you could say
30 that the proposal lower on the list, that's very
31 important. We want this one to be considered. It may
32 need to be worked on for the next one, but we want it
33 to be considered because it's very important.

34
35 The summaries. I'll go through the
36 book. You know, do you like the summaries. Are they
37 helpful to you to determine -- you know, to understand
38 the project or the whole process. Anything in the
39 process. We've got some good comments back from some
40 other Councils on the process.

41
42 So this is very important. We'll do
43 this right at the end. Your comments are very
44 important. The Board and ultimately the OSM -- or the
45 OSM ARD will use those in the final determination.

46
47 So our last step is step six. So after
48 this meeting your comments and the TRC rankings will go
49 to the Board. I think we're meeting in January to
50 determine the final Monitoring Plan. The list of

1 projects that will be funded. And so they'll go --
2 first they'll go to the InterAgency Staff Committee.
3 They'll review them. Make recommendations. Send them
4 to the Board. The Board will review them in January.
5 And then the Assistant Regional Director of OSM has
6 final say. So Gene Peltola, Jr. will make the final
7 determination and sign off on the final Monitoring
8 Plan, which is the list of projects.

9
10 So that's sort of the process that
11 we're utilizing. And now I just want to -- before I
12 want to go through the -- there's a lot of information
13 in this book and, you know, it can be overwhelming.
14 But I want to go through it really quickly just to let
15 you know how it's organized so you can use the book to
16 its fullest. We tried to make it as simple as
17 possible.

18
19 So if you turn to page 357, so there's
20 three regions -- FRMP regions for this RAC. We've got
21 the Kuskokwim. We have the Yukon. And we have the
22 multi-region. So on page 357, again I want folks to
23 know where the money's going. So on the Kuskokwim, on
24 page 357 the pie chart is who's received the money and
25 the bar chart is the number of projects by agency.

26
27 If you turn the page to page 358, there
28 is a typo -- a mistake I'd like to bring your attention
29 to. On the top it says 2016 draft multi-regional. If
30 you want to cross of multi-regional and put Kuskokwim.
31 And then it says overview priority information needs.
32 Then the 2016 notice of funding opportunity for the
33 multi-regional -- that should be crossed out, too, and
34 that should say Kuskokwim. I apologize for that
35 mistake.

36
37 So on page 358, there is a list of
38 priority information needs. So it's listed there. It
39 talks about available funds. And then on page 359,
40 there's the list of ranked projects. We'll come back
41 to this. This is what we're going to talk about.
42 There's a list of ranked projects for the Kuskokwim.

43
44 But if you turn the page to page 360,
45 we summarize this in ranked order. So on the top of
46 page 360, it says TRC ranking number one, project
47 number, the title. We've given you a brief project
48 summary and then a brief TRC justification. It's kind
49 of a quick way to reference the individual projects
50 and it's right past the ranked list. So we hope that

1 is helpful.

2

3 Then if you go to page 365, this is all
4 the projects. This is the executive summary we
5 received from the principal investigators. So this is
6 a little more in depth information. If you want to
7 dive a little deeper, it's a little farther back. It's
8 not the whole proposal. It's just the executive
9 summary.

10

11 And then if we turn go page 379, this
12 provides a list of all the projects done in the
13 Kuskokwim Region from the inception of the program.
14 And that list goes from 379 to 381. So if you want to
15 look up past proposals. So there's a lot of
16 information there, but I'm hoping it's right at your
17 fingertips and it's easy to understand.

18

19 So we'll go on to page 382. This is
20 the Yukon Region. I know I'm going through this fast.
21 There's a lot of information. But I just want to show
22 you where it's at so if you want to look at it after
23 the meeting, that would be great. So on page 382, this
24 is the Yukon. This is the historical information on
25 the Yukon. Where all the money has gone. There's been
26 \$18.7 million since the start-up program and that pie
27 chart shows each piece of it. And again there's been
28 -- I didn't add up how many projects -- 51 projects
29 done on the Yukon since the inception.

30

31 So and then I'm going to have you turn
32 to page 417. 416 -- I'm sorry. Page 416. This is the
33 multi-regional. This is projects that cross over two
34 regions. And again we wanted you to have all the
35 information. So that's since the inception of the
36 program. There's been \$1.7 million given towards
37 multi-regional projects. And 16 total projects.

38

39 So that's kind of an overview of the
40 book. There's a lot of information if you want to look
41 it up and see it, but I'd like you to turn back to page
42 359. And we'll talk about this for a minute, but are
43 there any questions about the process or evaluation.
44 This might be a good time to ask any questions about
45 that before we get into the actual discussion and
46 comments on the proposals.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any Council Members
49 got questions on how this process works. The ranking.

50

1 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

4

5 MR. HONEA: I do have some questions.
6 I was going to save it for later, but I thought -- you
7 know, I mean I'm really glad for the change in the OSM.
8 You know, this is the first time that I could remember
9 that we've had Lisa up there explaining each proposal
10 and making it really simple for us to understand or the
11 questions. And so Stewart, I was just -- and maybe
12 this is a question for the end there. And maybe it's
13 good that we have some people from the Village that are
14 interested. Say are you open to -- you know, when I
15 first got a Board, I thought wow, hey, I'm going to try
16 to secure some of these for my Village or in this area
17 or something. Are you open to -- say if we have a
18 Hunting and Fishing Task Force in our Village -- in our
19 Tribal offices, are you open to helping them other than
20 -- because, you know, pretty much when our proposals
21 and stuff -- you know, it goes from the RAC to you.

22

23 And are you open to maybe drafting up
24 or helping villages secure for different projects, like
25 you mentioned all these projects. And I don't know if
26 you want -- if that's an answer for later or now, but I
27 appreciate your response.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Stewart.

32

33 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair.
34 That's a great question, Don. And that's what we want.
35 I want OSM to be helpful in those instances where, you
36 know, a village may have a need or desire and may not
37 know exactly how to get a project developed. Yes.
38 We'll -- you know, we want to be able to -- I mean the
39 details we'll have to work out in exactly how that
40 happens, but that's my intent. Is to help anybody who
41 wants to put in a project, get them in touch with
42 principal investigators. Maybe it's to help develop
43 the proposal. You know, the idea. And that's why we
44 need to talk beforehand.

45

46 If we're not talking, you know,
47 beforehand and you've got to hurry up and rush and get
48 the project in, you don't have time to do that. But if
49 the investigators understand that and the village --
50 you know, Wildlife and Fish Councils know that we've

1 got to get going on this, maybe we can start scheduling
2 some meetings. And we will to the extent possible to
3 meet those needs, you know, if we can. So.....

4

5 MR. HONEA: Okay. I appreciate that.
6 I just -- you know, at our last training at Fairbanks,
7 Lisa gave kind of an overview of what exactly your
8 office does. And I thought wow, you know, the
9 participants in here should know that. They should
10 know that you guys are a resource that -- because I
11 mean there's offices out there where we -- there's
12 subsistence offices, task force in Village Councils.
13 And they may not know how to write up a -- well, what
14 would you call it.

15

16 MR. COGSWELL: A proposal.

17

18 MR. HONEA: Well, not a proposal.
19 Maybe for to secure funding. They'd have to -- what is
20 the thing when you have to.....

21

22 MR. GERVAIS: A grant?

23

24 MR. HONEA: Yeah. Right. Grant
25 writing and stuff like that. And I was just wondering
26 if you guys were open to something like that. And I
27 appreciate that.

28

29 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair. I
30 don't -- the Staff -- I don't know if OSM has Staff to
31 write the proposals. We probably do not have time to
32 do that. But we will help facilitate that. We will
33 put you in touch with folks that -- you know, the
34 University or someone else that has that ability. They
35 can -- but we want to get those people together.
36 That's how we'll help out. We'll assist with the
37 process. We can't do it. We don't have enough Staff
38 to do it. But we really want to not let things like
39 that fall through the cracks.

40

41 It would be good to take, you know,
42 this book. This priority information needs back to the
43 villages and see, you know, what their needs are and
44 how they relate to this. And if they're not on here,
45 they need to get into the RACs and say we need these --
46 this is our priority needs. So and then develop a
47 proposal around that. So yes, we can't write the
48 proposals, but we will help facilitate working with
49 folks to get that done.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim.

2

3 MR. GERVAIS: Stewart, this \$103
4 million, does that just come out of general funds for
5 Department of Interior? Is that like money that's
6 assigned like through a Taft-Hartley or some specific
7 allocation? Like how -- where is the funding coming
8 from.

9

10 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair.
11 Thanks, Tim. The funding -- there's an OSM budget.
12 And I believe that it's -- and again I apologize. I
13 don't know exactly where it comes from, but we do have
14 an OSM budget that funds office operations, you know,
15 the Regional Advisory Councils. And part of that money
16 that comes down is, you know, slated for the FRMP,
17 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. And it's
18 through increased cost, all that, the amount of money
19 is declining a little bit. It's not quite what it was
20 in the past. And so that's why we have to be -- I want
21 to be very careful and I only want to fund those
22 projects that are ready to go. So I can't tell you
23 exactly where that comes down from at this point.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's for Region 7
26 funding allocation. Region 7 is the Alaskan region and
27 they probably get a certain amount of funding. And
28 then they are the ones who will continuously reduce
29 OSM's budget with the amount of money they get. Is
30 that the way I understand this? That's what's been
31 presented at past meetings, is Region 7 is -- holds the
32 purse strings. And then they allocate to OSM. And
33 then OSM has certain amounts that they spend on the
34 Resource Monitoring Program. Something to that effect.

35

36

37 MR. COGSWELL: I think you're -- that's
38 pretty close to the way it goes. Yeah.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are there any other
41 questions.

42

43 Darrel?

44

45 MR. VENT: No.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Continue.

48

49 MR. COGSWELL: Okay. So we're on page
50 359. And this is where -- so we have three regions to

1 go through. We have Kuskokwim, the Yukon, and the
2 multi-region. We're looking for comments. And Melinda
3 will get these comments to the Board. To the ISC and
4 to the Board. So your -- I'll just read through the
5 projects real quick.

6
7 The number one TRC ranked -- Technical
8 Review Committee ranked project is 16-301, Lower
9 Kuskokwim River subsistence chinook salmon harvest.
10 Age, sex, length, composition.

11
12 The number two ranked project is 16-
13 302, the Salmon River weir on the Pitka Fork.

14
15 The number three ranked project is 16-
16 303, enumeration and spawning area characterization of
17 sheefish in the Upper Kuskokwim River.

18
19 TRC ranked fourth project is 16-351,
20 Middle Kuskokwim River in-season subsistence salmon
21 harvest monitoring and estimation.

22
23 The fifth ranked project is 16-304,
24 assessment of chinook salmon freshwater production in
25 the Kwethluk River.

26
27 And the sixth ranked project, 16-305,
28 is Kuskokwim River broad whitefish harvest cataloging
29 and spawning demographics.

30
31 And that number in the corner is the
32 average annual request, so it's those six projects
33 would cost on an annual basis \$687,000.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

36
37 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Stewart. I just had
38 a question here. What's your criteria for ranking? I
39 mean is it the importance of the studies? Or who ranks
40 this and your criteria.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair.
45 Thanks, Don, for that question. If you want, turn to
46 page 353 in the book. Page 353. And actually if you
47 want to read it on page 352, it says project evaluation
48 process right under that graph at the top. This will
49 go through and explain it, but I'll quickly go through
50 it.

1 The five criteria are strategic
2 priority/priority needs -- on page 353. The second
3 one, the bottom of page 353 -- page 353 is the
4 technical scientific merit. On the top of page 354,
5 investigator ability and resources. The fourth one is
6 partnership capacity building. And the fifth one is
7 cost benefit.

8
9 So each project as it came in, you
10 know, there's a point value assigned to each one of
11 these five criteria. And for cost -- if it was very
12 expensive, they got less points. If it was -- if they
13 deemed it to be cost effective, it got more points.
14 Partnership and capacity building. If they hit it out
15 of the ballpark, they got all the points. If they
16 ignored capacity, they got no points there.

17
18 So it was a very objective review
19 process. It was based on these criteria, so it was
20 equal and fair across all regions. They all has the
21 same criteria. So that is how they were ranked. And
22 it was the 12 folks on the -- you know, they're senior.
23 They have a lot of experience in funding and they've
24 done a lot of projects. So they all like the process.
25 You know, the TRC was really happy with the process.
26 And I think it was fair. And I think it's fair for
27 everyone, the process, when you send them through all
28 the same filter. It's no longer -- it's less opinion
29 and more do they meet this. So we want to hold people
30 to this standard, those five criteria.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Answers your
33 question?

34
35 MR. HONEA: Yes.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.
38 (Affirmative)

39
40 MR. COGSWELL: Okay, Mr. Chair. These
41 -- so I want to open it up for questions and/or
42 comments. Basically these are your comments going to
43 the Board on these proposals. You know, and again on
44 that slide handout or that handout you have on step
45 five, we're asking for comments on do you like the
46 projects. Which projects do you like. Which ones
47 would you like to see funded. The projects that are
48 ranked higher have a higher probability of getting
49 funded than the ones on the lower end.
50

1 So are we meeting your priority needs
2 with these proposals. You know, OSM does not submit
3 these proposals. It's the principal investigators. So
4 do we need to work on lining them up, like Don was
5 saying, to more directly meet the priority needs.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I will state that I
8 like the Pitka Fork project because Ray Collins has
9 spoken adamantly for the Takotna weir, but mainly
10 because we need up river escapement assessment. And so
11 weir projects in the Upper Kuskokwim are very
12 important.

13
14 The age, sex, length composition is
15 also a very important for chinook salmon because that
16 gives managers the ability to discern age class in
17 relation to size and ocean production. And so I think
18 that's a very important project to understand. When
19 you have smaller fish returning you have higher
20 competition or lower ocean production. And so this is
21 important to assess what the run's health is. That's
22 what I feel. And so I do feel that's a very worthwhile
23 project.

24
25 The sheefish enumeration spawning areas
26 is very important because, you know, we have Donlin
27 Creek and some other aspects that are going to occur in
28 the Upper Kuskokwim River and we have to know where
29 sheefish -- and then the use of sheefish on the
30 Kuskokwim is very important to the subsistence users.

31
32 So looking down this list, I think your
33 filter system is working pretty well. I think that
34 it's actually capturing informational needs that are
35 important. You know, the in-season subsistence salmon
36 harvesting for the Middle Kuskokwim River, this is
37 giving informational needs, allocation throughout the
38 whole drainage. The lower river, middle river, and
39 upper river.

40
41 So as far as this list goes, I feel
42 these are -- they have high priority in my mind. And
43 so these informational needs are important, especially
44 in this stabilization and reconstruction of the
45 Kuskokwim and chinook salmon run. And so I think that
46 these are important projects myself.

47
48 Darrel.

49
50 MR. VENT: Well, I think I'm catching

1 my second wind here, so I see all this as good
2 information. But, you know, in the environment of the
3 fish we're looking at some things that's a factor. And
4 there's -- you know, we're having climate changes where
5 we don't know -- I don't know any -- have any
6 information on what happens to the fish when they're
7 going through the spawning grounds. How much -- what's
8 the survival rate. What's the survival rate when
9 they're coming out of there. Going back down to the
10 ocean, what's -- you know, is there a factor there,
11 too. It's something that, you know, we haven't seen
12 over the years that we're getting more and more warmer
13 trends of water compared to the seasons that at the
14 time that they spawn and everything. So I don't have
15 any information on that. I don't see that as -- you
16 know, as the whole picture in there. So.....

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So this project
19 number five is assessment of chinook salmon freshwater
20 production for the Kwethluk River. That actually would
21 assess what the smolt production is for the out
22 migration. And so that's an important project. And so
23 that's an important project.

24
25 So that's actually getting to what
26 you're talking about. Is climactic conditions, water
27 temperatures, and production being affected in the
28 system. So that's a very important project. So that's
29 what you -- actually that project's addressing what
30 you're talking about. And that's this number five
31 here, 16-304. So you're actually speaking for that
32 proposal.

33
34 MR. VENT: Okay. That's great.
35 Because, you know, I don't know if they have any
36 similar problems like we're having in our area. We're
37 having low counts of whitefish now and it has to do
38 with the other fish, so I'm just, you know, kind of
39 trying to figure out what projects are doing what. So
40 that was my answer -- question. Thanks for the answer,
41 Jack.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate that
44 comment though. It's a very -- those are very
45 important comments for the OSM and Federal Board to
46 assess from the Regional Councils.

47
48 And so other comments on these rankings
49 from Council Members here.
50

1 Tim.

2

3 MR. GERVAIS: No. Not on the ranking.
4 I'm just like looking at that first project, 16-301,
5 Lower Kuskokwim ASL composition. I wonder why they
6 wouldn't want to look at the Upper River ASL
7 information at the same time. That would be useful to
8 help us figure out the effects of these different net
9 size regulations that come into play. I noticed from
10 speaking with Andy Bassich in Eagle about the
11 transboundary ASL for the Yukon is -- feels like the
12 spawning quality is low. And we feel it could be
13 caused by gillnet fishing, so we're trying to get a
14 handle on that.

15

16 But it seems like these projects are
17 just proposed. Then you just have to rank them as they
18 show up. You're not allowed to change the scope of the
19 study.

20

21 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair. No.
22 The projects -- for the most part, no. The project as
23 submitted, we -- before we used to I think modify them.
24 There's 44 projects, you know, and they're big
25 projects. I do not believe it's the TRC's role to be
26 picking out pieces of these different projects. We
27 have to go with how they're submitted. So that's why
28 it's imperative for the TRC to have these comments so
29 that when the project is proposed, it's exactly what
30 you need, you know, as best as possible to meet that
31 information need.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But at this point, I
34 fully agree with Tim. There needs to be a dual
35 assessment. If you're going to run that project to I
36 feel assess ocean productivity and survivorship and all
37 that, we should also be running a dual project up river
38 to assess the harvest change in demographics of the
39 chinook salmon in the upper drainage, on the spawning
40 grounds. Actually put through the fishery what the
41 effects of the fishery are on the spawning population
42 of chinook salmon.

43

44 And does this Council propose that at
45 this point in informational needs? Or where do we
46 request that.

47

48 MR. COGSWELL: Yes. That's the type of
49 comments that we want to go forward. Those will be
50 captured on the record and moved forward. And, you

1 know, OSM will consider them. And, you know, when we
2 work the -- or address the priority information needs,
3 that will be interjected when that discussion happens.
4 But to change that project now, it's already been
5 budgeted out. The scope has already been locked in.
6 They don't probably -- to change this project now we
7 don't -- it's not set up to do that. So they have to
8 set it up from the beginning to address the combined
9 one. Or have a future project. You know, is this is a
10 priority need, maybe a PI will say okay, the lower
11 river's been assessed. Let's combine them or just
12 address the upper. So that's a great comment to be
13 forwarded.

14

15 MR. GERVAIS: So maybe we've talked
16 about this in other meetings. When the researchers --
17 they must be going off of some basis on deciding what
18 their project's going to be. Is OSM or are the RACs
19 creating a project list of desired research or where --
20 for other years -- future years, how do we as a RAC
21 make the recommendation to the correct people at the
22 correct time on things that we're interested in being
23 studied. Is that part of our Annual Report or how do
24 these researchers evaluate what's important and
25 pertinent projects.

26

27 MS. KENNER: Stewart, this is Pippa
28 Kenner. Do you mind if I add some information?

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Pippa.

31

32 MS. KENNER: Oh, thank you. Hi. This
33 is Pippa Kenner and I'm speaking to you from OSM in
34 Anchorage. The reason why I'm talking is that I'm
35 familiar with these projects. And I want to just point
36 out two things. One is that these are areas for the
37 Monitoring Program are the entire drainage. And so for
38 the Yukon, that covers three Councils and three regions
39 and so the Kuskokwim it's two. And so I can imagine
40 that it's difficult for people in another Council to be
41 looking at projects that occurring in a different
42 regions and fully evaluate them. But I just want to
43 tell you that when you see a project that's on here,
44 sometimes -- and I'm not sure about this one, but
45 sometimes there is a similar project already occurring
46 in the middle or upper river. It might be done by
47 another agency or it might be funded by us, but it's on
48 a different cycle, we're on a two year cycle.

49

50 The other thing that makes this project

1 interesting is that the researcher's use an already
2 existing platform -- research platform, which is the
3 in-season monitoring project. The funding goes to the
4 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, but they
5 redistribute it to two local Native consortiums and in
6 one case a Tribe. And then they conduct the research.
7 And while they're doing those in-season interviews they
8 go ahead and collect ASL samples. So that's kind of
9 what we like to see. People using -- partnering and
10 sharing resources to do two projects essentially at the
11 same time, using the same Staff and the same boat.

12

13 So I just wanted to add that about that
14 particular project and thank you.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pippa. I
17 would request that OSM assess where there's another ASL
18 composition project going on in the upper river, with
19 ADF&G, spawning bed surveys or whatever may be going on
20 to bring this information together from the lower river
21 and compare it to the upper river actually escapement
22 health of the -- after they've moved through the
23 fishery. That's what Tim and I are basically getting
24 at. That's an informational need.

25

26 Because we've heard it on the Yukon for
27 years. What was escaped for many, many years was
28 extremely poor stock into Canada. The board of passage
29 was primarily males. Lots of males. Three-quarter
30 mail composition. Small females and horrible
31 escapement composition. And one of the needs for both
32 the Yukon and Kuskokwim is to have healthy escapements
33 that return good spawning -- viable spawning stocks
34 onto the grounds. And so we do need to run two of
35 these projects simultaneously.

36

37 And there may be a -- Pippa's saying
38 there may be other projects in process or with another
39 agency, so we need to assess whether those are actually
40 occurring.

41

42 Go ahead, Stewart.

43

44 MR. COGSWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45 And to try to answer Tim's question, if you -- on page
46 358. When we send out a notice for these projects,
47 it's called a notice of funding opportunity. It will
48 go out on the Federal Register in grants.gov. So it's
49 out there. OSM will send out notices to the RACs, the
50 Alaska Native organizations, all the researchers that

1 hey, it's -- for one, there's a pre-announcement. It's
2 going to be coming up. And then the announcement will
3 come out saying it's open. So -- and it goes out with
4 the -- the priority information needs document goes
5 out. So researchers can say oh, there's a funding
6 source. Then they'll look at these priority
7 information needs. And they'll look at what they want
8 to work on and what their current interests are. And
9 then they'll design a project around that, is how it
10 normally works.

11
12 What I'm proposing is to work on that.
13 Instead of when the announcement goes out asking for
14 proposals, we'll work on it throughout the years, you
15 know, so we can address it. We can have a discussion.
16 We can talk about what -- you know, is climate change
17 -- are we meeting the effects of climate change or
18 whatever the RAC -- concerns they have, those are
19 interjected into those -- in the priority information
20 needs and working with the investigator.

21
22 So I don't know if that answers your
23 question, Tim. Or.....

24
25 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Well, as I'm
26 looking at these priority information needs, I'm seeing
27 the first two marks, reliable estimates of the
28 escapement. And the second one quality of the
29 escapement. So I see where you're requesting the
30 research in those areas. And that I was just -- just
31 based on the title of this study 16-301, I'm like why
32 are they only evaluating Lower Kuskokwim ASL when we
33 really need to know both the Lower and Upper Kuskokwim
34 ASL information.

35
36 MR. COGSWELL: That's an excellent
37 question -- or comment. And that really -- those are
38 the type of comments we are looking for specifically to
39 forward on to the Board.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So that -- I'm in
42 full agreement with Tim on that issue. It would
43 quantify what the quality of the escapement is. And so
44 those would be the comments from the Council.

45
46 Any other comments.

47
48 Go ahead, Don.

49
50 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I

1 just have a question I guess. You know, we're looking
2 at all these projects and stuff. But is there a
3 website that we could check out to see, you know,
4 whether it's open for, you know, to submit for funding
5 part. Or is there, you know, like a website to see how
6 long this is ongoing and stuff like that. When it
7 ends. When it started and, you know, stuff like that.
8 I mean I just.....

9

10 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair.
11 That's a great question, Don. The FRMP is a bi-annual
12 cycle, so every other year. It's like we're getting
13 projects ready now for the 2016 cycle. So there would
14 be awards in 2016. And those awards are up to four
15 years, so they will go through 2019. In 2018 we'll
16 have another call for proposals. Those go out on our
17 website. They're announced. You know, there's a pre-
18 announcement. I think it's 60 days, so it will be
19 October, September-ish there will be an announcement
20 that goes out.

21

22 I don't know if we send out flyers to
23 everyone, but it will be on our website. An
24 announcement goes out on the Federal Register in the
25 grants.gov that this is -- this opportunity is coming
26 up. And then.....

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So you go onto OSM
29 Department of Interior or OSM's website.

30

31 MR. COGSWELL: Right.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Click on fishery.
34 And then you would go to this Resource Monitoring. And
35 then go from there?

36

37 MR. COGSWELL: Right. And it should
38 have the upcoming dates. We just redid our website, so
39 it may -- we're just starting to get it up to speed
40 again, so it should be fairly soon we'll have it
41 accurate.

42

43 MR. HONEA: So you guys are open to --
44 I mean do you correspond. I guess you correspond with
45 the Tribal Councils in a village or something when
46 these are available and such.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair. Yes.

1 There's a -- they send -- I think all the Tribal
2 villages get announcements. All the -- I mean there's
3 like over 600 in Alaska. And then there's several
4 university and type folks in the Lower 48 that get the
5 announcement, too. But yeah, they go out to everyone.
6 All the villages get a flyer saying that this
7 opportunity is coming. And we -- I think we do emails,
8 too, if we can. If folks have email. But it's a flyer
9 and email.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Oh, the blue
12 card.

13
14 We've got a member of the public here,
15 Tim Bodony, from Galena that wanted to speak to this
16 Resource Monitoring Program. Is Tim still here?

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: When did he stop by?

21
22 MS. BURKE: He was here about an hour
23 ago.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. I thought he --
26 well, if he shows back up, we'll take his comments.

27
28 MR. GERVAIS: It's Tim Bodony.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Bodony? Okay.

31
32 And so you've taken comments from us on
33 this ranking. And we pass a motion to adopt the
34 ranking or -- at this point?

35
36 MR. COGSWELL: Mr. Chair, you can --
37 it's your decision on what to do. I mean different
38 RACs have handled it different ways. You can send your
39 comments that we've taken down in the form of a motion
40 to the Board or you can simply just -- they're going to
41 be passed along. Melinda will pass those along to the
42 Board. So either way is fine. The different RACs have
43 handled it different ways. Most of them, the comments
44 have just gone forward. So.....

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Our comments
47 are being recorded. And so -- but I do feel that this
48 comparison of what enter, return at the mouth compared
49 to the up river is a very important issue, especially
50 at this time of low return. So I would like to add

1 that to our Annual Report also.

2

3 Tim.

4

5 MR. GERVAIS: The low return and also
6 not so much on the Kuskokwim, but -- well, Kuskokwim to
7 some extent and lots of the Yukon River keep adjusting
8 all these mesh sizes. And it's a good opportunity to
9 figure out what kind of effect it's having on the ASO
10 composition.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. So okay.

13

14 Is that all the comments the Council
15 has on the Kuskokwim.

16

17 Darrel.

18

19 MR. VENT: I just had just a thought
20 that was -- you know, when I talked about the climate
21 changes, I guess, you know, I heard about when the
22 fish notice the temperatures -- if they're the right
23 temperatures they're going to, you know, hit that
24 spawning grounds. But sometimes -- these ones I heard
25 were, you know, up in the Kobuk River. They were
26 getting some fish that was coming from the -- first we
27 going to the Yukon, but they diverted up into the
28 Kobuk. So that was why I mentioned that climate
29 change.

30

31 I don't know whether that happens with
32 the Kuskokwim or the Yukon or what. But that was just
33 one of the reasons why I mentioned that.

34

35 MR. GERVAIS: Stewart, I have a
36 question. They put out this funding. In my
37 experience, whenever I do a project it almost never
38 comes out to my budget. So how do these people do
39 these projects. They just wake up one morning in
40 August and say oh, our 78,554 is gone now. We're going
41 home. Or how -- it seems hard to estimate and then say
42 okay, it's fully funded. And all the money's spent or
43 you might have extra money. What do you do there?

44

45 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair.
46 That's a great question, Tim. Their allocated budget,
47 that's for the most part all they get. So if they run
48 over, you know, we don't have -- we try to fund as many
49 projects that we have. We don't hold some in reserve
50 for overages. When they're done, you know, we may have

1 -- if they need a little bit more, they can request
2 that. That's kind of on a case by case basis, but it's
3 probably not going to happen if they go over. If they
4 are under, you know, the money comes back.

5
6 So it happened. I've seen it in the
7 year I've been here. It's happened both ways. People
8 have been a little under. We take that back, if
9 possible, and then it's just used for other projects
10 down the road. But yeah, if it's over, yeah. You
11 better make your budget as -- you know, anticipate
12 everything without being -- without padding it too
13 much. But you need to -- most grant writers put a
14 little in there because stuff happens. You know, we've
15 all worked in the field. We know stuff will happen.
16 So you better plan for that a little bit. But no,
17 there's no guarantee if you're over you're going to get
18 more money.

19
20 MR. GERVAIS: Okay.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any further comments
23 on the Kuskokwim.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's almost 12:30.
28 Should we break for lunch pretty soon, Melinda? And
29 then go on with this?

30
31 MS. BURKE: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I think
32 we should. And, you know, if the Council Members have
33 a few more -- if you stew about this over lunch a
34 little bit and have a few more thoughts that come up, I
35 think it would be really appropriate to capture those
36 after lunch. And perhaps we might have our local
37 gentleman here to speak to as well.

38
39 I would suggest breaking till at least
40 1:30. The coffee shop is serving lunches today. I
41 think they're doing nachos and Indian tacos. And then
42 for all the travelers as well they're going to do a
43 pizza night for us. So when we come back from lunch
44 maybe we can estimate what time we'll quit. That way
45 we know if we need to do a later dinner like we did
46 last night or shift it a little bit earlier as well so
47 folks can get some rest.

48
49 So I would suggest breaking till at
50 least 1:30, Mr. Chair.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And then we'll take
2 up the Yukon after that. Well, if Mr. Bodony is here,
3 we'll take his comment also.

4
5 MR. GERVAIS: Bodony.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Bodony. Bodony.

8
9 MS. BURKE: And I wanted to let folks
10 on the phone know, too. Yesterday I had a little teeny
11 bit of intermittent email connection. I'm not having
12 any today. So if you're sending me emails, I'm not
13 getting them. FYI.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. We're going
16 to break till 1:30 and take up the Yukon portion of
17 the.....

18
19 (Off record)

20
21 (On record)

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to
24 bring the meeting back to order.

25
26 And Galena school students are here.
27 And I'm Jack Reakoff, the Chair of the Western Interior
28 Regional Advisory Council. This is some of our Council
29 Members. And we were going to have the students come
30 up to the table and introduce themselves. Where you're
31 from and who you're kind of related to.

32
33 And so I know you have a lot of people
34 that come to the school here and from all over Alaska,
35 and so we always enjoy students coming to watch at
36 least a part of this process. The Federal program is
37 managing the Federal lands for subsistence if there's a
38 problem or a resource issue. And the State of Alaska
39 manages for other uses, including sporthunting.

40
41 And so I have -- we'll go around the
42 room here. We'll start on this side. Come up to the
43 mic. State your name and where you're from. And just
44 file in one after another and tell us a little bit
45 about yourself and what the class is that you're in.
46 Come on up.

47
48 STUDENT: Do I just say my name?

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Just talk into that

1 mic right there. This is all recorded. So everything
2 we say goes into that recording system. And then it's
3 going to be transcribed, so you're going to be
4 archived. So go right ahead.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 STUDENT: I'm Cedric (Indiscernible).
9 I'm from Hooper Bay, but I live in Anchorage.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
12 that. And come on up. One after the other. File in
13 behind each other. Line up.

14

15 (Laughter)

16

17 STUDENT: I'm Kenneth (Indiscernible).
18 I'm from Brevig. And I wanted to relay that I'm
19 related to Trisha Barr.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And what is the
22 class that you're with?

23

24 STUDENT: I'm with a government.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, this is a kind
27 of a government.

28

29 (Laughter)

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

32

33 STUDENT: I'm Eden Deatherage and I'm
34 from Soldotna.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for coming.

37

38 STUDENT: Also in government.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

41

42 STUDENT: I'm Daphne (Indiscernible)
43 and I'm from Nome.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

46

47 STUDENT: I'm Trevor Saunders. I'm
48 from Kaltag.

49

50 STUDENT: My name is Amber Harvey and I

1 live in Fairbanks.
2
3 STUDENT: My name is Joseph
4 (Indiscernible) and I'm from Galena.
5
6 STUDENT: My name is Shea
7 (Indiscernible) and I'm from North Pole.
8
9 STUDENT: I'm Joy (Indiscernible) and I
10 live in Galena.
11
12 STUDENT: My name is Marvin Sheldon and
13 I'm from Ambler.
14
15 STUDENT: My name is Dylan
16 (Indiscernible). I'm from North Pole.
17
18 STUDENT: My name is Katherine
19 (Indiscernible), Fort Yukon.
20
21 STUDENT: My name is Denise Adams and
22 I'm from Koyukuk.
23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, welcome. And
25 that's a lot of different places. And when I was in
26 high school I almost croaked when I had to get up and
27 talk in front of a group.....
28
29 (Laughter)
30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:but you get
32 over it over time. Now everybody wants me to shut up
33 sometimes.
34
35 (Laughter)
36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So it's just part of
38 government is being able to speak before people. And
39 it's a very important thing in your community at
40 various levels to do it, you just get used to it over
41 time.
42
43 And so we're going to be going back to
44 the Resource Monitoring Plan. Or where's my glasses.
45 I can't see.
46
47 Okay. And so we're still on the
48 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. But we did have
49 -- I can't pronounce your last -- Tim.....
50

1 MR. BODONY: Bodony.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:Bodony. Bodony
4 wanted to speak on this Fisheries Resource Monitoring
5 Program.

6

7 Go right ahead.

8

9 MR. BODONY: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
10 Members of the Council. My name is Tim Bodony. I'm a
11 12-year resident of Bodony and I am a subsistence --
12 Federally qualified subsistence user. And I
13 particularly enjoy fishing in the fall time and that's
14 why I wanted to talk a little bit about one of the
15 projects that was ranked under the Fisheries Monitoring
16 Program for the Yukon. I was a little disappointed and
17 surprised to see project number 16-201, regarding a
18 project to do radio telemetry on the distribution of
19 coho salmon in the Yukon be ranked so low.

20

21 It looks like from the summary there
22 for this one, it got a ranking of number eight. If
23 you're looking in the book, page 390, I believe.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: 385.

26

27 MR. BODONY: It looks from the summary
28 there that the proposal that went in it looks like Fish
29 and Game to get Federal funding for a coho salmon study
30 was -- the proposal was incomplete or flawed. And it
31 may be that Fish and Game can continue to do this type
32 of work on its own, which would be great. And maybe
33 when I'm done, if anybody is listening from Fish and
34 Game on the line can comment whether or not a coho
35 salmon escapement project or distribution study would
36 be done. That would be nice.

37

38 But I just wanted to kind of talk about
39 it and put it on your radar as a species to look out
40 for. There's a statement in the bottom of that summary
41 there that TRC believes there's no immediate
42 subsistence or conservation concerns regarding coho
43 salmon. And I'm not so sure about that. I think at
44 least the jury is still out. Maybe not an immediate
45 concern, but we essentially don't know how many coho
46 are coming into the Yukon.

47

48 It's a mysterious species. They run
49 late. They run, a lot of them, after the pilot station
50 sonar has been shut off and packed up for the year.

1 And yet the commercial harvest of coho has gone up
2 significantly in the last couple of years. This year
3 was the highest commercial harvest on record in the
4 Yukon. 118,000 at least. Last year was also over
5 100,000 fish. And we don't know how many fish are
6 coming total. We don't know how much of a bite that is
7 out of the run. There's only one escapement goal for
8 one tributary in all of the State of Alaska for coho
9 salmon. And that's the Delta Clearwater.

10

11 So when I did a story on this -- I'll
12 say that I came to learn about this as a radio reporter
13 here at our local station KIYU and did a story on coho
14 salmon. Noticing those commercial harvest numbers
15 being so high and wondering what's the status of that
16 stock. And Fish and Game basically doesn't know. We
17 have guesses, but there's no firm escapement data. We
18 don't quite know the health of that run. So I think at
19 the very least it's safe to say there may be a
20 conservation issue. If not now, coming soon.

21

22 And I bring that up just because I'm
23 speaking not as a radio reporter now, but as a
24 fisherman that loves fishing in the late August, early
25 September, when the coho is the prize of that catch.
26 It's the best quality fish that we have now on the
27 river in these times of king salmon conservation and it
28 probably will be the prize fish for some years to come
29 until the king run hopefully recovers. But yet there's
30 an incentive because it is fetching the highest price
31 per pound in the commercial fish to harvest that fish.
32 It's hard to select out of the -- from the fall chum in
33 that fishery, but nonetheless those fishermen get paid
34 a higher price per pound for it.

35

36 So as a user and someone who enjoys
37 coho as a special treat that shows up in the net, I
38 really want to see if we can do our best early on to
39 prevent the same kind of collapse that happened to the
40 king salmon fishery.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I really appreciate
45 those comments.

46

47 Does any Council Members have questions
48 or.....

49

50 Darrel.

1 MR. VENT: I appreciate your comments.
2 I remember when we were in the meeting before they were
3 talking about opening the season for cohos and I
4 mentioned the same thing about, you know, my concerns
5 that if you switch from one fish to a species that, you
6 know, we've got to watch what we're doing or else
7 we're going to have the same conclusion as we had with
8 the kings. So you're -- you know, that's an important
9 thing that you're talking about there, is we need to
10 maybe get some data on this so that we can keep track
11 of how much fish is being caught and maybe prevent the
12 cohos from crashing like the chinooks.

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim.

15
16 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Tim, when you were doing your radio story, did you have
18 some conversation with Fish and Game or the Fish and
19 Wildlife Service about things that could be done, like
20 the most whatever -- top three most practical ways they
21 could get an evaluation on the run strength and some
22 other monitoring programs that could get set up to help
23 us fill the information gap?

24
25 MR. BODONY: Yes. Through the Chair.
26 When I spoke to the in-season manager, Mr. Estensen
27 with Fish and Game, he spoke about this particular
28 project in particular. Doing the radio telemetry
29 project and mentioned it as something they were seeking
30 funding for. And that would be the first step to
31 getting a gauge on what a proper escapement for coho
32 might be. And just figuring out where they go.

33
34 So that's why if anybody is listening
35 on the teleconference from Fish and Game that could
36 comment on this. Whether this project will go forth
37 even without additional funding, that would be nice to
38 hear.

39
40 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah. Mr. Chair, sorry
41 to interrupt. My name is Jeff Estensen. I'm the fall
42 season manager -- in-season manager for coho on the
43 Yukon. And I am online here. And I'm available to
44 answer any questions you might have regarding the coho.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Have you heard the
47 concerns of Tim Bodony here about the expanding harvest
48 of coho in the fall harvest? Over 100,000 with very
49 little escapement data. And whether that run can --
50 and what is your end river assessment. How do you

1 assess. Do you have an indices at Pilot Station. Do
2 you do test fishing or above the fishery or how are you
3 assessing what's getting past the fishery?

4

5 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, Mr. Chair. Jeff
6 Estensen. Yeah. I kind of came in halfway. A little
7 bit late there. And kind of caught just a -- missed a
8 little bit of the beginning there though.

9

10 Currently, what we do right now is we
11 have -- you know, we have the Pilot Station indices
12 which gives us our first look at what we got for coho.
13 The issue with that or one limitation with that is that
14 it doesn't operate for the entire coho run. So after
15 the -- we cease operations at Pilot Station sonar,
16 there's certainly coho that come in after that. We do
17 a test fishery that kind of gives us an idea of what --
18 you know, how many coho might have come in after the
19 operation at Pilot Station sonar.

20

21 We also have indications from the
22 harvest -- the commercial harvest in particular. You
23 know, when you have a big harvest like we did this
24 year, that is an indication that there is a lot of coho
25 out there in terms of the run size. As you start
26 moving up river, our first indication of whether we're
27 seeing on the Tanana, is was -- right now is what we
28 see as being the big producer for coho in the Yukon
29 area. We get indications from the subsistence
30 fishermen in season, as well as indications from
31 whatever commercial fishery might be going on as far as
32 if the fish are showing up, you know, in the Tanana.

33

34 As it was mentioned just a couple of
35 minutes ago that the only goal that we do have in the
36 Yukon area is the Delta Clearwater. This year the
37 survey -- the boat survey was just done a couple of
38 weeks ago. We saw 19,500 fish, which was well above
39 the lower -- or the 5,300 I believe it is goal. So the
40 goal has definitely made at the Clearwater this year.

41

42 I should also point out, too, that
43 talking with subsistence fishermen throughout the
44 season on the Tanana that this was a good year for
45 coho. They saw a lot of coho and the catch rates were
46 very high. So, you know, the subsistence fishermen are
47 a very good source of information in the absence of
48 anything else as far as how the run is going. And they
49 were all in -- basically said that it was a good run.

50

1 I think that, you know, as was
2 mentioned just a little bit ago that it's absolutely
3 correct. Yeah. Our biggest informational gap for
4 salmon right now in my opinion -- and I think a lot of
5 people agree with this, is coho salmon in the Yukon
6 River. And we certainly need to, you know, fill in
7 those gaps a little bit. And the Department did put in
8 funding for a telemetry study, which we just -- we put
9 that into the AYKSSF and just found out that we did not
10 get funding for that for next year. And I believe
11 that's what we put that in for -- anyway, we put it
12 into a funding source and just found out that we did
13 not get funding for that for next year. And right now
14 we're trying to regroup and see what we can do.

15
16 A telemetry study right now is the
17 perfect thing to happen to fill in these information
18 gaps because as it was mentioned, it would certainly
19 give us timing about when coho are coming in to the
20 river, but also distribution as well. It would kind of
21 help fill in the gaps and get an idea of where these
22 fish might be going. You know, a big mystery was 2014,
23 where we had good -- you know, we had decent passage at
24 Pilot Station sonar and we also had good catch rates in
25 the commercial fishery, but we didn't see it
26 necessarily translated into escapement into Clearwater
27 and/or reports from subsistence fishermen. So it's --
28 so that was kind of a mystery. And I think a telemetry
29 project would certainly shed a lot of light on getting
30 some more information about coho.

31
32 So I hope that answers your questions
33 and I'm available to answer any more questions.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Jeff.

36
37 Any other.....

38
39 Don.

40
41 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
42 also agree with Mr. Bodony's questioning the ranking
43 project. I mean the merits, and I mentioned this
44 earlier about how these -- the ranking part. How do
45 you -- what is the qualifications or merits. And until
46 I found out from this book or who actually does the
47 ranking in order and how that's come about. Because I
48 also agree. I mean if it's 100,000 fish that we saw or
49 better, that has become a very important part of our
50 fish catch. I mean, you know, the fish in the river

1 itself.

2

3 And so, you know, with the declining
4 chinooks and stuff, I think it's vital. And I think
5 it's vital. And I want to say on record that, you
6 know, to OSM or whoever secures these things that I
7 think it's a very important project that should
8 continue.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Don.

13

14 One question for you, Jeff. In 2014,
15 what was the escapement at the Delta Clearwater.

16

17 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, Mr. Chair. Jeff
18 Estensen. We actually -- the escapement came at I
19 believe at about 5,200 or something, which was below --
20 just below the lower end of the escapement goal range.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And so we
23 understand this issue. And so this Council is -- would
24 be -- also have concerns for coho. And so this is --
25 at this portion of the meeting, we're going over the
26 Yukon prioritization. And so there's questions that
27 Don had. And I'll ask Stewart, in the ranking, was
28 this -- there was too much funding request? What were
29 the lower scores for the Yukon drainage coho radio
30 telemetry and why it's listed at eight.

31

32 MR. COGSWELL: Mr. Chair, the -- again
33 just to sort of answer Don's question, those five
34 criteria -- that's what we use to assess all these --
35 all the projects in the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay.
36 All the regions where those five criteria were the same
37 criteria used.

38

39 The people that reviewed them, it's
40 called a Technical Review Committee. There's three
41 folks from ADF&G. There's two folks from Forest
42 Service. Two folks from Park Service. One from BLM.
43 One from BIA. One person from Fish and Wildlife
44 Service and two from OSM. So there's twelve kind of
45 senior level positions that use those five criteria to
46 rank all these projects. The same criteria for each
47 project.

48

49 So -- and then they came up with this
50 final ranking. They scored each proposal and then how

1 this proposal scored, this is how it came out.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

4

5 MR. HONEA: Just one other question.
6 So suggestions or anything from the public or the RACs,
7 do they -- can they comment on this to make any
8 suggestions toward that.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

13

14 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair. If
15 you go to that handout and slide number five, I
16 mentioned there's two parts of the process that are
17 very important. The first part is project development.
18 That's slide number one. Step number five -- and it's
19 exactly what you're talking about, Don -- is comments
20 from the RAC. The TRC rankings are one part that goes
21 to the Board. The comments from the RAC are the other
22 part. They're both very important. Those will both go
23 to the Board for a final decision.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrel.

26

27 MR. VENT: I see in the TRC
28 justification that this Proposal was not -- that it
29 wasn't complete. It was still in draft form. Is that
30 one of the reasons why it was rated so low on this?

31

32 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair.
33 That's a great question, Darrel. Probably, yes. I
34 don't have the ranking right in front of me, but the
35 TRC justification means that this project -- although
36 the title is important -- you know, this is coho. I
37 think we've identified that. The project was lacking
38 in different areas. This is the TRC's justification.
39 And what those five areas -- maybe in all five. Maybe
40 in one. I'd have to go back and look at the scores.
41 But it was lacking in those areas. So it did not score
42 very high. Although it is an important title, this
43 project probably needs some more work before it's a
44 vital project.

45

46 And if you look on page 385, again that
47 number in the corner -- that average annual request is
48 \$1.1 million. Most of these projects -- the titles --
49 most of them would be important to do. But we can't
50 afford to fund all those projects. We have to fund the

1 best projects. The ones that are ready to go right
2 now. So that's why those projects are ranked a little
3 higher, the ones that are on top.

4
5 MR. RIVARD: Mr. Chair, this is Don
6 Rivard.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

9
10 MR. RIVARD: Thank you to everybody.
11 Good afternoon. I just wanted to continue with the
12 justification for this project. If you'll notice,
13 actually your other Council members just read off some
14 of it. But after that, it also says that this project
15 is contingent on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
16 getting funding through the Alaskan -- I think it's the
17 salmon fund. And I believe I just heard Jeff Estensen
18 say that they are not getting funded this year. So
19 that means this project couldn't go forward anyway
20 because that was contingent on another project being
21 funded.

22
23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for that
26 clarification, Don. I did hear him say that.

27
28 But I do want -- my personal feeling is
29 that we've requested the Alaska Department of Fish and
30 Game to shift harvest back in the run to protect fall
31 chum, but for harvest, the Department is also -- by
32 pushing harvest back -- commercial harvest back, they
33 also get into the coho component. And so we would like
34 to see if the Department feels that a telemetry of --
35 basically they don't know a whole lot about coho. They
36 don't know where they spawn. I say there are coho who
37 spawn on Jim River, in the Upper Koyukuk River.
38 They're like yeah, we heard that. They don't really
39 know where they all go.

40
41 And so we do kind of got to know where
42 these coho are actually going and to assess what the
43 overall capacity of that -- you know, the one -- the
44 Clearwater Delta, that's just one drainage. And that
45 has -- that's like -- that's kind of a shot in the
46 dark. The Yukon's a lot bigger than that and there's
47 other components in the coho runs into drainages. So
48 maybe this project -- with the State losing their
49 funding, the project can't go forward. But at least
50 for the next cycle this is -- this should move in one

1 of our priorities. This should be a priority for --
2 this is a data lack. We're basically managing in the
3 dark on this species.

4
5 And I think the Department of Fish and
6 Game would enjoy working with us on coming up with
7 another joint project. And hopefully in two years
8 they've got some funding to match up. And so I do feel
9 that what Tim has brought up -- Bodony -- is that is
10 very worthwhile to this Council to assure that coho are
11 actually protected. Because if we stay in low chinook
12 return, the harvest is going to shift towards fall chum
13 and coho and silvers. And so we do need to assure that
14 they're not being over-harvested in the commercial
15 fishery. And so that's kind of a problem.

16
17 Other Council Members comment on that.

18
19 Tim.

20
21 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
22 Yeah. I had two questions for Jeff. The first one
23 being with this 19 and a half thousand fish escapement
24 on Delta Clearwater, but that only being one tributary
25 of the system, does Fish and Game classify it as an
26 over escape run, where it's going to change their
27 management strategy next year or in two years because
28 it was a -- could be classified as over escapement.

29
30 And then a more general question is if
31 you were -- as a management biologist and you're trying
32 to manage the run with very little information, what
33 are some of the research projects that could be put
34 into place that gives you the biggest amount of
35 information for the money expended.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Jeff.

38
39 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah. Through the
40 Chair. Yeah, Tim. The answer to your first question
41 there in terms of the -- seeing the numbers that we saw
42 at the Clearwater, no. That doesn't change our -- we
43 don't necessarily see that as over escapement and would
44 change our management for next year or the year after
45 that. The way that the coho are managed right now,
46 just an FYI, is that their harvest in the commercial is
47 incidental to the fall directed fishery that occurs,
48 you know, up through the end of August. And although
49 the harvest of coho is incidental in that fishery, that
50 does not mean that we do not pay attention to the coho.

1 And certainly, you know, we're not --
2 we certainly keep an eye on it and are conscious when
3 making management decisions during the fall directed
4 fishery about the harvest of coho. And then there's
5 also a salmon directed fishery in District 6, where
6 coho is harvested there as well.

7
8 In terms of answering the second part
9 of your -- your second question there, I think that,
10 you know, right now you're asking what the -- you know,
11 what type of research or projects would be to give us
12 the best information for the buck. Right now I think
13 that the first logical step is this radio telemetry
14 project. Because it's going to give us two important
15 sources of information. One, it's going to give us a
16 timing or a sense of when the fish are coming in the
17 river. You know, how long the run is going for. But
18 more importantly distribution. And you know, if we --
19 we know that Clearwater is a producer. And as the
20 Chair said, there's probably other areas.

21
22 The Yukon is a very large drainage.
23 The Porcupine has a sizeable run going up into it. The
24 hearing about the Koyukuk, you know, once we get this
25 distribution information and then we can then start
26 shifting resources to putting projects where they need
27 to be. So, you know, if we do find out that there is
28 another stream somewhere where there's a lot of coho
29 going up, then maybe it's time to put some sort of
30 monitoring project or whatever that might be.

31
32 So the first course right now in terms
33 of getting to in my mind setting up research for coho
34 is this telemetry project. And that's probably the
35 most -- the first important step in this, you know,
36 expanding out farther and trying to get more assessment
37 for the coho in the drainage. So -- thank you.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim.

40
41 MR. GERVAIS: But based on what Don
42 Rivard's saying, is as of today, this project is off
43 the list because it's -- the preceding project didn't
44 get funded. So this one is not able to be funded also;
45 is that -- it's done?

46
47 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah. Through the
48 Chair. This Jeff Estensen again. Yeah. I mean right
49 now we're -- we put in funding into AYKSSF and that was
50 not approved. And that doesn't mean that we're sort of

1 giving up hope. You know, it takes a while to get
2 things accomplished. You know, there's other ways.
3 There's other spending sources hopefully that we can
4 try to get funding from, you know, or some potentially
5 maybe for the whole project. I don't know. It's
6 something that I would like to talk with OSM people
7 about to see where that might lead or what the
8 potential is for that.

9

10 But, you know, we're not going to stop
11 here. We're going to keep trying. So, you know, we're
12 working in collaboration with Sportfish Division. You
13 know, trying to get some interest. You know, hopefully
14 collaboration with the Federal government. So yeah,
15 I'll leave it at that.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrel.

18

19 MR. VENT: My first question is that
20 you mentioned that we are -- are meeting below -- at
21 the low end of escapement or below the escapement.

22

23 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah. Through the
24 Chair. This is Jeff Estensen again. This year we
25 actually maybe exceeded the upper end of the goal at
26 the Clearwater, which is 17,000 fish. We had 19,500
27 thereabouts. It was 2014, which is where our
28 escapement was -- our count at the Clearwater was
29 4,285, which was below the lower end of the goal, which
30 is 5,200.

31

32 And then prior to that we've met the
33 goal at the Clearwater for the last -- I mean I'm going
34 back ten years right now. So we've made that goal
35 pretty regularly the last few years. So.....

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you.

38

39 Oh, sorry.

40

41 MR. VENT: My second question then is
42 what's the total estimated population along the same
43 years as these escapements.

44

45 MR. ESTENSEN: I'm sorry. I didn't
46 quite understand that question. Could you ask that
47 again?

48

49 MR. VENT: Yes. You know, the total
50 estimated population of the coho. And so just for

1 escapement, just the numbers that you had for the year,
2 for 2014.

3

4 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah. You're asking
5 what the total run size was, I believe. And I don't
6 know that we have the -- I'm looking back at our table
7 right now and I don't know that I have the total run
8 size.

9

10 Do we have the total run size on that
11 one.

12

13 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Indiscernible)

14

15 MR. ESTENSEN: Okay. So our -- for
16 2014, our estimated -- I've got estimated as being
17 231,612. And then that year we had a total harvest of
18 120,622. So if you put escapement and harvest
19 together, that would put a run size based on at about
20 350,500 or so. Those are very estimated numbers there.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I want to know --
23 my question is at what quarter point in the coho run do
24 you pull the Pilot Station sonar? Do you think you're
25 halfway through the run? A quarter of the way into the
26 run?

27

28 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, Mr. Chair. That's
29 very variable between years and it really depends on
30 timing, but I would say on average we probably miss
31 about 20 percent of the run. And Power Station ends on
32 August 7th, so I would say we're probably somewhere
33 around the 8th percentile on average. And again that
34 varies between years.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And the gear size
37 assessment is adequate to assess the number of coho
38 compared to fall chum?

39

40 MR. ESTENSEN: I'm sorry. Can you ask
41 that again, I'm having a little trouble with the phone?

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. They fish a
44 net near the sonar site. Do they fish and get an
45 apportionment ratio for coho and fall chum and is the
46 next size selective towards one or the other? Are you
47 fishing like six inch gear or -- or what size net?

48

49 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I know
50 that the suite of nets they use changes during the fall

1 season. And I believe that they are using the suite of
2 nets that they need to be able to differentiate between
3 the coho and the fall chum. And that's certainly
4 something that we look at, is how that apportionment, I
5 mean there's certainly, you know, one would expect or
6 anticipate that there could be some mis-apportionment
7 between the two species. And that's something that we
8 do look at in-season to try to keep -- make sure that
9 that apportionment is correct and matches up with what
10 we're seeing in the fishery.

11
12 This year, in 2015, we do feel like
13 that it was possible that there was some, you know,
14 mis-apportionment of the coho to the fall chum. And we
15 were using the number at Pilot Station as more of a
16 kind of a minimum. And that's something that we'll be
17 discussing with the -- something we will be discussing
18 with the sonar Staff during the off season to try to
19 get a better handle on it for next year.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I think we've
22 covered the coho issue enough. And I do think that the
23 coho are -- we have a yellow light on the panel. And
24 we do need to pay attention to this coho as the
25 commercial fishery has shifted later into the fall and
26 with data lacks and so forth. And so we would request
27 that the Department of Fish and Game would seek funding
28 again to submit this proposal to OSM for -- to work as
29 a partner for this informational need that this Council
30 feels is necessary, as we shift towards fall fishing
31 instead of during the coho run itself the summer
32 season.

33
34 So thanks, Tim, for bringing that to
35 our attention.

36
37 MR. BODONY: Thank you for your
38 support.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And.....

41
42 MR. BODONY: I'm very encouraged by
43 what I hear.

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

46
47 MR. BODONY: Thanks.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so we -- the
50 Council can talk to this -- we're looking at page 385.

1 And we've mulled over this coho issue.

2

3 And so we -- what does the Council feel
4 about these projects and their ranking.

5

6 Go ahead, Don.

7

8 MR. HONEA: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair.

9 I want to reiterate that I think it's -- you know,
10 whether the funding is there or not, I mean just for on
11 the record that it's become such a vital source I mean
12 with the declining chinook or the kings that we take an
13 interest in something like the coho. So I'm really --
14 you know, like I said, I question the ranking on this
15 and, you know, the merits of how you do it. And I
16 agree with Tim that it should be up there, ranked
17 higher, whether the funding is there or not.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Don.

22

23 My question to Stewart is since the
24 Department lost funding, the project is dead in the
25 water, right?

26

27 MR. COGSWELL: Mr. Chair, again the
28 projects that are ranked higher on this list have a
29 better chance of being funded than the ones on the
30 lower end. And so yes, that would wouldn't -- that
31 would have a harder time being funded at this point.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would personally
34 prioritize this coho issue on the Yukon River above
35 characterization project five of habits and migratory
36 spawning timing for Burbot, which are under-utilized
37 species on the Yukon, which has lots of funding. And
38 as their -- what was the -- was the fisheries
39 monitoring contribution to that project versus -- see,
40 it's a much higher funding for the Burbot project
41 number five, 251, versus the project for the coho
42 telemetry is a much lower funding number. Would this
43 -- can this Council request reorganization? Or.....

44

45 MR. COGSWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
46 for that question. The Council can -- you know, any
47 comment you have can be forwarded. So you have the
48 information based on -- you know, you have the TRC
49 project summary, the justification. You can recommend
50 that, you know, if -- you know, the Board's going to

1 look at that and see, you know, if there's -- the other
2 half of that funding is not there, you know, the
3 project doesn't have the money to go forward at this
4 point. So that is a big concern.

5
6 But yes, the Council can forward any
7 comment they would wish.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What I'm getting at
10 is can the -- can we eliminate the 16-251, which I feel
11 Burbot are an under-utilized, not highly sought
12 species, and fully fund the Yukon coho telemetry
13 project in its place. And can the Council request
14 that.

15
16 MR. COGSWELL: The Council can again
17 request what they want. They can request project -- if
18 there's a project up there that they do not want
19 funded, you can request that. These are your comments.
20 You know, the TRC ranking is what it is. That TRC
21 ranking's not going to change. But your comments are
22 very important to what goes forward. What I'm -- I
23 don't want to speak for you, but what I hear you saying
24 is you'd like to maybe not fund number five and apply
25 those funds to the 8th ranked project.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's basically
28 where I'm going with this. I feel that, you know, the
29 TRC's assessment was that the coho are not a stock of
30 concern, but I feel that they are -- that's not word
31 specific, but that they are not a management concern.

32
33 MR. COGSWELL: Mr. Chair, I don't think
34 you should take these rankings as what the TRC thought
35 if it's a concern or not. Whether or not it's a
36 concern, it's the quality of the project. So again
37 that project could have been your top priority need,
38 coho. But if it's a poorly written project, lots of
39 variables that are unknown, it's not going to rank very
40 high. Even though coho may be your number one project
41 or number one priority concern, if it's a poorly
42 written project, it doesn't address those five
43 criteria, it's not going to rank high and it's not
44 going to get funded.

45
46 And based on the justification on page
47 390, there are some major concerns the TRC had with
48 that project. Again, the title is something -- what
49 I'm hearing you all say is very important to you. But
50 the meat of that project, it's not ready to go. So a

1 great comment would be that this Council wants that
2 type of project worked out and get the bugs worked out
3 for the next go around.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's -- okay.
6 That's what I would like to see. Is that this project
7 is -- this information is needed and that we would like
8 to see this project moved forward, but work with the
9 investigators to fine tune it to the acceptable level
10 for the TRC.

11

12 And so is that acceptable to the
13 Council.

14

15 Tim.

16

17 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. I'd like this
18 Council to add to that that addressing this one part of
19 justification, where they say there's no immediate
20 subsistence or conservation concern regarding coho
21 salmon, this is similar to this morning when we were
22 trying to evaluate the Mulchatna caribou herd. And we
23 don't have any accurate information on the herd size or
24 composition, so how can you make management
25 recommendations without the correct information. And
26 as from our conversation just this afternoon, we're
27 understanding that there is not good information on the
28 run size or timing and stuff like that.

29

30 So just that lack of information on its
31 own creates a conservation concern for that species,
32 especially when they are -- it is taken in a commercial
33 fishery and we see that it's going to be -- continue to
34 be a substitute subsistence species to take care of the
35 amount of -- the bygone harvest opportunity for the
36 king salmon. So I think they -- the Technical Review
37 Committee should understand that the lack of
38 information on the coho salmon is a conservation
39 concern in its own right.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, I will point
42 out that the 100,000 coho harvest in 2014 affected
43 basically the escapement and that the Delta Clearwater
44 was only -- was about almost 1,000 fish short of the
45 minimum escapement goal of 5,200. And so apparently
46 the commercial fishery is affecting in shore return.
47 So that's a conservation concern. And it's a concern
48 to subsistence users because they have to expend more
49 unit of effort to meet subsistence needs.

50

1 And so I do feel that this telemetry
2 project would be beneficial to the subsistence users in
3 knowing -- and the managers to know where the coho are
4 going and get an idea of what -- to better manage them
5 in conjunction with the shift towards fall fishing for
6 subsistence users and the commercial fishery during
7 chinook avoidance.

8

9 So I think we have beat that horse to
10 death.

11

12 (Laughter)

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so we need to
15 kind of move on here.

16

17 Stewart.

18

19 MR. COGSWELL: Just one comment. Tim,
20 I thought that was an excellent comment to put on the
21 record. The lack of information on coho is a concern.
22 So I think that's a very good, you know, statement to
23 put on.

24

25 I just want to reiterate it one more
26 time. The ranking does not in any way show, you know,
27 which ones are more important. If you look on page
28 383, the priority information needs for the Yukon,
29 Burbot is listed as one. But they're -- the quality of
30 the project. Not the title. The title has nothing to
31 do with the overall ranking. It's the quality of the
32 project. That should be very clear.

33

34 So coho -- maybe it's a priority need
35 over here. Number one, reliable estimates of salmon
36 escapement. It is a concern. But it's the quality of
37 the project that put it down. It's not ready to go.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim.

40

41 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. I have a comment.
42 Stewart, maybe in future years when you guys are
43 ranking these TRC findings, that you could put the
44 exact score that these projects received for these five
45 categories so that when our RAC and other RACs are
46 evaluating the scoring, we could see okay, yeah. It
47 had strategic priority, yes. But then the -- maybe
48 investigator ability to resources was one or two and
49 that's why the project received such a low score. That
50 helps us to realize that the Technical Review Committee

1 appreciates the strategic importance of that, but
2 perhaps there was other -- the other four
3 qualifications or the cost or whatever was too much to
4 give it a favorable ranking.

5
6 MR. COGSWELL: Through the Chair.
7 That's a great comment. And we're -- the TRC is going
8 to be working on that and how we project that. I mean
9 you can -- the justification alludes to where it was
10 weak, but it doesn't give an exact score. But we are
11 going to consider that. The TRC's got to -- I've told
12 them all that they're not going to meet every two
13 years. We're going to meet a lot to get this right.
14 And that's one thing on our list to address, is do we
15 make that score public. So we will be taking that up.
16 It's on the agenda. But great question, Tim.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Then
19 informational needs. And on the Kuskokwim we were
20 talking about age, sex, length analysis from the mouth
21 to the upper drainage. And also the Eagle River sonar,
22 which we keep hearing that the Eagle River sonar is on
23 the chopping block. And the assessment of quality
24 escapement or the amount of escapement and quality of
25 escapement into Canada. So those informational needs
26 for this Council for the Yukon River are very
27 important. And so we need to see that published.
28 There's an informational need for that.

29
30 And so for next cycle we need to have
31 -- if we lose the Eagle River sonar, we need to have
32 some kind of an assessment of escapement quality and
33 quantity through capture remark or however you want to
34 do it. How the investigators in the TRC can come up
35 with it. But we need to know what's coming into the
36 mouth of the river. We need to know what's going into
37 Canada. And we need to get an understanding of the
38 health of the chinook salmon that were actually
39 escaping.

40
41 Tim.

42
43 MR. GERVAIS: Oh, I'm sorry. I left my
44 microphone on. Also with that, I think there's -- it
45 would -- for our Council's concern anyways, it would be
46 good to have some research into the correlation of
47 those ASL findings based on the management strategies
48 that were put in place. I mean this last ten years
49 we've tried all kinds of interesting management
50 strategies to get better transboundary escapement. And

1 so if this is ASL data's available and has the ASL
2 information from Emmonak or Pilot Station or Eagle and
3 if you could compile that and evaluate well, we did
4 this in these certain years and this is what happened
5 to the escapement as a result, that would be useful
6 information for the three river RACs. For the Yukon
7 anyways. I don't know how the scientists -- the
8 scientific community would think about that, but for
9 the RACs it would be of use to help us in deliberating
10 our different management strategies and making our
11 recommendations.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: One thing that they
14 do on the Lower Yukon is they use eight and a half inch
15 gear for their Emmonak setnet indices -- setnet
16 indices. And so we have to know -- we have to have a
17 consistency in the assessment. Age, sex, length, the
18 type of gear used. And the lower river has to be
19 compatible with what's being used in the upper river.
20 You can't have -- mix apples and oranges because we're
21 not going to use six inch net in the upper river and
22 the eight and a half down there because they strained
23 off all the big fish in that -- that was what they
24 used. They haven't changed to the established seven
25 and a half as often in gear size yet. And so in that
26 project there needs to be an assessment as to -- so
27 there is consistency in actually assessing what the run
28 is doing transboundary.

29

30 So any other comments on the Yukon
31 River projects.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don't see any.

36 So.....

37

38 MR. COGSWELL: All right. Those are
39 great comments. I just want to say that, you know, you
40 had some on process, you know, scores. You had some
41 on projects. So, you know, some of the prior -- you
42 needed some -- the last one, Tim, research need.
43 That's kind of the priority needs. So those are
44 exactly the type of comments, you know, that we're
45 looking for.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 Do you want to move on to the multi-
50 regional? Or.....

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

2

3 MR. COGSWELL: Okay.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Move to the multi-
6 regional.

7

8 MR. COGSWELL: I'll look up the page
9 for the multi-region here real quick. The multi-region
10 is on -- the ranked list is on page 418. And there's
11 two projects. I'll just read them real quick.

12

13 The number one ranked project is 16-
14 752, YK-Delta Coastal communities non-salmon harvest
15 and use pattern. And the second ranked project is 16-
16 751, Kuskokwim and Yukon the meaning and context of
17 sharing within the subsistence fisheries. And the
18 priority needs is the page before, on page 417.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like to
21 include in multi-regional priority informational needs
22 that the incidental harvest mortality loss, dropout
23 factor is needed on the Kuskokwim and the Yukon River
24 as a multi-regional need. And we need -- well, I will
25 continue to request this indices. There's a complete
26 lack of indices to assess how many fish fall out of too
27 small a net. Like using six inch for king salmon when
28 seven and a half is optimum, there's a certain amount
29 of king salmon falling out of that net. And we need to
30 have an indices to know what that loss is.

31

32 And so I'll keep saying that until at
33 some point the Department of Fish and Game and the
34 Federal managers develop a project that will come up
35 with an indices to where the managers know that we're
36 going to kill so many chum salmon and we're going to
37 kill so many king salmon retention. And we also have
38 killed so many king salmon that fell out of the nets
39 and are floating down the river as white fish. They
40 float to the surface. They call them ghost fish. And
41 so we need to know what that indices is.

42

43 The assessment -- the assumption -- and
44 there are millions of fish statewide that are lost out
45 of nets by using too small of gear whether it's the
46 Bristol Bay sockeye salmon fishery, there are millions
47 of fish annually in Alaska that fall out of nets. Fall
48 to the bottom of the ocean or the river. Rot and float
49 to the surface. And wash up on the beaches by the --
50 literally millions of fish are lost.

1 And the Yukon River, when we're talking
2 about critical numbers of fish and escapement needs and
3 harvest, we need the fish gear that's optimal for
4 retention and not assumption -- make assumptions where
5 it's a shot in the dark -- that by guess and by golly.
6 We need to have real biological information so that we
7 make healthy management decisions.

8
9 And so right now I don't feel there's a
10 manager in Alaska that has the slightest clue what the
11 dropout rate. They have for specific gear sizes for
12 specific species. They think that there's seven to
13 twelve percent or something like that. But that's for
14 using the intended gear size. When you use gear size
15 that's not at optimum, then you get into larger numbers
16 of dropped out fish, which I sent you those schematics.

17
18 So I want to see this in this multi-
19 regional category. The assessment of incidental harvest
20 mortality or dropout rate using smaller gear sizes than
21 intended -- that are then optimum. And so that's an
22 informational need.

23
24 But as far as coming back to the
25 projects before us, is there any other informational
26 needs that the Council has.

27
28 Tim.

29
30 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. One information
31 request I would have is to get ASL data for the bycatch
32 kings that are caught in the Bering Sea and Gulf of
33 Alaska trawl fisheries. And I think that this
34 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program should be able to
35 get that information fairly cheaply because they can
36 have the observers on board take that information. And
37 as long as somebody -- the FRMP researcher could set up
38 the criteria -- the information they need to collect
39 like the ASL data and maybe, you know, scale sample or
40 something for genetics, that that would help us to
41 understand what age fish are getting caught in the
42 Pollock fishery and how that correlates to what we're
43 seeing for reduced returns on the Kuskokwim, Yukon, and
44 the other Western Alaskan systems.

45
46 So I think the trawl fishery owes us
47 the courtesy of assisting with that information
48 collection. So I feel like we could get pretty good
49 information out of it without a lot of expenditure from
50 this FRMP budget.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim.
2
3 Any other needs.
4
5 MR. RIVARD: Mr. Chair, this is Don
6 Rivard.
7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.
9
10 MR. RIVARD: I heard what Tim just said
11 and those kind of efforts are already being done by
12 other organizations and funding sources. It's not
13 something that could be funded by OSM's FRMP Program
14 because it's in the ocean. It's outside of Federal
15 waters.
16
17 Thank you.
18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Don.
20
21 But we can request that information
22 feedback into the Regional Councils.
23
24 Any other projects that the Council --
25 I want to cover these projects -- multi-regional
26 projects, Yukon and Kuskokwim.
27
28 (No comments)
29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So going to page
31 418, there's only two projects. How many total
32 projects were there?
33
34 MR. COGSWELL: Mr. Chair, there's two
35 projects in the multi-regional. Every project
36 submitted was ranked and put in these lists.
37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.
39
40 MR. COGSWELL: So there was only two
41 multi-regional projects.
42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.
44
45 And so any comments on those from the
46 Council.
47
48 (No comments)
49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I don't see any. I

1 guess they're acceptable.

2

3 MR. COGSWELL: Okay. I just -- just I
4 want to make a note on page 383. The priority
5 information needs for the Yukon River, the sixth bullet
6 point that addresses your incidental mortality. So you
7 would like that priority information needs in both the
8 Yukon, Kuskokwim, and the multi-regional.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes. I saw this in
11 the Yukon resource, but I feel that it's actually
12 applicable to both drainages for the Western Interior.
13 Both systems are using six inch gear sizes and have
14 this harvest mortality factor. And so I think it's an
15 inter-regional -- or correction. I'm drawing a blank.

16

17 MR. COGSWELL: Multi-regional.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Multi-regional.
20 Multi-regional issue for the Yukon and Kuskokwim River.
21 And so I think my comments may have been last year or
22 the year before.

23

24 MS. BURKE: They were both.

25

26 (Laughter)

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And every year
29 before that. It was about the six inch was translated
30 into the Yukon, but it's a -- has to do with harvesting
31 chinook salmon with six inch net. That's what the
32 issue is. And so it's a multi-regional issue.

33

34 Any other comments on the Fisheries
35 Resource Monitoring Program.

36

37 (No comments)

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none.

40

41 I appreciate.....

42

43 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. Go ahead, Don.

46

47 MR. HONEA: No. I just want to kind of
48 reiterate it's kind of like bitter irony when they
49 reduce it on down. And then there's incidental catch.
50 And you're exactly right. I mean I've seen that

1 before, you know, when people are checking their net
2 and they lose this big king salmon. And, you know, I
3 mean we don't know how many have been caught that, you
4 know, just prior to checking it, too. So I think that
5 is a problem. And I -- you know, thank you.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. They get
8 caught on the gill plate. And if it's rough and
9 they're picking the net up, it just jerks and it pops
10 it right out. And they sink just like a rock. They go
11 straight down. And they lay on the bottom of the
12 river. Takes two or three days for them to rot. And
13 then they puff up and float to the top. And they float
14 down the river as a white fish or wash up on the beach
15 and ravens eat them and the seagulls eat them.

16
17 And that's what's happening to -- you
18 can go to the Bristol Bay areas of the coastline where
19 I used to fish there. Hundreds of thousands of fish at
20 the high water mark that fell out of nets. Popped out
21 of the gear, drifted up on the beach. It's windrows.
22 Two-foot deep for miles along the district boundaries.

23
24 That's mortality factor. That's human
25 induced. That's not -- and they need to know this
26 number. We need to know that when we're managing
27 critical numbers of king salmon on the Yukon River. We
28 need to know this number. Because the guess and by
29 golly thing is not going to work out. There's a lot of
30 fish being killed.

31
32 And so the projections are not
33 calculating what that mortality -- it's a -- there may
34 be an estimate. It's sort of skewing -- it's messing
35 with -- the projections are not matching up with the in
36 shore returns because they have a mortality factor
37 they're not taking into account. So it's an unknown.

38
39 And we need to get this unknown factor
40 figured out. The Yukon River and Kuskokwim River have
41 chinook problems and we need to figure it out here
42 first and so maybe it will spread statewide eventually.

43
44
45 And so we've covered that project. I
46 appreciate all of the work. I'm real happy for the
47 kind of work you're been doing for us, Stewart. And so
48 cleaning up this program a little bit and making it
49 more transparent and a little more fine tuned. It will
50 be more economical for the program in the long run and

1 I appreciate that.

2

3 Other comments.

4

5 Tim.

6

7 MR. GERVAIS: Sorry. I had one more,
8 Mr. Chair. But on the -- I guess it could be
9 Kuskokwim. I'm just as familiar with that system as
10 the Yukon. But on your priority information needs, how
11 about an assessment of the effects of the low
12 escapement. Like this year was fine on escapement, but
13 we've had habitual under escapement for the ten years
14 preceding this year. And so we're not getting very
15 much spawning bio mass up on the spawning grounds and
16 so less nutrient put in the water. And I'm just
17 curious if there would be any researchers interested in
18 commenting on how detrimental the effects of that low
19 spawning bio mass onto the spawning grounds is for the
20 development of the smolts.

21

22 Well, they're not smolts yet. Before
23 they leave they're the fry.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Fry.

26

27 Stewart.

28

29 MR. COGSWELL: Well, thank you, Mr.
30 Chair and Council. It's been an honor to work with
31 this program. It's a really neat program to -- you
32 know, that it's directly tied to subsistence users.
33 And I'm hoping that, you know, the TRC and the
34 Fisheries Division Anthropology Division are going to
35 continue working to make it the best it can be. So
36 thanks.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

39

40 So I think that Tim is requesting
41 another project on the Kuskokwim about nutrient flow to
42 the upper drainage with declining salmon runs.

43

44 MR. GERVAIS: Could be, yeah, a
45 multi.....

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Multi-regional?
48 Multi-regional project. So okay. Thank you.

49

50 And so we're going to move on in this

1 agenda. Where are we at here, Melinda?

2

3 MS. BURKE: Mr. Chair, Gerald Maschmann
4 is going to be leaving us in a couple of hours and so
5 would it be okay with you and the Council to take up
6 the Yukon season overview while he's here in the room
7 with us.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. We're on a --
10 we've got a burr under our saddle about fish right now,
11 so.

12

13 Gerald.

14

15 MR. MASCHMANN: Council, my name is
16 Gerald Maschmann. I'm the Assistant Federal In-Season
17 Manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. You
18 should be getting two handouts. One is the 2015
19 Preliminary Yukon River Summer Season Summary. That's
20 from Fish and Game. That's their season summary they
21 do every year. It gives a really detailed outline of
22 what happened this season. And if you're really
23 interested in how we prosecuted the subsistence
24 fishery. How we opened and closed the fishery.
25 There's pretty good detail in there.

26

27 And the other handout is from our
28 office, is our salmon season overview. And I'm not
29 going to read that whole thing. I'm going to summarize
30 it. But there's -- in the back of that are some graphs
31 that you might find interesting. And the graphs help
32 summarize some of the information in there. Give some
33 historical context to what we're talking about.

34

35 So management of the 2015 summer salmon
36 season was challenged with the typical wide disparity
37 and run strength between overlapping chinook and summer
38 chum salmon mixed stock fisheries. Efforts to conserve
39 chinook salmon were initiated at the beginning of the
40 season in the lower river and implemented
41 chronologically in up river districts as the run
42 progressed.

43

44 Due to the anticipated poor chinook
45 salmon run, conservation strategies were maintained
46 throughout most of the summer season in all areas of
47 the drainage. Essentially throughout the entire summer
48 season, all fishing for chinook salmon was closed in
49 most districts and fishing gear restrictions were
50 applied to direct harvest towards other species.

1 Sportfishing and personal use fishing
2 were closed and a large amount of commercial fishing
3 opportunity for summer chum was foregone due to a lot
4 of those restrictions. These management actions
5 significantly limited subsistence access to the
6 abundant summer chum salmon; however, in the lower and
7 middle Yukon River sections dipnets were allowed for
8 the harvest of summer chum, while releasing chinook
9 salmon back into the river unharmed and manned fish
10 wheels requiring the live release of chinook salmon
11 were allowed in District 4.

12
13 Many lower river fishermen took
14 advantage of these gear opportunities and were
15 successful in meeting their summer chum salmon needs.
16 These opportunities were not provided in most of the
17 upper river as few fishermen in the upper sections
18 harvest summer chum due to low local abundance or poor
19 flesh quality. Up river fishermen opted to harvest
20 other species or wait for the fall chum run when the
21 flesh quality is better.

22
23 Verbal reports and anecdotal
24 information indicate many fishermen voluntarily avoided
25 chinook salmon in their subsistence fishing activity
26 for the 2015 season. As expected, subsistence salmon
27 harvest information collected in season indicated that
28 most fishermen did not meet their chinook salmon
29 subsistence harvest goals. Generally, fishermen
30 reported a lack of fishing opportunity, having to fish
31 later into the season or having to shift their fishing
32 efforts to other species. This was expected in light
33 of the current trend in low chinook salmon abundance
34 and the extreme conservative management efforts.

35
36 Based on assessment projects,
37 particularly the Eagle sonar, the 2015 chinook salmon
38 run appears to have been closer to the more recent
39 years average and near the high end of the preseason
40 outlook range. Because of the uncertainty around
41 productivity in recent years, management approached
42 this season very cautiously with implementation of
43 exceptional conservative management actions that
44 restricted the chinook salmon subsistence harvest and a
45 somewhat higher than expected return of chinook salmon,
46 it is believed that most of the Alaska escapement
47 objectives were attained and the U.S. Canada Treaty
48 Agreement was met.

49
50 Likewise, the summer chum run came in

1 at an average size and all escapement goals were met.
2 Fall season salmon stocks provided liberal
3 opportunities for subsistence harvest and a surplus for
4 commercial harvest. Fall chum are expected to meet or
5 exceed most escapement objectives and coho salmon
6 escapement is expected to be sufficient.

7
8 It is recognized that the sacrifices of
9 the Yukon River fishing community are heavily relied
10 upon for assistance in conserving the chinook salmon
11 run. To sustain this important resource, fishermen
12 incurred a significant hardship to reduce harvest in
13 any fishing gear types. Given the trend in chinook
14 salmon runs in recent years, we will continue to work
15 with fishermen and interested parties to develop
16 conservative strategies with the primary goal to
17 provide for escapement needs and subsistence uses
18 during low years, while looking for ways to accommodate
19 other fishing opportunities. We're hopeful that the
20 good escapements we saw this year will result in
21 improved returns in the future.

22
23 Before I finish up, I'd also like to
24 also note that the Alaska Board of Fish, as you guys
25 know, will be taking up AYK fish proposals in January
26 in Fairbanks. So I'd encourage everyone to discuss
27 these with your State AC meetings.

28
29 And I don't know if the State Manager,
30 Sabrina -- if she has any more comments on the summer.
31 And when she's done, if Jeff has any additional
32 comments for the fall season.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have
35 comments, Sabrina?

36
37 MS. GARCIA: Hi. This is Sabrina
38 Garcia, the Summer Season assistant manager on the
39 Yukon River, with the Alaska Department of Fish and
40 Game. Thank you for that overview, Gerald. I don't
41 have anything to add at the moment. Just would like to
42 reiterate thanks to all the fishermen on the Yukon
43 River. Thanks for your efforts this season. We were
44 able to meet all of our escapement goals. I'm happy to
45 take any questions on Brooks Range of Fish proposals or
46 on the summer season.

47
48 Thank you.

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does Council have

1 any questions for the Alaska Department of Fish and
2 Game on the summer season.

3

4 (No comments)

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none. I
7 appreciate the diligence of the Department and U.S.
8 Fish and Wildlife to assure escapement needs were met.
9 I highly appreciate all of the hardships that people
10 went through to get that escapement for chinook salmon
11 in the summer season, so I wanted to thank you for
12 that.

13

14 That would be my comment. Any comments
15 from the Council on summer season.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And have anything
20 else?

21

22 MR. MASCHMANN: I just want to say that
23 as managers this year, we really worked hard to try and
24 find opportunities for folks to fish, you know, in
25 between pulses. We have a lot of requests particularly
26 around Tanana due to the fire for some -- to allow a
27 short opportunity to feed firemen, which we allowed.
28 There were several folks who had potlatch requests and
29 we tried to meet as many of those as we could.

30

31 And unfortunately, you know, the
32 distribution of the fish isn't the same everywhere and,
33 you know, some folks -- they look at other areas and
34 say, you know, why did they get this and we didn't.
35 And it's because, you know, just different
36 opportunities, different fishing conditions in
37 different part of the river. Different stocks of fish
38 are present.

39

40 And so we're looking at, you know, each
41 district. Each subdistrict and trying to find the best
42 opportunities we can provide for, you know, summer chum
43 fishing and fall chum fishing when we can.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I understand the
46 complexities of what that would be, but I do feel that
47 any time we see that we've met the goals for
48 reconstruction of this run, I'm happy to see that.
49 Even though there was -- there's lots of fall chum and
50 so the shift to the fall chum and coho is an important

1 part of subsistence these days.

2

3 You've got a comment there, Tim?

4

5 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
6 Chair. Just like to thank and congratulate Gerald and
7 Sabrina and Fred and all the Staff that work with you
8 on this management and meeting the escapement goals. I
9 know it's real difficult to try to interact with a lot
10 of desperate subsistence and commercial users that are
11 concerned with trying to work within the management
12 parameters but feed their families at the same time.
13 So it's not -- hasn't been easy to meet our escapement
14 goal recently, the last 20 years about, so I'm really
15 excited to see escapement numbers like that to show
16 that there is a benefit to everybody's sacrifice and
17 not fishing.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim.

20

21 Did you have any comments, Jeff, on the
22 fall season?

23

24 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, Mr. Chair. Thank
25 you for the opportunity. No. I think Jill had covered
26 it very well. And thank you.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

29

30 And, Darrel, have you got a comment?

31

32 MR. VENT: Yeah. I was just kind of
33 wondering. You mentioned something about the Pilot
34 Station sonar. I was wondering about the accuracy of
35 the Pilot Station sonar. You know, when you're trying
36 to meet this amount and if you exceeded it, was there
37 some false readings? Or was there anything that kept
38 the fishermen from getting -- to have a little bit of
39 fish because they got the wrong counts or anything like
40 that?

41

42 MR. MASCHMANN: Yeah. That's a pretty
43 question. You know, we -- the managers rely on the
44 Pilot Station sonar as a big project for us and we look
45 at that pretty closely. And this year the Pilot
46 Station sonar was indicating to us not as good of a run
47 as maybe we're thinking it is post-season. And the
48 Pilot Station genetics information was showing maybe
49 even a worse Canadian component than what materialized
50 up at the Eagle sonar.

1 So I would say yes, that this year
2 Pilot didn't look good for us in-season. I don't know
3 if there's any of the State managers have more to
4 comment. If it's something that we'll be discussing
5 post-season, you know, what happened. But in-season
6 everything seemed to be working fine with the sonar.
7 The test fishery was operating correctly. Just the
8 numbers we were getting from Pilot Station aren't
9 really jiving with what we've seen at Eagle sonar.

10

11 So -- and some years it's the opposite.
12 Everything lines up. And everything matches up great.
13 And everything is what we expected. This year it was
14 the amount we got past the Eagle sonar was unexpected.

15

16 So I don't know if Sabrina has any
17 more.

18

19 MS. GARCIA: Yeah. Through the Chair.
20 I just wanted to add that also this summer season we
21 did not have the Rapids Test Fish Wheel Project
22 operating, which meant that we had about 1,000 miles of
23 river between Pilot Station and Eagle without an
24 assessment project. So we did have to rely solely on
25 our data from Pilot Station alone. So that did
26 complicate things a bit for us as well.

27

28 MR. ESTENSEN: And Chair, if I may.
29 This is Jeff Estensen, fall season. And this is more
30 just kind of general -- you know, when you look at
31 Pilot Station sonar there's a little bit more
32 variability because you have a portion there that's
33 also multiple species of fish there, which can kind of
34 add to the error that you have around your count there.
35 And, you know, when we get a -- so Pilot Station sonar
36 count, we certainly look at the range around it.

37

38 Versus Eagle sonar, which is obviously
39 just passing one species with little overlap in timing.
40 It's the kings are going by and then the fall chum.
41 So, you know, Eagle sonar tends to be a little bit less
42 variation around the estimate versus Pilot Station
43 sonar. Just an FYI to you for that.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah.

46

47 Pollock.

48

49 MR. SIMON: Okay. The last time
50 fishermen comments about the fish. For years we take

1 the fish -- king salmon as needed from the river before
2 Statehood and before the feds took over management.
3 Now the State and the feds took over management and the
4 king salmon disappeared. So for a few years now we are
5 not allowed to take king salmon although that's our
6 main fish diet for our people along the river. I was
7 just thinking how many more years are we not going to
8 take any king salmon.

9

10 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for those
13 comments on use, Pollock.

14

15 You got a comment there, Darrel?

16

17 MR. VENT: Yeah. Just one more
18 comment. Now you were saying that they met or exceeded
19 the escapement. Do you mean that there was more fish
20 that went by that could have been utilized by the
21 subsistence users if the escapement was accurate? Is
22 that what you're saying?

23

24 MR. MASCHMANN: I think as post-season
25 we look into our analysis and just based upon what we
26 saw at our escapement projects along the river and what
27 we saw at Eagle sonar, it appears as managers we maybe
28 could have allowed some harvest on some chinook. But
29 again it wasn't a stellar year for chinook. It was a
30 little better than the really poor years we've been
31 having. At least at this time preliminarily speaking,
32 there may have been a little bit of room for some
33 harvest.

34

35 But again, you know, escapements -- we
36 didn't blow escapements out of the water or anything.
37 Some of the escapements were average and then some were
38 a little above average. And what we saw at the Eagle
39 sonar was, you know, we surpassed our border
40 obligations up there. So.....

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But when you look at
43 the under escapements previous to the last two years,
44 then you've got to get some overlap, too. So there's
45 -- it's not like it's a lost resource or anything. You
46 get more nutrient on the grounds. You get better
47 smolts -- or fry survival. Things turn around when
48 you've got -- after bad escapements.

49

50 Tim.

1 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
2 was wondering if Gerald or Sabrina could comment on --
3 give us a brief update on what either the Service or
4 the Department is doing for ASL assessment at Eagle.
5 So and also what kind of program or projects do you
6 have going there. And then particularly I'm interested
7 -- we have this basic subsistence user standing down
8 from fishing 2014, 2015. I'm interested to know how
9 those management actions affected the ASL compositions.

10

11 MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

14

15 MR. MASCHMANN: Tim, on page 9 and 10
16 of the Fish and Game's Preliminary Yukon River Summer
17 Season. They report all the age, sex, and length data
18 for some of the projects. And on page 10, second
19 paragraph, is the Eagle sonar. And for the Eagle
20 sonar, they got zero percent age three, which is an
21 unusual -- six percentage four; a 35 percent age five;
22 57 percent age six; and two percent age seven.

23

24 And this was comprised of 40 -- females
25 were 44 percent of the samples and age four percentage
26 was near average; age five percentage was below
27 average; age six percentage was above average; and age
28 seven percentage was near average. And females were
29 near average at least for that project.

30

31 MR. GERVAIS: And then when you're
32 listing these age of the fish, does a -- a king salmon
33 swims out as a smolt when it's like.....

34

35 MR. MASCHMANN: One or two years old.

36

37 MR. GERVAIS: One or two years old?

38

39 MR. MASCHMANN: Yeah.

40

41 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. So then what
42 you're -- on this page, where you have an age five
43 fish, then it's.....

44

45 MR. MASCHMANN: That's an age five.

46

47 MR. GERVAIS: Two in the river and
48 three in the ocean?

49

50 MR. MASCHMANN: It might probably -- I

1 think most of the Yukon fish tend to be one in the
2 river and then like an age five fish would be four in
3 the ocean.

4
5 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: One, four.

6
7 MR. MASCHMANN: Yeah.

8
9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah.

10
11 MR. MASCHMANN: And of course they sit
12 in the gravel for nearly a year.

13
14 MR. GERVAIS: So how do these numbers
15 compare to something we see before the 2014, 2015 with
16 like we have really poor escapement. Transboundary
17 escapement in 2010, 2012, 2013, were the age class of
18 those years different or skewed to younger fish? Or
19 how -- is any of that information showing up where the
20 -- like a poor escapement year ends up with a lot of
21 smaller, undersized fish crossing the boundary?

22
23 MR. MASCHMANN: Well, it's kind of
24 interesting because sometimes you have poor escapement
25 years that return a lot of fish and sometimes you have
26 good escapement years that return a poor amount of
27 fish. So it's hard to make that judgement, but we do
28 watch those age classes and the Department, when they
29 do their modeling, they look at the returns of each age
30 class and then they look at the escapement of that age
31 class from that parent year. And as they're moving
32 along, they're looking at productivity. Like what
33 might have been the productivity for that age class.

34
35 And so again I'm not exactly sure what
36 you're asking, but we definitely look at those
37 escapements and go okay, you know, there was poor
38 escapement in that year so we might be looking at poor
39 age fours coming back for instance. But then we do
40 keep an eye on that, but it's tough because sometimes
41 you get -- you think well, we had poor escapements. We
42 shouldn't get good returns. But that isn't always how
43 the fish behave. So sometimes you get good returns on
44 poor escapements and sometimes you get bad returns on
45 good escapements.

46
47 MR. GERVAIS: What I'm really curious
48 about for right now is like with this -- with the
49 subsistence fishermen basically not fishing this summer
50 and the summer of 2014, did that result in a lot higher

1 percentage of these five and six year old fish at the
2 Eagle sampling point -- Eagle test fishery.

3

4 MR. MASCHMANN: Well, the '14 and, you
5 know, '15, it's going to take a while before we see
6 them come back. And so without having the data in
7 front of me, I can't really tell you what each age
8 class and what years produced and which ones didn't.

9

10 I don't know if Sabrina has that
11 information in front of you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What I see looking
14 at page 10, the age group and where they were taken,
15 the lower river test -- Lower Yukon test fishery with
16 eight and a half inch gear, it just skews the numbers.

17

18 MR. MASCHMANN: Yes.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's an inaccurate
21 assessment. That's not a correct age, sex analysis.
22 If they used seven and a half inch gear you'd have a
23 more accurate analysis of what actually was entering
24 the river. So this is like mixing apples and oranges.

25

26

27 I keep saying the lower river test
28 fishery with eight and a half inch gear should not be
29 occurring. It actually targets large female chinook
30 salmon is what that actually does. And so it skews the
31 sex ratios. It skews the age classes. Look, you've
32 got 72 percent six-year old fish in the lower river
33 test fishery. But the border pass is just 57 percent
34 in an unharvested stock. So this lower river test
35 fishery is a huge flaw in the management assessment.

36

37 And this Council would like to see
38 what's a comparison for stock assessment once it's
39 moved through the fishery. What was coming into the
40 river. What sizes and age classes. And compare that
41 with what we put onto the spawning grounds. That's
42 what we would like. And there's no way we're ever
43 going to get that kind of an assessment with still
44 using eight and a half inch gear in the Lower Yukon
45 test fishery.

46

47 I asked for this change two or three
48 years ago. Yeah. The data set is long, but it's not
49 working. It doesn't work out. It's like flawed
50 information with what we're using now for gear sizes in

1 the harvest regimes. And so I think the Fish and
2 Wildlife Service and the Department should work
3 together on developing a methodology to switch over to
4 a gear type that actually -- as the selectivity study
5 showed in the Board of Fish changed the regulation to
6 seven and a half. Seven and a half was optimum for
7 harvest. And so they needed to have a better
8 assessment of what stock composition was at the lower
9 river.

10
11 The Pilot Station indices is already
12 moved. There's been some harvest there. And there's
13 -- so that's not -- I would prefer to see this
14 assessment for the lower river changed to an indices
15 that we can use to assess what the subsistence harvests
16 or commercial harvests have done to the stocks as
17 they've moved through the fishery and then we actually
18 put on the spawning grounds.

19
20 And so I'll say that again on the
21 record and maybe somebody will hear me again. So I've
22 said this over and over. And that's what Tim's asking.
23 Tim's asking what's the comparison this year with
24 unharvested stock going into Canada. And I can't look
25 at this graph and tell you what that is because we're
26 using eight and a half inch gear down there. There's
27 no way you're going to figure that out. Because what
28 are they using at Eagle. Six, six and a half?

29
30 MR. MASCHMANN: Well, I'm not familiar
31 with the Eagle test fishery, but they're probably using
32 a suite.....

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Six and a half.
35 Sabrina?

36
37 MR. MASCHMANN: They're using a suite
38 of different sizes.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah.

41
42 MR. MASCHMANN: Just to.....

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so they've
45 probably got a heck of a lot better idea of what
46 they're -- what's entering over the border than what we
47 do know in the Lower Yukon test fishery. And they
48 could use a suite of -- like it should be consistent.
49 They're using a suite -- and that's at Pilot. They're
50 using it at Eagle. And they should be using that at

1 the lower river to get an assessment of what the stock
2 composition is.

3

4 You have no idea. That eight and a
5 half inch thing has no idea how many three-year old
6 fish entered the river. They swam right through the
7 net. You didn't catch them. They're not there. And
8 so it's a screwed up science. It's not real science.
9 It's just by guess and by golly again.

10

11 Tim.

12

13 MR. GERVAIS: All right. Sorry to take
14 time on this. I just want to explain why I keep
15 bringing it up. Because I go to North Pacific
16 Management Council to testify. I tell him that they're
17 part of the problem because of what they're catching --
18 bycatch in their trawl fisheries. And their rebuttal
19 is that the in river fisherman are the problem.

20

21 So what I'm trying to get figured out
22 so I can testify to them correctly is -- okay, we've
23 got two years now with not having directed king fishing
24 in the river. So how does that affect -- I want to
25 know how much effect our directed king fishery had --
26 how much difference it makes on the -- the drift
27 gillnet fishing in the river or fish wheels.

28

29 Just -- we just have this two years of
30 data. Two years of low fishing effort to evaluate, you
31 know, how does the in river fishery affect the ASL
32 information so that it can help justify or take away
33 this hypothesis. Who's harming the stocks worst, the
34 in river fishermen or the Bering Seal Gulf of Alaska
35 trawl fleet.

36

37 MR. BUE: Mr. Chair, this is Fred Bue.

38

39 MR. GERVAIS: So that's where I'm
40 coming from with all these questions on ASL between
41 Emmonak and Eagle.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. One more
44 comment here, Darrel. We're going to have to move
45 along in this agenda, but one more comment.

46

47 MR. VENT: Okay. Mine is, you know,
48 that you have that Pilot Station. You were mentioning
49 that there was a place in between Pilot Station and
50 Eagle that tests -- I mean finds out more information

1 to let the people know that, okay, this escapement is
2 being met, now we could allow this time to subsistence
3 fish for this chinook. So is that going to be
4 somewhere above Pilot Station or is it going to be
5 closer to Eagle. That's my question.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

8

9 MR. MASCHMANN: Through the Chair.
10 That's Stan Zaray's fish wheel at the rapids, which
11 he's been operating for many years. But due to the
12 fires this year, he wasn't able to operate during the
13 chinook salmon run. And it appears that he's decided
14 that, you know, he's retiring from this project, so he
15 did not put in for funding to do his rapids fish wheel,
16 which is -- it's not a population assessment, but it
17 gives us run timing and relative pulse strength. When
18 fish split off from Tanana, some go up to the Tanana
19 and some head up to Canada. It gives us that early
20 District 5 strength.

21

22 And so it looks like unless someone
23 jumps in and wants to take over from him, that we're
24 going to lose that tool for next year. So it's a
25 concern.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's a bummer.

28

29 So I think we've covered the Yukon
30 River season.

31

32 One more comment there? Go ahead.

33

34 MR. MASCHMANN: I think I thought I
35 heard Fred trying to chime in.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. Were you there,
38 Fred?

39

40 MR. BUE: Yeah, Mr. Chairman. Fred
41 Bue, with Fish and Wildlife Service. I just wanted to
42 get back a little bit to Tim and his thoughts about the
43 2014 and 2015 season. The idea there is that there was
44 very little subsistence harvest and so how did we see
45 the different age classes perform. And I think if he
46 looks at -- and maybe Gerald handed it out. But the
47 graphs from the Federal Report, page 7, that has the
48 Eagle sonar passage there.

49

50 You should turn to that. You'd see

1 that 2009 was the last previous year where we had a
2 pretty strong passage across the border. And so from
3 2009, we saw a strong return of five year olds in 2014.
4 And that was to be expected. Now, the thing about five
5 year olds is that they tend to be a stronger male
6 component of the run. And so 2014 we saw a strong male
7 passage across the border and people pointed to that as
8 a poor quality of escapement. Well, that was pretty
9 much to be expected because that was the strong year
10 class that we saw cross.

11
12 In 2015, those -- you know, the strong
13 five year olds last year turned into strong six year
14 olds this year. Six year olds tend to be dominated by
15 females and so we saw a stronger female passage this
16 year. And so what we saw was that that production off
17 of 2009 seemed to be pretty good. It held true to what
18 our expectations were without the harvest.

19
20 So I think that shows that our
21 expectations are good. We just need to keep on getting
22 some fish across the border and fish into the
23 escapement. And that it looks like that is to be
24 expected. Last year's poor -- low abundance of females
25 wasn't due to mismanagement or over-harvest of females.
26 It was because that year class was strong on five year
27 olds, which tend to be more males.

28
29 Does that help, Tim?

30
31 MR. GERVAIS: Yes. Thank you, Fred.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Appreciate
34 that explanation.

35
36 So I think we've covered the Yukon
37 River salmon runs pretty well. Thanks so much.

38
39 Gerald.

40
41 MR. MASCHMANN: I just want to just go
42 back to Tim and relay it was the fishermen who deserve
43 all the credit.

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

46
47 MR. MASCHMANN: Because, you know, they
48 attended the preseason meetings. They were informed.
49 You know, they're not happy about the run, but they
50 were informed. They were in agreement. They were

1 compliant with the restrictions. They did the best
2 they could with the gear that they had and, you know,
3 really -- you know, we can make up all the rules we
4 want, but if people aren't on board, then it doesn't
5 work.

6

7 So really it's the fishermen that --
8 and we hope to continue again this winter with more
9 preseason meetings and hopefully we're seeing some --
10 the trends turn around.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate it.
13 Well, I appreciate all the Managers' work and all the
14 fishermen's work to rebuild this run. And so I --
15 that's what everybody's hoping is that we'll eventually
16 be returning back to normal subsistence uses again.
17 Hope sooner than later.

18

19 So thanks so much. And thanks so much
20 for Alaska Department of Fish and Game Staff and Fred
21 being on the phone there. So appreciate all the
22 information.

23

24 Melinda.

25

26 MS. BURKE: Yes, Mr. Chair. Thanks for
27 letting us take that up a little earlier. Sometimes
28 that discussion can be quite lengthy and I didn't want
29 us to run right into Darrel needing to run off to the
30 plane.

31

32 If we go back up to the beginning of
33 number 11, I know we still have some various Tribal
34 governments represented in the room, so I think we
35 should check in and see if there are any Tribal
36 governments in the room or on the phone who would like
37 to make comment to the Council.

38

39 And we also still have this resolution
40 from Loudon Tribal Council. If I can read it into the
41 record or if there's another representative here from
42 the Tribe, I think we should probably read that into
43 the record at some point, Mr. Chair.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Is Loudon
46 representatives here to speak.

47

48 (No comments)

49

50 MS. BURKE: And I can check and see if

1 somebody would like to come and speak to this tomorrow
2 before we depart town. Before we adjourn. But I know
3 we've got some other Tribal groups represented in the
4 room. I wanted to make sure we check in with them.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. So does
7 anybody want to come up to speak to the Council.

8
9 (No comments)

10
11 MS. BURKE: All right. Just wanted to
12 check in. We had skipped over that beginning section.

13
14 We usually cover special actions that
15 are pertinent to the Region. One special action that
16 we had this -- submitted this last year, I know Arnold
17 mentioned that he might want to come up and speak to a
18 little bit was Wildlife Special Action 15-11. It was
19 submitted from the Community of Nulato. You don't have
20 anything in your packet. We've spoken about this a
21 couple of times and the Board did take action on that.
22 And that was deferred.

23
24 The Community of Nulato requested a
25 shift in harvest dates and the Board has made decision
26 on that. And they are deferring that to the next
27 wildlife cycle. We came and had a really great
28 consultation with the community. Jeremy went with us
29 and had a great dialogue with the community as well.

30
31 So that has been -- that's been
32 deferred to the next wildlife cycle. And Arnold had
33 mentioned he might want to speak to it. I don't know
34 if there's anything you want to cover, Arnold, with
35 regard to that special action.

36
37 MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah. I know that the
38 Tribal Council in Nulato want me to get up. Arnold
39 Demoski, for the record. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

40
41 They submitted this special action
42 request because the vegetation on the trees are staying
43 on the trees longer and it's harder to see through the
44 woods when we go out hunting. And they're just not
45 moving at that time and people barely have luck that
46 early hunt. So they wanted to try something different.
47 Not eliminate the early hunt, but put days onto the
48 regular season. On the front and the back to make it
49 September 1st to September 30th.

50

1 But just due to warm weather. I
2 remember going hunting with my dad every year for as
3 long as I can remember. And I remember there used to
4 be times when we'd go out during that early hunt and it
5 would be cold. And we wouldn't have to rush the moose
6 back home to process it. But nowadays it's just really
7 warm out and we've got to -- as soon as we get a moose,
8 we've got to unpack. Take down the camp and go home
9 and start processing it. And then we've got to try to
10 do that as quick as we can because we need more than
11 one moose in my family. Most families I think need --
12 if you have a big family, I think you need more than
13 one moose.

14
15 But I just think that early hunt is
16 just too much vegetation on trees and it's just too
17 warm. The flies are always getting on the meat before
18 we get it home. But I just wanted to give my aspect on
19 that proposal.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any questions from
22 the Council.

23
24 Darrel.

25
26 MR. VENT: It's good to see someone,
27 you know -- I guess this is not working. Or is it
28 working. Just speak louder?

29
30 It's good to see someone young and, you
31 know, interested in subsistence. I remember when I was
32 that young, I don't think I was ever really involved
33 with subsistence like you are. So it's great that you
34 could come up here and speak to us.

35
36 And also, you know, if you are
37 interested in the Federal Subsistence Board, I'd advise
38 you, you know, to put in your application. Or if he
39 already has, it would be -- you'd be -- I think you'd
40 be beneficial to, you know, later on in the years with
41 all the information you'd get that would be helpful to
42 us.

43
44 MR. DEMOSKI: I just want to say thank
45 you for those comments. I'm still learning. All the
46 stuff I know now I didn't know two years ago when I
47 started this job. So every time I go to meetings or
48 trainings it's all a learning process. And I'm
49 starting to understand more and more as I go to
50 meetings.

1 So thank you for those comments.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

4

5 MR. DEMOSKI: I just want to say I did
6 turn in my application for the Western Interior RAC,
7 too.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

10

11 Don.

12

13 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
14 guess this is on.

15

16 I was just wondering about the dates
17 that you're requesting. Were you requesting toward the
18 end a special hunt? Or what exactly is the dates? I
19 mean I don't have anything to say here.

20

21 Thank you.

22

23 MR. DEMOSKI: Yeah. So right now the
24 early hunt for -- I'm just going to go with the 21D
25 remainder. The early hunt is from August 22nd to
26 August 31st. And then the regular season starts from
27 September 5th to September 25th. We're not eliminating
28 any days or nothing. We're just taking that early hunt
29 and distributing five days to the front of the regular
30 hunt and five days to the back of it.

31

32 We're just taking that early hunt and
33 distributing the days to the front and back of the
34 regular season.

35

36 MR. HONEA: Oh. So actually you're
37 splitting it. You're taking maybe ten days and you
38 want to put the five in the front of September 5th and
39 five days behind it.

40

41 MR. DEMOSKI: Yes.

42

43 MR. HONEA: Oh, okay. All right.
44 Thank you. That explains it.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. That's no
47 affect on the amount of hunting time, just more of an
48 applicable to when moose are moving around and when
49 it's colder and stuff. And so I'm very supportive of
50 that idea. We've had to do that in other areas in the

1 Western Interior Region because of climatic warming.

2

3 You know, they -- I have observed that
4 on warm years when cow moose eat green food, bulls
5 don't really seek them very much. They don't have a
6 pheromone release or something going on there. They go
7 by them, but they don't even pay attention to them.
8 And the bulls keep eating food all the way through the
9 middle of September. It's not till right before the
10 rut that they actually start hanging around the bulls
11 and really start traveling a lot. So the warmer the
12 fall, the more green food they eat, the more complacent
13 the bulls get.

14

15 And so this is becoming more and more
16 of a problem. People say -- and the Managers go, no,
17 they all breed on time. Yeah. But the bulls aren't
18 moving when hunters are looking for them. So the
19 number of days that the hunters actually have to look
20 for them is actually -- where they have success it gets
21 real short right before the breeding occurs in late
22 September.

23

24 So that's why we keep wanting --
25 pushing for season extensions towards the end of
26 September because they breed -- typically moose are
27 breeding from the 28th of September to the 6th of
28 October. And so that's -- so you get more activity
29 right after the 22nd of September on a warm, green
30 year.

31

32 So thanks for bringing that up to us,
33 Arnold. Appreciate all the work you're doing and hope
34 you're successful on getting on this Council at some
35 point.

36

37 MR. DEMOSKI: I'm trying.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's good to get --
40 takes a year or two to get kind of rolling with it,
41 like anybody.

42

43 MR. VENT: Four years is more like it.

44

45 (Laughter)

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Four years.

48 Whatever.

49

50 So okay. Thank you.

1 MR. DEMOSKI: Thank you.
2
3 MS. BURKE: Do you want to take a
4 break? Or.....
5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. We can take a
7 break. Probably about a ten minute break would be
8 good.
9
10 (Off record)
11
12 (On record)
13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to go
15 over the Donlin Creek draft EIS update.
16
17 Hello, Donnie.
18
19 MS. FLEAGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
20 My name is Donnie Fleagle. I'm the Rural Community
21 Engagement Senior Specialist for AECOM. And with me is
22 Jessica Evans. She is a.....
23
24 MS. EVANS: I'm the Public Involvement
25 Lead on this project.
26
27 MS. FLEAGLE: And we work for the Army
28 Corps of Engineers, not Donlin. And we work putting
29 together the environment impact statement for them.
30
31 So I want to thank you very much for
32 allowing us to participate in today's meeting. The
33 Donlin Gold project is a proposed gold mine located on
34 Calista and the Kuskokwim Corporation lands near the
35 Village of Crooked Creek on the Kuskokwim River.
36 Donlin Gold is a joint venture between two mining
37 companies, Barrick and NovaGold. And the Army Corps of
38 Engineers is neither a proponent or opponent of the
39 Donlin gold mine project.
40
41 The EIS analysis is organized by three
42 major components.
43
44 The first is the mine site, which
45 includes numerous facilities. One we're going to
46 highlight to you is the open pit, which is eventually
47 going to cover 2.2 square miles or 1,480 acres.
48
49 Two, is a two tailing storage facility.
50 And it's going to cover about three and a half square

1 miles. And the waste runoff facility is going to cover
2 about 2,300 acres, which is a little over three square
3 miles.

4
5 The major facilities support the mill,
6 which will process 59,000 tons of ore a day.

7
8 And again you can see the pit. There
9 we are.

10
11 The transportation infrastructure.
12 We're going to have a new barge landing near Unmiak
13 (ph) Creek, which is below Crooked Creek. And it's
14 going to involve a 30-mile road and a 5,000 airstrip.
15 And it will be able to store 40 million gallons of
16 diesel fuel.

17
18 There's going to be 122 barge round
19 trips per year. The average barging season is 110 days
20 on the Kuskokwim. There will be up to three barge fill
21 passings per day either going up or down the river.

22
23 Now you can see the pipeline route. It
24 starts in Cook Inlet and is a 350-mile long natural gas
25 pipeline. It's going to cross about 56 percent State
26 land, 34 percent BLM land, and 10 percent Native
27 Corporation land. It's going to go right out the
28 Alaska Range, down through the Kuskokwim Mountains.
29 And it's going to have a couple of river crossings.
30 They're going to use horizontal drilling to put it
31 underneath the river bed at the Kuskokwim -- point on
32 the Kuskokwim and a point on the George River.

33
34 Okay. Let's click that. Let's move
35 another slide there, Jack. Thank you. We're having
36 problems with the slide presentation, huh. It doesn't
37 want to move. There we go.

38
39 The next steps that we have is that we
40 are currently finishing the draft EIS. It will be out
41 the end of November. And it will be open for comment
42 through the month of April. And then we will take the
43 comments that we receive and we will incorporate that
44 into the EIS.

45
46 We are going to have several meetings
47 beginning the middle of January in a few communities.
48 And we'll get to that slide.

49
50 So I've already told you about the

1 draft EIS coming out the end of November. And I've
2 already told you about the public comment period that
3 will start. So we'll move to the next slide.

4
5 Issues that are going to be addressed
6 in the draft EIS. The next four slides are going to
7 show what's going to occur. Examples of comments that
8 are also addressed is the barge traffic, which is a
9 major concern for other users on the river. I won't
10 read this to you. I know you can read yourself.

11
12 Another major issue is subsistence.
13 And there are concerns that the amount of traffic will
14 affect moose along the river and the Upper Kuskokwim
15 through the Middle Kuskokwim are river hunters,
16 primarily for moose. And they're worried about the
17 impact to the small fish that are born and over winter
18 the migration of fish up the river and back down. And
19 the habitat changes in the water flow and water quality
20 as the barge traffic impacts the riverbanks and other
21 users.

22
23 We can move on. So we're showing that
24 again. That there's going to be some impacts to --
25 with new employment. And that may bring some benefits
26 as well as some setbacks as people adjust to incomes
27 and the ability to purchase things which would normally
28 be outside their capability of purchasing.

29
30 Issues addressed as for fisheries and
31 the impacts, which we've talked about already. Social
32 economics. The projected levels of Alaskan Native
33 Corporation hire. They're going to -- Donlin has made
34 a commitment to the Regional Corporation and the
35 Village Corporation to hire as many shareholders as
36 possible. Once that's reached, they'll go to the
37 region. And they've already got a very good record of
38 hiring Alaskan Natives.

39
40 Some people are concerned about out-
41 migration because during the exploratory period there
42 were quite a bit of folks that moved out into
43 Anchorage, into Wasilla, and to other parts of urban
44 Alaska because things were cheaper there and their
45 children were able to access better services, better
46 programs.

47
48 There's going to be some of course
49 indirect economic benefits. Some additional revenue to
50 small businesses. We're hoping that maybe some small

1 businesses will also get started around service
2 delivery.

3
4 And I don't know why our program there
5 isn't working, so while -- we're going to talk about
6 water flow. The impacts to the streams and the Crooked
7 Creek drainage in the winter and summer. There will be
8 two creeks that will entirely disappear because they're
9 right in the mine site. However, the mine site is
10 above two creeks that are the major spawning creeks,
11 which is Getnuna (ph) and Bell. So we don't expect a
12 huge impact there.

13
14 Folks are concerned about airborne
15 contaminants in the air and the air emissions and water
16 discharges. And this just doesn't concern just dust.
17 It concerns some other chemicals. And we've got a
18 section in the EIS that addresses that. Talk about
19 airborne contaminants to vegetation.

20
21 And we can move past that one. For
22 some reason, Jack, it's giving it double.

23
24 And one of the things that I just
25 alluded to is mercury released as fugitive dust during
26 mining. And a lot of folks are concerned about
27 mercury. Mercury is a natural occurring composite in
28 the rocks. Cyanide will be used in the milling
29 process. Folks are concerned about the transportation
30 and disposal of that. They're also concerned about the
31 spills. If there was any spills in the river, how fast
32 the response would be and the likelihood and potential
33 of what exactly was put into the water body.

34
35 So we can move past that.

36
37 We have organized the draft EIS into a
38 few chapters. And since this -- the draft is coming
39 out the end of November, we wanted to walk you through
40 it. It's going to be a document that's approximately
41 3,000 pages plus. We won't have hard copies, but you
42 can get DVDs by contacting our office.

43
44 So first chapter of course is purpose
45 and need. Chapter two is alternatives. Alternatives
46 to different aspects and components of the mine project
47 that were looked at and either made it through the
48 process or failed to make it through the process. For
49 instance, one that failed to make it through the
50 process but was considered was a pipeline going down

1 the Dalzelle Gorge. It would be buried. However, that
2 was not a real good alternative. So that was one that
3 washed out.

4
5 Three is the environmental analysis.

6
7 Four is the cumulative effects.

8
9 And five is mitigation. How are you
10 going to mitigate this or that.

11
12 So we'll move on to the next slide,
13 Jack. Not this one. This is one that we looked at
14 already. And that looks like -- this is it.

15
16 It provides an overview. It summarizes
17 our draft findings on potential impacts. Serves as a
18 guide. You can see the photo up there of what the
19 barge is going to look like compared to our river boats
20 and the loads they'll be pushing up river.

21
22 Okay. We'll move on.

23
24 Purpose and need. It just introduces
25 the roles and authorities of the organization of how
26 the EIS is done.

27
28 The Army Corps of Engineers, because it
29 involves water, is the lead agency. And they put out
30 to bid the EIS, which AECOM, the folks who work for
31 got, and so we work with that client in producing an
32 EIS. And the applicant, which is in this case is
33 Donlin. They pay for the EIS. And as we were talking
34 earlier with Don, it can get pretty spendy. So it
35 talks about also the purpose. Why it was needed. And
36 it's examined.

37
38 Okay. And chapter 3, which we'll move
39 on to. The environmental analysis. This is the meat of
40 the document.

41
42 Oh. Describing the alternatives.
43 There we are. Thank you very much. It outlines the
44 regulatory framework. Describes the baseline
45 conditions to 26 resources from groundwater, surface
46 water, hydrology to soils to rock components. You name
47 it, it's in there.

48
49 Okay. And here's just a quick shot of
50 when I said you name it, it's in there. There it is.

1 All right. I promised not to read to you, so I'm not
2 going to.

3
4 Okay. We'll move on to the
5 organization of the draft EIS. And four is the
6 cumulative effects. So it takes a look at the overall
7 impacts to the environment that would be caused by this
8 new development should it occur.

9
10 So we've got the baseline for the past.
11 For the present, what it looks like. And if their
12 development project would go in, what could it possibly
13 impact and what would those impacts be.

14
15 Okay. Chapter 5 is the design features
16 and the best management practices and standard permit
17 conditions included in the project design. It also
18 gives a list of additional measures that could be
19 implemented to further reduce impacts.

20
21 And we'll go on to the next slide.
22 We're planning on have proposed public meetings. And
23 these are the places that public meetings will occur,
24 starting in mid-January through the end of April. It's
25 a working list. It's based on where the scoping
26 meetings were held. The dates for individual meetings
27 are not yet decided on, but there will be a variety of
28 public notices for each meeting.

29
30 This is another way to see where the
31 scoping meetings were held. In January to March or
32 2013, the Army Corps of Engineers made a big effort to
33 get to all parts of the region that's going to be
34 potentially affected by this project. And that
35 includes 66 communities.

36
37 So we'll move on. Click, click. Keep
38 trying, Jack.

39
40 MS. BURKE: It's thinking.

41
42 (Laughter)

43
44 MS. FLEAGLE: It's thinking.

45
46 So how do you go about making comments.
47 You can attend and make comments at public meetings.
48 You can email comments. And an address will be set up
49 and provided. You can submit written comments to Keith
50 Gordon, who is the project manager at the Army Corps of

1 Engineers. And you can fax comments. And a number
2 will be provided for that.

3
4 If you come to the public meetings, it
5 would be great if you have written something up, if you
6 could bring an extra copy and provide that to the
7 recorder. It's always nice to have that.

8
9 So we are finally at the end. And it
10 seems like it's been really quiet between the winter of
11 2013 and right up until now. But as you can see,
12 there's been a lot of work that's been taking place.
13 And I've given most of you a Power Point presentation,
14 which is over. But I also wanted to talk to you about
15 newsletter four that's.....

16
17 MS. EVANS: Five.

18
19 MS. FLEAGLE: Four is the one that we
20 brought, right?

21
22 MS. EVANS: Yes.

23
24 MS. FLEAGLE: Thank you. Newsletter
25 four.

26
27 Newsletter four is a document that I
28 think is going to be very good for you to take and use
29 when you do the 3,000 page project of trying to read
30 your way through it. It lists the primary issues that
31 came out at the scoping meetings, like barging,
32 subsistence. It has a lot of questions there. And it
33 shows you exactly where to go in the draft EIS so you
34 don't have to spend a lot of time going through all
35 these pages individually. So I would encourage you to
36 keep that newsletter four and use it as your guide.

37
38 And now we are open for questions,
39 which Jessica Evans will be glad to do.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for the
44 presentation, Donnie.

45
46 Questions from the Council. Comments
47 on the presentation.

48
49 Darrel.

50

1 MR. VENT: Just a quick question. I
2 know this -- you know, we have a mining operation above
3 Huslia on the Hogatza River. And they are -- we're
4 currently on State land, but I think they put a
5 proposal in to go into some Federal land. I'm not too
6 sure how that went -- how the proposal went because we
7 -- they put a notice up and then by the time the
8 comment period came around, I was kind of late on that.

9
10 But the thing that I see, there's
11 probably going to be a lot of, you know, controversy on
12 these things, easily it's going to be the subsistence.
13 Because of the fish -- you know, their fish is being
14 heavily impacted down there. And close to the spawning
15 grounds, that's going to be, you know, pretty
16 controversial. Because when you're in those areas,
17 like what we got be proposed up above Bettles, we have
18 a road that's being proposed. And it's going across --
19 trying to go across some areas that's real key to us
20 for our fisheries, our wildlife habitats, our
21 subsistence use.

22
23 So I imagine you're going to get a lot
24 of controversy on all these subjects with pluses and
25 minuses, but it has helped our area with some
26 employment. But we have no current studies on what it
27 did to our fishing, with the spawning grounds. Because
28 Clare Creek was called Clare Creek. And if you go up
29 there and you look at Clare Creek now, it's not Clare
30 Creek no more. It's called -- maybe they should call
31 it Muddy Creek.

32
33 But yeah, so there's going to be a
34 little bit of controversy, you know, because we've seen
35 it happen up there in our area. So I'm just -- you
36 know, just a little information.

37
38 MS. FLEAGLE: Thank you, Darrel.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Darrel.

41
42 Other comments.

43
44 Pollock.

45
46 MR. SIMON: Yeah. I was just wondering
47 about local hire for the mine and how large is the mine
48 going to be and how long. Just, you know, I'm from
49 Koyukuk River. Allakaket is my home. And Darrel
50 mentioned that there was a mine on the Hawk River maybe

1 20 years ago. A lot of visitors in the Koyukuk River
2 work in the mines, kind of like a summer seasonal job,
3 it helped the communities and that was good. So I was
4 just wondering if there would be much local hire for
5 the area.

6

7 MS. EVANS: Yes. Donlin has already
8 committed to having a large percentage of local hire in
9 particular. And they've already done this in some of
10 their studies and stuff that they have done, but that
11 is a priority for them.

12

13 As to how much and how long, I know the
14 construction season for a couple of years will have
15 significantly more jobs available than the rest of the
16 life of the mine.

17

18 Do you know?

19

20 MS. FLEAGLE: 2,000, I think, jobs.

21

22 MS. EVANS: Yeah. I think that's
23 right. Approximately 2,000 jobs during the
24 construction season and then about 1,000 for the rest
25 of the life of the mine.

26

27 MS. FLEAGLE: Which is 27 years.

28

29 MS. EVANS: Yes. Does that answer your
30 question?

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did that answer your
33 question, Pollock?

34

35 (Nods affirmatively)

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Got a question, Don.

38

39 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
40 might seem kind of like a dumb question. I mean we --
41 is it mandated? You know, I mean because it seems
42 like Donlin Mine's been there for a while there
43 operating, right? So -- and I'm kind of confused with
44 the EIS study. Shouldn't that be already done before
45 any activity? I mean you gave us a report over in
46 McGrath exactly a year ago.

47

48 And it seems like -- you know, I mean
49 they had the -- I don't know if it's a courtesy thing
50 to do a presentation or you're mandated to do that to

1 the villages' advisory groups like us or anything else.
2 But it just -- I guess when we're, you know, weighing
3 the options of the mercury mining and stuff -- I mean
4 the -- you know, leaching the gold out by using mercury
5 or cyanide or something. And it seems dangerous.

6
7 So do you -- you know, I mean is it
8 just a courtesy thing to give us a presentation? I
9 mean because it seems like the villages that are
10 affected that's in that area are going to, you know,
11 give you guys the -- give Donlin Mine the authority to
12 be able to even operate.

13
14 So any comment on that?

15
16 MS. FLEAGLE: Sure. The Kuskokwim
17 Corporation owns the surface and Calista owns the sub-
18 surface. And in order to do any exploratory work,
19 Donlin Gold had to get a lease or some type of legal
20 document in order to do the exploratory work. And
21 that's all they've done is set up this small little
22 camp. Make an airfield. And do exploratory work.
23 They've been working on this for I would say 18 years.

24
25 So they had to go in and they had to
26 find out whether it was something that they wanted to
27 do. If there was enough there. And they had to figure
28 out just exactly how would they get that gold out.
29 That gold is microscopic, so you can't see it to the
30 eye. And they had to find out just exactly how far it
31 went. An idea of how far it goes and what they had to
32 do.

33
34 So when they finally made up their mind
35 that this was something they wanted to pursue, Barrick
36 and NovaGold as the owners through Donlin Gold, then
37 they applied for a permit. And permits from the Army
38 Corps of Engineers and some other Federal agencies and
39 State agencies. And when they applied for the permit
40 and it went to the Army Corps of Engineers, that
41 triggered the EIS.

42
43 That means that until the Army Corps of
44 Engineers makes a decision whether it's to go or not to
45 go, Donlin Gold cannot really do any physical at that
46 site. So right now they're ensconced in gobs and gobs
47 and gobs of paperwork.

48
49 MR. HONEA: Okay. So actually I mean
50 is there a timeline that they're going by? And maybe,

1 you know, EIS is -- may be eventually approved? Is
2 there -- is just.....

3
4 MS. EVANS: The final EIS will come out
5 in probably 2017. And then -- as well as the record of
6 decision. And what the EIS will do is just give the
7 Army Corps of Engineers the information they need to
8 grant the permit. It's not really an approval thing.
9 They just use it as a way to make their decision. And
10 then the Army Corps will make that final call.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And the Army Corps
13 will make the record of decision early or late 2017?
14 Or that's -- they have a time frame of one year to
15 decide? Or.....

16
17 MS. EVANS: I think right now it's
18 projected early 2017.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

21
22 Do you have any comments or questions,
23 Tim?

24
25 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
26 Chair. Does Donlin plan to do any cyanide heat bleach
27 or cyanide tank leaching on this?

28
29 MS. EVANS: You know, I'm not entirely
30 sure about that. But I can find out.

31
32 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. And then how does
33 it work? There are some big things that they're trying
34 to do. One is the gas pipeline from Cook Inlet and
35 then the barge traffic. Who's to say like that's too
36 invasive. We don't want that. Or does that not --
37 does it matter what people think? It's just going to
38 happen because they can do it within a legal or
39 environmental parameter or something?

40
41 MS. EVANS: I guess that's up to the
42 individual agencies that grant the permits and right-
43 of-ways.

44
45 MR. GERVAIS: Which is the Corps of
46 Engineers, right?

47
48 MS. EVANS: Well, and the State agency
49 for instance will grant the pipeline right-of-way for
50 State land and the BLM will grant it through the BLM

1 land. So in theory any of them could hold it up.

2

3 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. So when is the
4 proper time for like this Advisory Committee to comment
5 on the issues that we feel might affect the subsistence
6 resources for that area.

7

8 MS. EVANS: Well, I'll take any of your
9 comments right now. But the official public comment
10 period will begin with the release of the draft EIS on
11 the 30th. And I am -- I mean and you can submit a
12 formal comment period then. And we will address every
13 single comment.

14

15 MR. GERVAIS: How do you want to handle
16 that stuff like Ray was talking about with the pipeline
17 corridor. Do you want to talk about it now or submit
18 it later in the winter?

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, Ray Collins is
21 -- stated, as he did in McGrath, that he's concerned
22 about the route of the pipeline following the baseline
23 of the hills and the highly productive areas for moose.
24 But the response was that it was -- the black spruce is
25 considered wetlands. Well, I don't see where the
26 difference between tundra being primarily wetlands and
27 then black spruce being primarily permafrost soils. I
28 think the avoidance -- some of the primary concerns is
29 avoidance of natural resources to the highest degree.
30 Targeting low productivity terrains versus high
31 productivity terrains.

32

33 And then the access that this pipeline
34 is going to bring as far as basically a trail for all-
35 terrain vehicle use along those corridors. If the high
36 productivity terrains are targeted along the base of
37 the mountains, there will be impacts to the resources
38 because those moose and so forth that live there will
39 be subject to exceptionally high harvest rates and will
40 affect the migratory movements of moose into the
41 Kuskokwim Valley corridor could be highly affected for
42 subsistence uses.

43

44 The BLM is here. And I would like to
45 have them come up to the table because they have
46 significant lands in this area. And our map here is
47 the -- it's yellow. Yeah. It's the yellow lands that
48 this is crossing. And so I would like to get the BLM
49 involved in discussion with this Council on -- they've
50 been far more involved in looking.....

1 Yes. Go ahead, Don.
2
3 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
4 Before they leave I just had one.....
5
6 MS. BURKE: They're not going to leave
7 yet.
8
9 MR. HONEA: I just.....
10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My mic is down.
12
13 MR. HONEA: Can I go ahead?
14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, there it came
16 back on, the plug came out.
17
18 MR. HONEA: I just had.....
19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. They're not
21 going anywhere. I'm just bringing the BLM into this
22 discussion.
23
24 MR. HONEA: Okay. Well, I mean just in
25 response to the last question, we saw in the slide show
26 here and we see in our handouts here the use of cyanide
27 in the milling process. And then you said you did not
28 know if they were going to do that. I don't know any
29 other way to extract that.
30
31 MS. EVANS: They are going to use
32 cyanide to extract the -- to extract the gold. I'm not
33 sure if they have like a heat bleach fill. I know
34 they're going to destroy the cyanide before they put it
35 back into the tailings.
36
37 MR. SEPPI: This is Bruce Seppi with
38 the BLM. I reviewed this draft document over the last
39 three weeks and over the last several years. It is a
40 cyanide -- closed circuit cyanide. It's not heat
41 bleached. It won't be open to the environment, but
42 there is cyanide use. And you have to read the draft
43 analysis to see exactly what's going on. It is a
44 massive document.
45
46 But I would like to talk about BLM's
47 involvement and mine, if I could.
48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like to hear
50 your involvement and the perspective of one of the land

1 managers.

2

3 MR. SEPPI: Yeah.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Since we don't have
6 the State here for their perspective. So.....

7

8 MR. SEPPI: Right. For the record, my
9 name is Bruce Seppi. I'm a Wildlife Biologist and
10 Federal Subsistence Coordinator for the Anchorage Field
11 Office BLM. And I've been tasked with -- like I said,
12 with reviewing this document. I have over the past
13 several years as it's come from summaries.

14

15 Donlin Gold, LLC is going to have their
16 draft EIS out in late November, as the representatives
17 from the quarry have said. This is a large sulphide
18 gold mine near the Village of Crooked Creek, on the
19 Kuskokwim River. We've just finished -- not just me.
20 But our entire BLM AFL staff has just finished
21 providing comments to the draft of this to the
22 contractor who's putting the EIS together. And that is
23 AECOM. And we've submitted over 100 pages of comments
24 to them.

25

26 BLM involvement is that we would grant
27 the right-of-way for the pipeline across the portions
28 that go across BLM lands. And that is only -- of that
29 315-mile pipeline, of that only about 97 miles go
30 across BLM lands. But according to NEPA policy, you
31 can't just comment on one portion of it. So BLM is
32 commenting on the whole thing. The mine, the
33 transportation facilities, and the 315-mile pipeline.

34

35 So I know the Corps folks here have
36 given you a Power Point on what's going on, but I just
37 wanted to emphasize to this RAC -- and I wasn't sure
38 you guys were going to be here. But I just wanted to
39 emphasize the magnitude of this and the scale of this.
40 And you really have to read that document and look at
41 it a log to realize it's a jaw-dropping size of a thing
42 happening. And it -- you know, it's going to cross
43 thresholds -- ecological thresholds in this area.

44

45 It includes this 315-mile gas pipeline
46 from Cook Inlet through the Alaska Range up to the
47 Kuskokwim River. And it's providing power -- the main
48 power to the mine through that natural gas pipeline.
49 That will power a 227 megawatt power plant and that
50 will be used to crush and grind the ore that will be

1 then treated with cyanide in a closed circuit type of
2 facility. It's not out in the open.

3
4 This mine is designed to run for about
5 28 years, with three to four years of construction
6 time. And just to give you a little perspective, I
7 know you had given the area of the pit itself, but the
8 pit will basically be one mile by two miles wide by
9 1,600 feet deep by the time the mine life is completed.
10 Behind the tailings dam, that's about 500 -- 495 feet
11 high. And that is poised in the watershed of Crooked
12 Creek that drains into the Kuskokwim.

13
14 So even if you like the whole barging
15 scenario, which I'll talk about in a second here, after
16 this mine is done, this pit will fill with water. And
17 it will be forever threatening the Kuskokwim River. I
18 just want to point that out. It will have to be
19 treated forever.

20
21 The transportation facilities part of
22 this is proposed to -- through the building process and
23 then also when they actually supply fuel and supplies
24 to the mine involves a port at Bethel -- or an
25 expansion of a port at Bethel to bring in oceangoing
26 barges and then transfer cargo and fuel onto those
27 barges that are going up the river. And then creating
28 a new port on the Kuskokwim River at Shunjek Creek,
29 which is just south of the Village of Crooked Creek.

30
31 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Ungjek.

32
33 MR. SEPPI: Ungjek. Excuse me. It's
34 Ungjek. The ports will be used to barge cargo and fuel
35 up. And that's -- just to give you a little bit of
36 size of this, it will be 98 million gallons of diesel
37 fuel barged up annually to that port, along with cargo.
38 So that involves 122 round trips of barges from Bethel
39 up to Ungjek.

40
41 And that is in a configuration of four
42 barges pushed together. And my comments on this to
43 AECOM is that barges that size and with that much
44 weight on them just isn't feasible or possible to get
45 up that river. The diesel barges will have 1.69
46 million gallons of diesel fuel on them each.

47
48 So that's a major concern of BLMs. And
49 even with.....

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is there a
2 calculation of wake displacement of that? That's a lot
3 of tonnage and wake displacement and wave action.

4
5 MR. SEPPI: It is. And AECOM and
6 Donlin have no doubtedly worked well on that because
7 it's to their benefit to make this happen, but I've
8 traveled that river on a skiff well enough to know
9 between -- just between Aniak and McGrath doing p.
10 falcon surveys. And I know that there's times that I
11 see barges pulled over to the side that just can't make
12 it any further. And those are little cargo barges
13 going up to McGrath.

14
15 So I know full well and I've been
16 commenting since we've been comment -- you know, began
17 commenting on this that these barging scenarios aren't
18 realistic. And so if you had 122 barge trips with a
19 tow of four barges, I think that's likely double or
20 quadruple that number when it comes to reality. And
21 especially later in the season when water levels are
22 low.

23
24 But that remains to be seen. And
25 that's what I was hoping this RAC would comment on.

26
27 So bottom line is I'm the Federal
28 Subsistence Coordinator for Anchorage Field Office, so
29 it's my responsibility to put together an .810 -- or a
30 preliminary .810 analysis for subsistence impacts to
31 this whole project. And I just finished that in fact
32 yesterday before I got onto the plane. I handed it to
33 my boss. And they're reviewing it now and I have to
34 hand it over to AECOM by Friday.

35
36 This EIS will be out for public review.
37 And in that process during that same time, BLM is going
38 to hold .810 subsistence meetings specifically for
39 subsistence impacts to this. And we plan to go to
40 those communities also.

41
42 There was discussion about doing the
43 subsistence impacts meetings -- the .810 hearings at
44 the same time that they were having their scoping
45 meetings and we decided that we're going to do them
46 separately and alone. So the villages that we're going
47 to are still being decided. But it's basically all the
48 villages on the Kuskokwim River that the barges will
49 pass, plus McGrath, Takotna, Nikolai. And then the
50 villages along the pipeline itself, particularly

1 Skwenta and Tyonek which will also be impacted on the
2 Cook Inlet side.

3
4 I have concerns about access and
5 improved access by non-qualified subsistence hunters
6 along the pipeline corridor. I have serious worries
7 about barging on the Kuskokwim and its effects to fish.
8 In my opinion, this barging traffic will completely
9 prevent people from using the river, subsistence or
10 otherwise.

11
12 And I have huge concerns about the mine
13 itself and the drainage off the mine. Not so much
14 during mining operations, but after. When you've got
15 billions of gallons of toxic water held behind in the
16 pit and that tailings dam. And they're going to end up
17 -- they have to be treated what Donlin calls into
18 perpetuity.

19
20 So that's something that I don't think
21 is even possible, but it would take a water treatment
22 plant treating that entire part of the watershed
23 forever. So.....

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And who is
26 responsible for that? To treat this -- I've looked at
27 these mines over in Canada. Pharo finished off.
28 They're over there leaching into the -- into portions
29 of the Yukon or Yukon River drainage. And they've
30 spent -- last year it was like \$920 million Canadian
31 dollars so far in a very short period of time trying to
32 mitigate what this -- these mining companies, they --
33 they come in. Take out all this money. Then they
34 leave this giant hole in the ground with all this toxic
35 water. And somebody is going to be dealing with this
36 forever.

37
38 And so I feel that the project should
39 bond for an indefinite life span to maintain the
40 structure of this dam and treatment. And well, this
41 will make it cost prohibitive. Well, that's what it
42 is. The government or somebody is going to pay for
43 this. And so whether it's the State of Alaska, the
44 Federal government, somebody is going to be mitigating
45 this toxic pond forever. Because we don't have to
46 reinvent the wheel. We just look at what the Yukon was
47 all welcoming these giant mines with open arms. And
48 please come and give us lots of jobs and all of these
49 perks. But then they end up with all of these huge,
50 huge economic drains on their economy because they have

1 to maintain these dams. Otherwise they're going to
2 destroy the resources and the people below that.

3
4 And so this is not a little deal. This
5 is a huge deal. And so I'm very, very concerned about
6 the long term mitigation of this project. I'm
7 concerned, like I said last year, about the influx of
8 people who are going to be utilizing subsistence
9 resources for recreational purposes. The access to
10 certain areas along the route of the pipe -- of this
11 gas line. And I'm concerned about the people of -- the
12 economic impact of the rest of the Alaskans of
13 Southcentral Alaska that are going to be impacted by
14 the higher utility, by the taking gas away from
15 Anchorage in Southcentral Alaska and driving the costs
16 up.

17
18 That's what happened in Fairbanks when
19 they put in the Fort Knox Mine. They'd suck up half of
20 the electrical generation of Fairbanks and the
21 electrical costs increased by 100 percent. Well, I
22 don't think Southcentral Alaska is ready to start
23 paying 100 percent more for their power bills. There's
24 a lot of bad impacts of this project.

25
26 Everybody's like woohoo. The people in
27 Fairbanks are subsidizing the Ft. Knox by paying high
28 costs for electricity. For those 400 jobs that work at
29 Fort Knox, they could pay them to stay home by the
30 savings -- by the high cost that they're paying for
31 electricity.

32
33 There's some huge ramifications in this
34 project. And I don't think some of these things are
35 even being talked about. I'm concerned about this
36 project to huge degrees. I think that this Council
37 should make comments -- these comments that we're
38 stating on the record should be transmitted to AECOM to
39 be incorporated into the EIS. And then I haven't had
40 time to even look at this document. And I would like
41 to get your 100 pages of comments transmitted back to
42 each one of our Council Members. Your -- the BLM's
43 comments on this project.

44
45 I think that the wake is going to be --
46 for set net fisheries, the mouths of -- of critical
47 habitats at the mouths of sloughs and streams where the
48 chinook and coho stocks and various fish aggregate in
49 there, the mouths of these streams, there's going to be
50 this huge wake action continuously swamping those,

1 dirtying the waters. There's going to be phenomenal
2 amounts of impacts to those kinds of -- you know, I've
3 been around a lot of boats. You can imagine what that
4 kind of a wake is going to come off of that kind of
5 barge in a shallow -- with the shallow waters. It's
6 going to be this phenomenal wake action.

7
8 They're only going to be -- they're
9 going to get hung up. They're going to get stuck.
10 They could have spills. There could be bad things
11 happen with that kind of amounts of barges. I don't
12 think it's worth it.

13
14 I don't think that the -- I feel that
15 there needs to be bonding. If they want to proceed
16 with this project, they should be required to bond in
17 the billions of dollars that it's going to cost the
18 State and Federal government to mitigate the long term
19 impacts of this.

20
21 I requested last year for discussion
22 about dissipating some of that into -- you know, back
23 into the -- re-injection back into the Earth just like
24 they do at oil wells. Just to get rid of these -- of
25 this toxic water. To get rid of it. That's not in the
26 plan. It's let's let the government worry about it
27 after we're gone. No. I don't think that the people
28 of the Lower Kuskokwim River are ready for the kind of
29 impacts -- the long term impacts. The little bit of
30 benefit -- economic flash in the pan for 27 years is
31 not going to outweigh the hundreds of years of
32 mitigation.

33
34 And so I don't think that this project
35 is worth it.

36
37 What does the other Council Members
38 feel about that.

39
40 I think the impact to subsistence
41 resources and the subsistence users are far greater
42 than what the benefits of this project to the State of
43 Alaska and the people. We're going to have to pay for
44 the cleanup.

45
46 Got comment, Darrel?

47
48 MR. VENT: Yeah. That was one of the
49 things that I was wondering about, you know, because
50 they said 27, 28 years. But then what's going to be

1 left behind. How is that going to be dealt with. Are
2 there any objectives to take care of this problem after
3 they're gone.

4
5 Because in our area, we found out that,
6 you know, they left over 20 drums of, you know,
7 whatever kind of chemicals or everything that was left
8 there. And it went into our streams up in the Huslia
9 River. And we had a problem there that we had to take
10 care of ourselves. And it was costly. It did not
11 please us. And, you know, we still currently have some
12 areas that we haven't looked at what the impacts were.

13
14 So that's some of the things that --
15 like Jack is saying, it's really, you know, negative
16 for -- you know, some of the positive stuff that
17 they're mentioning. But there's also negativity
18 toward, you know. So it would be better if we
19 everything out in the open. And then we find out what
20 they want.

21 I know this is some areas where Carl
22 would have more input. Where Ray would have more
23 input, but currently they're not here right now. So I
24 can't put in all the words that they would put in for
25 what should be said there. So that's my comment.

26
27 MR. SEPPI: Mr. Chair, if I could
28 comment back just for a minute.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

31
32 MR. SEPPI: As part of this process,
33 Donlin Gold would have to put up what they -- and I've
34 commented directly on that to say who's going to pay
35 for that and how is that possibly even feasible to
36 treat that much water. The comments that AECOM and
37 Donlin have come back with is that they would have a
38 trust fund that would have enough money in it put in
39 over the life of the mine that would likely be billions
40 of dollars. No one's ever said what that would be.
41 That they would into perpetuity treat water. And my
42 comment was that's not even feasible. And I don't know
43 when it's, you know, below zero, how do you treat
44 water.

45
46 And they were going to -- when the mine
47 was first done, their proposal says they're going to
48 pump all runoff water from the Tailings into the pit.
49 And the pit wouldn't fill with water in their
50 estimation for another 50 years. And then sometime

1 around 50 years after the mine closes, that's when they
2 were going to build a water treatment plant to treat
3 all this toxic water. And my comment is that we'll all
4 be long dead and gone. Donlin Gold won't exist. And
5 you can bet whoever lives then in the Kuskokwim Valley
6 will be stuck with this enormous problem.

7

8 Those are the concerns I have. And
9 those are just the major ones. But you have to read
10 this document to really get your head around what
11 they're proposing because it truly is huge, to say the
12 least.

13

14 So I'm here to urge this Council to
15 really look at this. Now is your time when this draft
16 document comes out to look at this EIS and provide
17 comments. I'm now tasked with doing an .810 analysis,
18 which I know what I'm doing all winter long now I
19 guess. And I'm going to try to go to as many
20 communities as I can. I'm going to be real frank about
21 impacts to this thing because to tell you the truth,
22 this EIS downplays those impacts.

23

24 And I'm going to get as much
25 information from people and make sure that this gets
26 into this document. Because I'm required to, but I'm
27 very concerned about this entire project.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I appreciate your
30 frankness.

31

32 You got a comment, Vince?

33

34 MR. MATHEWS: Yeah. Some of you know
35 I've worn quite a few hats the last couple of years.
36 So I was assigned it when I was detailed to the Yukon
37 Delta Refuge to look into this. So I just have a
38 question for them, if I could ask.

39

40 What criteria was used on selecting
41 these scoping sites. Was there any -- I'm real
42 concerned. You've been in the meeting long enough for
43 the concern on the salmon. And I don't see Nikolai on
44 there. I don't see other communities at scoping
45 meetings. So what criteria was used for these scoping
46 meetings and can other communities further down river
47 -- can they request a scoping meeting.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Donnie.

50

1 MS. FLEAGLE: Thank you for asking that
2 question. I was not employed when they had the scoping
3 meetings. I know that they looked at hub areas. They
4 did bring in people from outlying villages for the
5 scoping meetings, but we're way past the scoping
6 period. Now it's called public comment on the EIS.
7 And I do hope that everybody does comment on it. It is
8 a huge development project. There's benefits. There's
9 also the down side of it.

10

11 And AECOM and myself -- I think the
12 comment was made that we're benefitting or I'm
13 benefitting. I'm from McGrath. I'm from that area.
14 I'm tasked to come out and to inform you what the EIS
15 process is. I'm not here to tell you whether it's a
16 good thing or it's a bad thing. I'm here to tell you
17 what I know.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

22

23 Vince.

24

25 MR. MATHEWS: I apologize. I mean you
26 have down here on your slide -- I don't know what
27 number it is. But it says proposed public meetings.
28 And that's what I was focusing on. That there may need
29 to be more public meetings in the drainage. And I'll
30 cut to the chase. When I saw Emmonak on there and
31 that, I'm wondering what -- if it's a budget question,
32 what are you going to gain from Emmonak that you would
33 not gain from an in river village. And that's what I
34 was -- that's what triggered me to look at this map.

35

36 MS. FLEAGLE: Well, I'm not sure about
37 why Emmonak was picked. I know that's got a pretty big
38 population base, as does Saint Mary's. I can tell you
39 that I have put in a recommendation to my supervisors
40 that Nikolai be included in the public hearing process.

41

42 MR. MATHEWS: Thank you, Jack. Because
43 I firmly believe Jack would be asking for that. So
44 that's why I got to the Emmonak, in addition to being
45 involved when it was detailed on the Delta.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is there a
48 propensity for water to bleed over into the Yukon River
49 system?

50

1 MS. EVANS: I don't think so.
2
3 REPORTER: Your microphone.
4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So there's.....
6
7 MS. EVANS: As far as I know, there's
8 not. Just the way the watershed's.....
9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.
11
12 MS. EVANS: So I don't think so. But
13 I'm not -- I'm not.....
14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is it to -- why
16 would meetings be held in communities that are not
17 impacted in any way other than economic beneficial.
18
19 MS. EVANS: Originally, there was an
20 alternative to do the barging on the Yukon River. That
21 alternative did not go through, but at the time of the
22 scoping meetings that was a possibility.
23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Then the comments
25 should be coming from the impacted communities of the
26 Kuskokwim River. And so.....
27
28 MS. EVANS: And so we've -- what we
29 have as proposed for right now are the same communities
30 that we did the scoping meetings in. But those are
31 still in flux. We're talking with the Corps and we
32 haven't completely decided on what those are going to
33 be yet. We are open for recommendations like I think
34 you were adding Nikolai.
35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrel.
37
38 MR. VENT: Okay. I have a question.
39 You said that there was some proposed areas that -- so
40 there's not only the Kuskokwim area was the route.
41 There were some alternate routes that you were
42 considering?
43
44 MS. EVANS: Well.....
45
46 MS. BURKE: Jessica, could you pull the
47 microphone closer.
48
49 MS. EVANS: Yes. Sorry. And also
50 another consideration to where the meetings were --

1 were shareholders of Calista.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we don't want
4 to build a cheerleader crowd because of the economic
5 benefits. We were talking about the EIS, Environmental
6 Impact Statement. And so we want to talk to people who
7 are going to be impacted.

8

9 MS. EVANS: Right. Well, another big
10 concern is dust and particularly mercury in the dust.
11 And there is a thought that the dust cloud will extend
12 into some of those areas as well.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, I see. Right.
15 Okay.

16

17 Tim.

18

19 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
20 Bruce, I'm curious on how the BLM's going to come into
21 play. You're going to prepare this .810 analysis. And
22 then if the BLM decides that some of these -- some of
23 the infrastructure of the mine can't be mitigated
24 properly, like the wastewater from the mine in
25 perpetuity, does -- how does the BLM's concerns play
26 out in the whole permitting process. Can you say it's
27 unacceptable and therefore the project's done? Or.....

28

29 MR. SEPPI: BLM's role in this is to
30 issue a right-of-way for the pipeline as it goes over
31 BLM lands. And like I said, through the NEPA, the rest
32 of it is a connected action, so we can comment on it.
33 But no. BLM could deny a right-of-way, but -- and the
34 thing couldn't happen without this pipeline and the
35 right-of-way. But the fact that a NEPA is a disclosure
36 document and even if it destroys the Kuskokwim, that is
37 just a disclosure. And as long as you're disclosing
38 that, you can still move ahead with it.

39

40 So don't depend on the NEPA process to
41 stop anything. It doesn't. It's a disclosure. It's
42 just letting people know what's happening.

43

44 They have the right to mine. The 1872
45 Mining Law says they have the right to mine. And they
46 have the right to ask for right-of-way across Federal
47 lands and across BLM. We can't deny them. We have to
48 process it. We're tasked with looking at it and
49 mitigating what we can, but it's not a matter of
50 stopping. We don't have that authority.

1 MR. GERVAIS: And then does the Army
2 Corp of Engineer -- do they deny it? Or they just say
3 these are the effects and this is how Donlin's going to
4 mitigate it and then it just keeps -- continues to move
5 forward? Or at some point does the Army Corps of
6 Engineer say these effects are too significant. We're
7 not going to issue a permit to proceed.

8
9 I'm trying to understand the permitting
10 process and who -- what agency controls the ability to
11 give the project the green light or the go ahead.

12
13 MS. EVANS: That would be the Corps, as
14 you had said.

15
16 MR. GERVAIS: So what criteria is the
17 Corps going to evaluate the project, that it can't be
18 approved on.

19
20 MS. EVANS: I'm not -- I can't speak to
21 the Corps on that.

22
23 MS. FLEAGLE: I can't speak to the
24 Corps on what kind of criteria they're going to be
25 looking at either, but I can find out. And I can get
26 back to you, Tim.

27
28 One of the decisions that the Army
29 Corps can look at -- well, actually they can look at
30 about three. They can accept the application as the
31 applicant wrote it, which is Donlin Gold. They can
32 also say no action. Then nothing happens. Or they can
33 choose some alternatives and modify that application.

34
35 MR. GERVAIS: All right. Well, my
36 comments to the rest of the Council is -- and I think
37 Jack's covered pretty good is we're concerned with the
38 access that this gas pipeline corridor may provide for
39 that region. Coming in and then the potential for
40 disruption of traffic and of spill potential for the
41 diesel and supply barges. And then not quite
42 understanding how anybody finds it acceptable to just
43 have a toxic leach site set up in perpetuity on the
44 Kuskokwim River. So.....

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like the
47 Councils comments to be -- because we most likely will
48 not meet before the .810, I would like our comments to
49 be incorporated into the .810 analysis that we're
50 making at this time. And the alternatives -- one is no

1 action, which is no go. And my feeling is that of the
2 alternatives, no action. No go for this project.

3
4 There's not enough assurance to protect
5 the resources, the people who rely on the resources,
6 and the future subsistence users that are going to have
7 to deal with this issue. So the negatives of this
8 project far outweigh the very short term, finite
9 economic benefit to a few people who may work or have
10 ownership of the sub-surface rates.

11
12 And so my opinion that this Council
13 should state is take no action on the alternatives. I
14 don't have to read 3,000 pages to know this is a bad
15 idea.

16
17 So is that agreeable to the Council to
18 in the .810 analysis -- these comments to be
19 incorporated into the .810 analysis and -- oh. We
20 don't have voting.

21
22 MR. GERVAIS: Well, the .810 analysis
23 is only for the BLM.

24
25 MS. BURKE: Your microphone, Tim.

26
27 MR. SEPPI: Mr. Chair, if I could
28 comment quickly.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

31
32 MR. SEPPI: And Tim. All NEPA
33 documents, especially EIS, have one alternative that is
34 the no action alternative. And that is included in the
35 EIS and it's basically they've done their exploration.
36 The mine won't be built. The pipeline won't be built.
37 And there won't be any transportation infrastructure.
38 It's always in there. It's kind of you always have
39 that option, but that doesn't mean it's, you know,
40 going to be taken. It's just something that's put in
41 there to compare as a baseline, I guess.

42
43 My analy -- and incidentally there are
44 six alternatives involved in this thing. In the
45 proposed action, which is alternative two. And then
46 there's several others or there's five others, plus a
47 cumulative impacts analysis in the .810 analysis.

48
49 Nothing I would love more than to have
50 this RAC have their comments in -- comment on my .810

1 proposal. There's not enough time, to be honest. And
2 it's got to go -- Donlin wants to put this in the
3 Federal Register and get it out by sometime mid-
4 November and have it out for public review the end of
5 November. So I have to have this .810 to them by
6 Friday.

7

8 So incidentally this .810 analysis is a
9 BLM document. It's mine. And AECOM did not write it.
10 The Corps did not write it. And Donlin Gold did not
11 write it. They're not -- they can't. They're not
12 allowed. The agency who is responsible for doing the
13 permitting is. The Corps doesn't have expertise or
14 they didn't have Staff to do an .810 analysis, so BLM
15 was asked to do that. But I just wanted to point out
16 that's going to be included in an appendix in the EIS.
17 But that is a BLM document, the .810 analysis.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, you're going
20 to do a hearing on the .810 analysis. And the hearings
21 are recorded.

22

23 MR. SEPPI: Yes.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're being
26 recorded. I want this meeting that is recorded and
27 being transcribed right this second to be incorporated
28 into the record of the .810 analysis. That the Western
29 Interior Region that has the mine inside of the Western
30 Interior Region is -- wants no action taken. That this
31 is too detrimental to the resources near term and long
32 term and to the people, the subsistence users of the
33 Western Interior Region. So that should be
34 incorporated into the .8 -- this -- I feel that this
35 recorded FACA Council can submit those as transcribed
36 record into the .810 analysis.

37

38 Is that agreeable to the Council.

39

40 MR. GERVAIS: With the four
41 justifications.

42

43 MS. BURKE: Tim.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. With the four
46 justifications. Try and plug it in. It sometimes gets
47 worked out or something. No?

48

49 MR. GERVAIS: With the four
50 justifications that we've been talking about. With the

1 toxic effluent into perpetuity; the likelihood of a
2 fuel spill; disruption of the river corridor for
3 wildlife and for subsistence activity; and the problems
4 with the pipeline causing disruption of wildlife and
5 creating an access corridor that's going to disrupt the
6 current hunting patterns in that region.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And now the
9 disruption to fish and wildlife. Because there's the
10 -- all of this traffic will damage fish and wildlife
11 habitat. And has a propensity at some point to have a
12 huge spill that would wipe out phenomenal amounts of
13 chinook and coho fry that are in system.

14

15 And so these are just some of the
16 reasons why this -- I, as a Council Member, feel that
17 this -- the benefits -- the costs of -- the benefit to
18 the people and to the resources are too high. And so
19 it's unacceptable. This Council -- it's incumbent on
20 this Council to oppose this project because the cost to
21 the resources and to the people of that region are too
22 high. Because there's no assurance that the bonding
23 could ever curtail the inevitable -- and I'll say
24 inevitable spill of this 1,600 feet of water that's
25 going to be in a relatively seismic active area. You
26 get a '64 earthquake 9.2 in Cook Inlet, you're going to
27 breach that dam. I don't care much you've treated it.
28 You're going to breach that dam. And you will have a
29 wave of toxic material flowing down the Kuskokwim
30 River.

31

32 And so I want these statements to be on
33 the record in the .810 analysis. And I would like this
34 Council to be on the record as preferring alternative
35 take no action on the Donlin Creek project.

36

37 Is the Council agreeable to that.

38

39 (Council nods affirmatively)

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I see affirmative of
42 all Council Members that are present.

43

44 MR. GERVAIS: But the comments are
45 going to the Corps of Engineers also.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

48

49 MR. GERVAIS: And not just the .810.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The .810 is -- it's
2 going to -- there's going to be an .810 hearing, but
3 these comments are also going to AECOM under their EIS
4 public comment.

5
6 Because we can't -- we're not going to
7 meet before these comments are all over.

8
9 And Melinda.

10
11 MS. BURKE: Mr. Chair, this Council has
12 in the past worked on -- when we've had time, we've
13 worked on letters during the meeting. If you'd like,
14 tonight and in the morning I can work up a rough draft
15 of the letter. We can put it up on the board. We've
16 done it in the past. I think is a really important
17 issue and it sounds like timing is really critical.

18
19 So if the Council wishes, I can have a
20 rough draft in the morning. We can work on language
21 together. Perhaps get -- see if we can Carl Morgan on
22 the phone. And I can transmit a draft via fax. And I
23 think it's really important for us to try to get a
24 signature or a very good draft done by the end of this
25 meeting.

26
27 And perhaps we can have our LT and our
28 representative from the office help us to push this
29 through the review process in the office in a fairly
30 quickly matter.

31
32 Mr. Chair.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like that to
35 occur. And before the end of this meeting -- before
36 adjournment.

37
38 I do appreciate AECOM coming to inform
39 us and the BLM also at the table. I've had a big
40 concern since I've heard about this years ago. I'm
41 concerned about a whole bunch of things. Those are
42 just some of the concerns.

43
44 And so I think that we've covered this
45 thoroughly. And I appreciate you coming all the way
46 out here to Galena to talk to us about it.

47
48 MS. FLEAGLE: Thank you for having us.

49
50 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

1 MR. SEPPI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2
3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.
4
5 MR. SEPPI: Council.
6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're back around
8 to Agency Reports there, Melinda.
9
10 MS. BURKE: We are, Mr. Chair. Does
11 the Council wish to continue this evening. I think
12 we're making some pretty good headway. I'm not aware
13 of any of the remaining presenters who have the early
14 flight to catch tomorrow. If the Council wishes to
15 continue, we can maybe see if Kanuti would like to give
16 their report or if one of -- but it's the wish of the
17 Chair.
18
19 I would like some time this evening to
20 work on this letter though. So.....
21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's only 4:40.
23
24 MS. BURKE: Do you want to do a couple
25 more?
26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think we can do
28 Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge briefing.
29
30 Vince.
31
32 MR. VENT: She was pointing at someone.
33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Koyukuk, Nowitna,
35 Innoko is way later. And probably has way more issues
36 to cover.
37
38 MS. BURKE: I'll get you a cookie.
39
40 (Laughter)
41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Since Robert's not
43 here, I'll welcome the Board.....
44
45 MR. MATHEWS: Well, as I said earlier,
46 I wear many, many hats. So I've got to put on my Yukon
47 Flats hat first before I do the Kanuti Flats. I
48 believe you're aware of this, but maybe you're not.
49 Basically, I'm part of the Refuge Information
50 Technician Program and was challenged when they met for

1 their workshop in 2014 why aren't we recognizing the in
2 river fishermen on their conservation efforts on the
3 Yukon River.

4

5 So I put forward to the Regional
6 Director that maybe they should be recognized as an
7 outstanding partner. So hopefully you received that
8 letter that was signed by Jeff Haskett on July 1, 2015,
9 that the Fish and Wildlife Service is grateful to the
10 many individuals, governments, non-government agencies,
11 Tribal Consortium, and Staff for a cooperative fishing
12 season on the Yukon River in 2014. So just wanted to
13 let you know that the Regional Director, Jeff Haskett,
14 agreed that the in river fishermen are outstanding
15 partners.

16

17 So that's that. Now I've got to pull
18 up my notes for Kanuti. And I may crack a joke or two.
19 I've only got 50 slides in an hour and a half
20 presentation, so I'll try to reduce it down to 45
21 minutes. No. I'll try to keep this under five
22 minutes. I've got to get my notebook because that's
23 were all my notes is.

24

25 But basically the one I want to
26 emphasize is I'll be passing around through Melinda a
27 copy of the fall hunt map we call it for Unit 24B.
28 This was an idea that we've had over the years to make
29 it as -- easy to understand the regulations that are
30 complex in that area for moose hunting. So that will
31 be a copy for you to look at.

32

33 And then large copies are in the back
34 room, which also cover the fall and winter hunts. So
35 I'll -- someone will pass that out. And I'm stumbling
36 here because I thought I'd get away till tomorrow. But
37 I'm fine.

38

39 (Laughter)

40

41 MR. MATHEWS: You should have a copy of
42 this report with the -- yeah, with the beaver on the
43 top. I'm going to go through that real quickly. As
44 I've said in the past, please let us know if you need
45 more information, different information, whatever. So
46 this is Kanuti's.

47

48 So on the front page you'll see a copy
49 of -- I don't like having a screen in front of me. I
50 feel like I'm hiding behind it. A copy of the permits,

1 excuse me. And just to give you an idea, for those
2 that do not have to get one of these permits really
3 what they look like. I also want to point out that the
4 Refuge is very proud that there was 100 percent
5 compliance by the hunters in Allakaket, Alatna,
6 Bettles, and Evansville for the permits hunts in
7 2014/2015.

8

9 And that again goes back to what I
10 think Jack was talking about earlier. The importance
11 of harvest data is extremely important. And yes, it is
12 a burden on the hunter. As I already pointed out, the
13 complexity of the permits in that area. So this is
14 really reflective of the hunters, as well as Mr.
15 Bergman. It's later in the -- Steven Bergman's effort
16 to make sure that everyone who wanted a permit got a
17 permit and that they reported.

18

19 So I already talked about the sample
20 maps. If you go to page two, and Park Service -- I
21 don't know if they'll be here to present this or not.
22 But you'll see the title there, Moose Radio Telemetry
23 Study Update. Full copies of those papers that are
24 summarized are over on the table.

25

26 So for example, if you look at the
27 first one, which is moose moving patterns in the Upper
28 Koyukuk River drainage, this basically resulted in the
29 percentage of the moose that are migratory in the study
30 population. And that would be for Gates of the Arctic
31 and Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge -- parts of it --
32 that the moose -- percentage of moose that are
33 migrating and are in the study population, the
34 distances they migrated were lower than reported from
35 studies elsewhere. They hypothesized this may be
36 related to the very low moose density and the -- and/or
37 high terrain ruggedness in the part of the area.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Vince, I will
40 comment on that.

41

42 MR. MATHEWS: Okay.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It was when they
45 deployed the collars is why the migratory moose action
46 was not precisely documented. They deployed collars in
47 March. Well, the moose have already moved. And so the
48 migratory moose that had already moved, they didn't
49 actually collar where they moved to. They collared in
50 areas in the -- and where I'm at in the mountains in

1 March. And the moose -- the more sedentary moose were
2 already still staying there. The migratory moose had
3 already moved. So if they had employed in the fall
4 time, they probably would have seen a considerably
5 different mi -- and the snow depths during the study
6 were not what it typically takes to drive the moose
7 into this migratory patterns, that they'll move up
8 drainage when the snow starts to get near three and
9 half to four feet.

10

11 And so we did capture some good data.
12 It didn't -- you know, there's -- I've -- and Tim Craig
13 worked for Kanuti. He also worked for the BLM. And he
14 documented up to 28 moose into the head of the Deitrich
15 River in deep snow years and where there were virtually
16 no moose that lived there in like '90 -- in the early
17 '90s. In the mid-'90s. And so the movement was not --
18 not all studies are foolproof. And so the way the
19 deployment and why the step -- the snow affected how
20 the moose moved. And so I wanted to have that on the
21 record in this presentation on the telemetry project,
22 which this Council requested of considerably amounts of
23 time to get that.

24

25 But we did get data. And it really
26 helped out on getting twinning ratios and various other
27 things. So the telemetry project was great. It's just
28 the statement as the moose didn't move as much and it's
29 attributed to low density, well it had to do with other
30 factors besides that. But I'm not one of the co-
31 conspirators on this project, so I'm just commenting on
32 that statement.

33

34 Go ahead.

35

36 MR. MATHEWS: Yes. And I should
37 confirm if Deputy Refuge Manager Tina's on. She may
38 want to jump in or not. I don't know what's going on
39 back in the office. And I know Yukon Flats is
40 scrambling to do a moose survey. So I know Mike is
41 involved in that. Hopefully it's being prosecuted. So
42 if Tina's online, hopefully she'll jump in.

43

44 You'll see the other summaries. And I
45 don't know if I want to go through those, but this is
46 -- you know, this is what you've requested over the
47 years. What's going on in the Refuges. We need to
48 know what's going on. This is a summary. And so I'll
49 leave those other summarizes of the research projects
50 unless Tina is online and has one in particular she

1 wants to focus on. Or you have one that need more
2 information.

3

4 So I'm continuing down. You'll see
5 that there was raptor nest survey. You can read that.
6 So basically it's pointing out the Refuge is heavily
7 involved in different surveys and we want to keep you
8 informed. For example, the breeding bird surveys, et
9 cetera.

10

11 I don't want to downplay them, but I
12 know you've had long days. So that's the reason we put
13 this in print form. And obviously you can always get a
14 hold of the Refuge Staff or through your Coordinator,
15 if you say well, what do you -- I want to know more
16 about the scopt/scoter survey. I want to -- you know,
17 et cetera, et cetera. We're available to do that.

18

19 So I won't go through those bird
20 surveys unless someone has some questions on it. It's
21 summarized there.

22

23 Okay. The one that we really wanted to
24 point out is on page -- well, you don't have a page --
25 I don't know what you have. I had her handwrite it in
26 page numbers, but it's the one with the moose picture.
27 I have it as page five. Anyways, trail camera surveys.
28 Hopefully, you'll -- I don't know. Have you guys met
29 Roy Churchill yet.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have. Yes.

32

33 MR. MATHEWS: Okay. He's the new
34 wildlife biologist. I'm sure he'll come down the road.
35 An excellent biologist. And him and Chris Harwood
36 deployed trail cameras again around the year -- year
37 round the Kanuti Lake cabin. And that is some pictures
38 of it. But the key point of this, if you go down to
39 the bottom of the pages, it says mammal surveys and
40 development. In the coming year we hope to start three
41 new projects that focus on black bears and furbearers.

42

43

44 First, we plan to use trail cameras to
45 capture pictures of black bears and using some newly
46 developed statistical models and estimate the size of
47 the black bear population. We will conduct this survey
48 for the next five years to investigate the accuracy of
49 the method and establish annual variation.

50

1 This goes back to your discussion
2 yesterday on knowing what the bear populations are out
3 there. And I won't even touch on what statistical
4 model that would be, but obviously that will be
5 explained to you when that gets further along.
6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: One comment. Why
8 aren't they including grizzly bear estimates in this
9 project.
10

11 MR. MATHEWS: I don't know. I'll carry
12 that back to the office and see why, unless Tina has
13 something. I look at different trail cameras, so I may
14 be influenced by Yukon Flats. But they did get
15 pictures of grizzlies on trail cameras there. So if
16 Tina's on maybe she has a -- I don't want to put her on
17 the spot, but.....
18

19 MS. MORAN: That's okay.
20

21 (Laughter)
22

23 MS. MORAN: I can check on that, but I
24 think right now we're still working with the
25 statistician here in Fairbanks on the protocol and how
26 many cameras we're going to have to deploy. We bought
27 quite a few more, but we need to know exactly how many
28 we need to make this project valid. So I think once we
29 get some understanding -- I think we're going to focus
30 on black bears right now, but we'll see what we can do
31 with grizzlies. And I can get back to you on that with
32 some more detail. Unfortunately, my last biologist
33 just left the office.
34

35 And just one other thing before there's
36 any other questions, too, for Vince, they are -- Mike
37 apologizes for not being able to be there -- the Refuge
38 Manager. He is doing the moose survey and they are
39 currently in their second day of doing the moose survey
40 for Yukon Flats out of Beaver. And we're hoping we
41 have the conditions for next week to work with Fish and
42 Game on the Kanuti moose survey.
43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Tina.
45

46 There's some -- the Henshaw South Fork
47 Drainages have significant concentration of brown bears
48 around salmon streams in the salmon spawning areas.
49 And so this trail cam methodology would work real well
50 for enumeration of capturing some of the bear

1 population of Kanuti. And there are some very large
2 grizzlies that utilize those salmon resources. They
3 also prey on moose calves and stuff. And so it would
4 be -- it's good to get the black bear population, but
5 it would also be good to get some work with the grizzly
6 population. But you'd have to work with your
7 statisticians on that, biometricians.

8

9 So all right. Continue, Vince.

10

11 MR. MATHEWS: Yes. The one that I was
12 personally interested in because I remember flying out
13 of Allakaket many years ago -- and I don't remember
14 what the chief was at that point, but he pointed out to
15 me -- Vince, look at all those burned areas. Where is
16 all that moose at that you talk about. And where's the
17 change that you said the fire would do. So page six is
18 looking at a ten-year comparison of post-fire burn and
19 vegetation monitoring. So basically people are
20 wondering what these burned landscapes would look like
21 in the future and the implication on wildlife and
22 habitat on Alaska Refuges. So in order to answer those
23 questions, biologists have returned to study plots
24 established in 2004 burn on the Refuge and re-measure
25 vegetation.

26

27 And then soon after 2004 they collected
28 on burns a severity in vegetation characteristics. And
29 burn severity is the measure of the fire effect on the
30 vegetation. How deeply it burns. I think you all get
31 an idea. It will explain more on, you know, that, but
32 it -- basically how much does it burn down. So that
33 plays a real important part in what vegetation returns
34 at the -- returns after the fire.

35

36 So you'll see on my page seven, your
37 page whatever, the pictures of -- figure 1 to the left
38 is showing a moderately burned spruce site with tussock
39 and grass under story in 2007. And then three years
40 post fire. And then 2015 on the right. So you can see
41 the changes that's happening there. And then obviously
42 pointing out the high severity burn in the black
43 spruce. On figure 2 you can see that 2015 there was
44 shrub growth and willows.

45

46 So my background has been with burning
47 prairies, so I'm exceedingly interested in this
48 personally because that's something we were looking at
49 is intensity and duration of fires in my old life. So
50 this one is I think something that we really need to

1 look at. And with climate change, some of the climate
2 change biologists are correct that we're going to have
3 more fires.

4
5 So let me continue. Unless here's
6 questions on that fire one.

7
8 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

11
12 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, Vince. How many
13 acres of Kanuti burned this summer.

14
15 MR. MATHEWS: It's in there. Yeah.
16 It's 5.08 acres burned. The 2015 season was the second
17 largest fire after the 2004 season.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That was total
20 acreages in Alaska, but Tim was asking within Kanuti.
21 It was just along the southern border. They had burns
22 along the southern border of the Kanuti Refuge this
23 year.

24
25 MR. MATHEWS: Maybe Tina knows. I do
26 not know what the estimated acreage was for last year.

27
28 MS. MORAN: I don't have it right in
29 front of me, but it was fairly small compared to what
30 it could have been. Like Jack said, we had two fires
31 that just went over the southern border of the Refuge.
32 We were pretty lucky this year as opposed to other
33 Refuges that the -- other areas of the Refuge didn't go
34 up. So it was certainly small acreage compared to all
35 the other areas of Alaska this year.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks. Thanks,
38 Tina.

39
40 MR. MATHEWS: I appreciate correcting
41 me on that. And there are some interesting maps on the
42 burn history on the Refuge that I think we brought at
43 past meetings. If you want to see those or get those,
44 that would be great. But they're extensive maps of
45 fire over the years.

46
47 I was going to move on to the salmon
48 studies on the Henshaw Creek weir, but -- well, I think
49 it's important based on your fish discussions. I'm
50 going to kind of try to paraphrase it, but in 2015 the

1 weir was operational and the total passage of summer
2 chum salmon through the weir was approximately 209,000.
3 And this was well above the historic average of 154,000
4 chum. And you can see what years that excluded, but it
5 was basically a large passage.

6
7 The total passage of chinook salmon
8 through the weir was oh, approximately 2,400, which is
9 the highest annual escapement since the project began.
10 So it's well above the historic average of oh,
11 approximately 1,200 chinook salmon. So again the data
12 for 2015 are preliminary and are derived from multiple
13 sources. So it looked like there was a good return.
14 And you could see the graphs there on the next page.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's what we saw
17 in the Upper Koyukuk was high returns of chinook in to
18 the upper drainage. Much, much higher than 2013, 2012,
19 where there were very, very few chinook.

20
21 And I want the Council to note that the
22 Henshaw is currently getting returns. It is slightly
23 less than 2 million summer chum salmon and Henshaw is
24 accounting for over ten percent of the summer chum run,
25 which is a phenomenal return for one -- Henshaw Creek
26 is a creek. It's like from here to that wall wide.
27 It's just a tiny, little creek. But it has really long
28 and really high grade spawning habitat. That's why it
29 does that.

30
31 So it's just below Allakaket Village.
32 How far is it up to there to Henshaw, Pollock?

33
34 MR. SIMON: What's that?

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: How far is it up to
37 Henshaw Creek?

38
39 MR. SIMON: Twenty-five miles.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Twenty-five miles.

42
43 Continue, Vince.

44
45 MR. MATHEWS: Yes. I'll leave it up to
46 you to look and review the water resources and weather.
47 Basically, we try to meet, you know, within the 15
48 minute presentations. So again if you have questions,
49 please stop me on these different things. But right
50 now I'm just hitting the high points. And you have at

1 your leisure to read the other things and get up to
2 speed on them. And of course later on if you have a
3 question or need more information, get a hold of one of
4 us and we'll gladly get that information to you.

5
6 So there has been some staffing
7 changes. You can look at those staffing changes.
8 There's a picture of Roy right there. I tease
9 biologists, so I can't pass up the moment. But that's
10 Roy there in the boat. So hopefully you'll meet him at
11 one of the upcoming meetings.

12
13 There's some other retirements and
14 staffing changes and shared positions which you'll see
15 there with Heidi Haling pictured on one of the pages
16 there. So there has been some sharing of Staff and
17 duties. I've already noted Steve Bergman, Sr. -- that
18 was discussed earlier. I don't know if that's going to
19 reflect on the Park Service one. But one stop shopping
20 has been a goal in the Allakaket and Alatna and we now
21 have that achieving. What do I mean by that. The
22 hunter can go get his State hunting license. Can get
23 his Federal permits and get his State permits at one
24 place. Prior to that, they had to go to two different
25 individuals. They had to go to Steve for the State and
26 licenses and then to another person to get the Federal
27 one. So Steven does a super job.

28
29 Okay. So then I'll keep moving on.
30 The other thing that the Refuge is really proud about,
31 it's under facilities. And it's the Winter Outreach
32 Center. Jack probably has more information about it
33 than I do, but the main thing is, is that there will be
34 a contact facility there during winter. And the center
35 will provide community members and visitors to the area
36 that are traveling the Dalton Highway year round to
37 learn more about the history and natural features of
38 the local area and nearby Refuge National Park BLM
39 lands.

40
41 So you'll see a picture of the re --
42 refurbished I suppose is the best word for the building
43 that's there. This is not the InterAgency Visitor's
44 Center. If you Council Members ever get a chance to
45 drive the Dalton Highway corridor, please -- and it's
46 open during summer -- do visit that InterAgency
47 Visitor's Center. It's -- I think it's key to getting
48 the information out. This Council does a lot of
49 discussions on the Dalton Highway corridor and that is
50 one place to get that information out.

1 I'll leave it at that. But bas -- I do
2 want to share with you that that Winter -- what is it
3 called -- that Outreach Center will not be open. It
4 will be a -- you know, eight days or seven days a week
5 it's going to be open at different times, but I and the
6 Refuge really feel this is a good opportunity to keep
7 people that are on that road during winter, if they
8 have any questions or need more information.

9
10 So with that, I will leave it. And as
11 I said twice already.....

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That -- I'll
14 supplement that Winter Outreach. My wife Kristin works
15 there.

16
17 MR. MATHEWS: Oh.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And there are
20 several hundreds of people that come to Cold Foot to
21 spend time there to watch aurora. And so there has
22 been a building winter visitation. And a lot of people
23 coming from outside, they don't know anything about the
24 area. And this Winter Visitor Contact will help people
25 understand various Federal public lands around the
26 Dalton Highway corridor.

27
28 Any comments or questions from Kanuti.

29
30 Pollock.

31
32 MR. SIMON: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I've
33 got a couple of comments. A couple of questions. One
34 question is that a couple of years ago Mike Spindler
35 took us on his plane to fly back a little ways back
36 Henshaw from the camp and in a four mile stretch he
37 said it was spawning ground areas but every mile we see
38 -- we saw four grizzlies -- five grizzlies all
39 together. And there -- on each side of the beach
40 there's hundreds of dead fish. But they're trampling
41 back and forth on the river and so it's (indiscernible)
42 thinks that they're squashing some of those fish that
43 laid eggs or not.

44
45 MR. MATHEWS: So the concern is, is the
46 aircraft traffic?

47
48 MR. SIMON: No. The grizzlies walking
49 back and forth eating dead fish on that spawning area,
50 are they squashing the eggs.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: He's concerned about
2 the reds -- spawning reds of the salmon. Walking
3 across all the spawning beds. Do you want to comment
4 on that, Vince?

5
6 MR. MATHEWS: No. I don't have any on
7 that. I don't know if Tina's online, would might have
8 a comment. I don't know.

9
10 MR. SIMON: I have another question.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

13
14 MR. SIMON: They told us when we'd go
15 to meetings that part of the reason there's no salmon
16 coming back is because we get poor returns from the
17 spawning grounds. So I don't know what's happening to
18 the eggs.

19
20 MR. MATHEWS: I suppose we can look
21 into it. I don't know if Tina has any comments on
22 that.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, those -- what
25 -- the area that Pollock's talking about is one of
26 those areas where these trail cam deployments would
27 capt -- they've had beaten down trails through the
28 brush along the banks in those areas. And then a whole
29 bunch of bears show up and concentrate. So for your
30 bear study you could put in a few trail cams and you'll
31 get bigger bang for your buck because there's so much
32 concentration there. Whereas you get -- the black
33 bears are more disbursed and you're going to have less
34 encounter per day or week or whatever.

35
36 So go ahead, Pollock.

37
38 MR. SIMON: One more question. The
39 fire -- there has been a lot of fire since the '70s
40 around here. There's fires around Allakaket. And the
41 Fish and Game keep telling us fires are good for moose
42 habitat. But over the years where there's fires most
43 of the time the state of the moose is declining. So
44 there's fresh growth willows and birch saplings.
45 Everything for the moose to eat. And why isn't there
46 moose out there. The only time this year we're getting
47 more there because there's an intensive management
48 there and predator control. They're killing wolves.
49 That's the only reason that the moose come back, but
50 the term used that fires are good for moose habitat, I

1 don't know what -- do you got comment for that?

2

3 MR. MATHEWS: Yeah. I do want to
4 comment on that because that's what I was -- we've
5 discussed that. That our message needs to be a little
6 bit more broader than that fire produces moose. So in
7 full respect of that, that was kind of the term we used
8 a lot. And that now is -- it's changed. And that's
9 where my opinion this fire severity and et cetera is
10 it's pointing out the different severity what returns
11 and et cetera. But I did say earlier -- I apologize.
12 I don't remember the chief's name, but that's when I --
13 my eyes opened up when he said well, that area is
14 burned and there's no moose. And you said there's
15 going to be more moose.

16

17 So yes, we are -- I'm not saying we're
18 modifying. But we're now understanding more that that
19 kind of campaign needs to be more comprehensive how we
20 explain it.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, there's a lot
23 of different factors. And severity and then ph of the
24 soil underneath that. If you just have acidic peats,
25 then you're going to have primarily black spruce return
26 fairly rapidly. If it's -- you get into more mineral
27 soils, then you get lots more airborne cedars. And
28 then you get more production on it. And so severity
29 has to do with how much residual acidics there are.
30 And so there's -- they need to look at ph factors. A
31 whole bunch of different factors in conjunction with
32 the severity thing. Because there's different plants
33 require different kinds of ph or alkaline or acidic
34 soil.

35

36 So okay. Any comments on Kanuti.

37

38 Go ahead, Don.

39

40 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
41 just had a question I guess in speaking to Councilman
42 Pollock here. It seems -- I mean looking at the report
43 here that you don't have any numbers for your take of
44 moose this fall. But speaking to him, that it does
45 sound like the predator control is working. And that's
46 a good thing. I was just wondering how many more years
47 of that is going to be on the books there.

48

49 And also I was wondering if it's -- the
50 winter hunt, is that a yearly thing or is that on the

1 books for each year? Or is it just -- do you know?

2

3

Thank you.

4

5

MR. MATHEWS: Well, your first comment
6 I would -- if the State's on the line to talk about the
7 intensive management.

8

9

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seth is right there.

10

11

12 Didn't you say there's just one more
13 year of IM?

14

15

(Nods affirmatively)

16

17

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so the intensive
18 management will end in 2016. And so that's the end of
19 the IM project. And they will be comparing data
20 between the two. There's a control area or wolf
21 control area and there's what they call control there.
22 They're sampling moose in another area that wasn't
23 treated or had wolf control. And they're going to
24 compare those. But that all ends next year. And so
25 the -- when we get the report, it should reflect the
26 population changes.

27

28 And when I was going to fly down here I
29 saw Glen Stout flying out with a helicopter to go
30 collar moose calves, is what I assume he was going to
31 do. And so they're out there collaring moose calves
32 right now -- or just the other day.

33

34

MR. HONEA: Okay. Thank you. And I
35 just wanted to kind of mention again I mean the --
36 because of the low moose population and the predator
37 control going on, you know, it came before the Board to
38 do the winter hunt. And I don't know if that was, you
39 know, on record to do that or it was like an emergency
40 order. And I was wondering if that's still in effect.

41

42

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Your question about
43 the hunt is that's on -- those are regulations that are
44 now passed. And so there's a State and Federal hunt
45 that occurs from the Henshaw drainage all the way down
46 to Unit 24C and Unit 24B. Now we've passed the
47 proposal to move it up into the upper areas on the
48 Federal lands. But that winter hunt around Allakaket,
49 that's on the regulations now. State and Federal
50 regulations. That will occur December 15 to April 15.

1 That hunt is on the books.

2

3 And so that answers your question, Don?

4

5 MR. MATHEWS: You might remember there
6 was a sunset clause. That's gone now. It's
7 permanently on the record. There was a sunset clause.
8 That might have been it.

9

10 The other thing is, just to get it
11 clear on the record, the intensive management effort --
12 plan -- whatever did not -- anyway part of the Refuge
13 lands. And Jack is correct. One of the control areas
14 where there would be no intensive management was --
15 correct me if I'm wrong, Jack -- is on Refuge land. So
16 this is an example of.....

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. It's in the
19 southeast edge region of the Refuge. Or they're quite
20 a distance away to compare what intensive management is
21 doing for these moose. Then they put collars on the
22 moose calves in the other area. Both areas they collar
23 the calves are seeing the survival rate of calves in
24 both areas. Then they can tell if the intensive
25 management has actually benefitted the moose where
26 they've -- and the intensive management was on the
27 Native Corporation lands, Doyon lands, and the State
28 lands that are near Allakaket. So it kind of looks
29 like a checker board around the community.

30

31 And that's -- if you look on your
32 colored map, you can kind of get an idea what that --
33 it's just really, really close to the village there.
34 The white areas would be intensive management near
35 Allakaket and Alatna. The pink lands -- the Refuge
36 lands were not subject to -- so if the wolves got on
37 the Refuge, they wouldn't shoot them. If they wandered
38 off the Refuge, they got shot. And so the State was
39 watching them pretty close. And they did -- they were
40 fairly effective last year on where the -- when the
41 wolves moved off the Refuge, they killed them. And
42 they were pretty effective with a helicopter. They
43 can't hardly get away from the helicopter in that kind
44 of terrain.

45

46 Darrel.

47

48 MR. VENT: Thank you, Chairman. I just
49 have a couple of questions. One is what Pollock
50 brought up earlier. Was, you know, the weather

1 concerns, the wolf predation on the moose, but also I
2 know they're not the only predators on the moose. But
3 how effective are the grizzlies and the black bears
4 compared to the wolves on the moose. Is it something
5 that you guys have a study on to compare to just the
6 wolves?

7
8 MR. MATHEWS: Through the Chair. That
9 would be more directed to Fish and Game on that.
10 Because they're the ones that developed the intensive
11 management plans that are adopted by the Board of Game.

12
13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's recognized in
15 the McGrath controlled area where they transported
16 bears away in conjunction with wolf control. It was
17 far more effective than just having wolf control only.
18 And so bears eat generally -- I think Glen was
19 estimating like about -- what was it -- 60 to 80
20 percent of the neonate calves are killed by bears.
21 Bears. Not wolves. Bears. Before they are five weeks
22 of age.

23
24 Because of the twinning rates in
25 conjunction -- when the fall survey, there's so few
26 calves compared to what they find in the twinning rates
27 in the spring when they're born. So bears have a huge
28 effect, but they did not -- because of cultural --
29 because of respect for bears, they didn't -- weren't
30 going to do any kind of bear control.

31
32 Down in 19A, down by Red Devil and
33 Sleetmute, they're shooting bears with helicopters and
34 bringing the bears' meat into the villages and then
35 passing it out and flying out the meat. So that's a
36 different area. And so that's what they're doing down
37 there.

38
39 But your question was about what does
40 the bears do. They typically kill between 60 to 80
41 percent of the moose calves.

42
43 So bear harvest -- the people
44 harvesting -- Huslia, Hughes, Allakaket, Alatna
45 harvesting black bears at the rates they do have a
46 large benefit to the moose population. They actually
47 are taking a predator away from the moose population.

48
49 MR. VENT: All right. That leads me to
50 another question. Because, you know, I know under our

1 customary and traditional use that we respect these
2 bears. But we've also got to think about what it's
3 doing to our moose. And when we get back to our
4 villages, we're going to have to discuss this. Because
5 this is -- this is concerning to our subsistence. It's
6 something that I will try to be more effective with
7 communication in my village, to let them know that we
8 have to try to take care of this.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We had Sidney come
11 here and tell us those bears -- those grizzlies -- he
12 was very adamant about those. Those grizzlies are
13 going to really take the moose population down. And so
14 that's -- he knows. He's seen it before.

15

16 Grizzlies -- I've read data where in
17 Canada grizzlies will kill -- some radio collared bears
18 were killing one to two moose calves per day for a
19 five-week period. They were eating moose calves like
20 popcorn. And I've seen predatory grizzlies hunting
21 moose calves. They walk cross wind. When they cut the
22 scent of a cow, he goes right to her. When he gets to
23 her, he knows there's a calf there. He hugs that calf
24 down and kills it. If she gets too aggressive with
25 him, he'll kill her, too. I've seen the calf and the
26 cow skins. And where she got too aggressive, he'll
27 kill her, too.

28

29 And so grizzlies are very predacious on
30 moose calves. And big black bears are, too. Big black
31 bears do the same thing. So yeah, bears are a big
32 predation factor. And the trouble with black bears is
33 they're omnivores. And so when -- if there's no moose
34 calves around they'll eat grass or dig roots or do
35 something else until they can start killing game again.

36

37 So everybody's down on the wolves, but
38 a large mortality for recruitment is actually bear
39 predation.

40

41 MR. VENT: Yep.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Vince.

44

45 MR. MATHEWS: Yeah. So -- well, input
46 from other Staff showing, you know, it's really helpful
47 to have other people here, especially when you're in
48 this hot seat.

49

50 But the answer to your question on the

1 acreage burn -- and if you look at the one that has a
2 picture like this and says fire management, that will
3 give you a summary of the acreage that was burned. So
4 I apologize I wasn't up to speed on that, but it is in
5 the report. And that's -- yeah, it's 31,655 acres.
6 But you get an idea it was a low percentage.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I think we've
9 covered Kanuti pretty well. It's 5:20. And I think
10 that we can recess for the evening to go to dinner.
11 And Melinda's got to type some things. And everybody's
12 getting a little tired.

13

14 So we'll recess till 8:15 tomorrow
15 morning.

16

17 MS. BURKE: And for dinner, the coffee
18 shop I think is going to do pizza tonight. So I told
19 them we'd have at least ten or twelve folks coming
20 down, so they'll be ready for us -- to serve us dinner
21 as they did last evening.

22

23 (Off record)

24

25 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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STATE OF ALASKA)

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Salena A. Hile
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