

1 SEWARD PENINSULA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5
6
7 VOLUME I

8
9 Old St. Joe's Hall
10 Nome, Alaska
11 October 14, 2015
12 9:00 a.m.
13

14
15 Members Present:

16
17 Timothy Smith, Acting Chairman
18 Fred Eningowuk (Telephonic)
19 Joseph Garnie
20 Tom Gray
21 Theodore Katcheak
22 Amos Oxereok
23 Charles Saccheus
24 Elmer Seetot

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29 Regional Council Coordinator - Karen Deatherage
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Nome, Alaska - 10/14/2015)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN SMITH: Call to order. And we'll let Amos work on that, getting the phone lines working while we're going through just the housekeeping stuff.

Tony asked to address us early in the meeting, because he's got work to do and weather's good, and so we're going to move that up earlier in the agenda.

So I guess, can we call the roll. I guess we can -- let's see, Peter's not here. Who would do that? Peter's the secretary, isn't he?

MS. DEATHERAGE: Well, I can certainly do it.

CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay.

MS. DEATHERAGE: This is roll call. Theodore Katcheak.

MR. KATCHEAK: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Peter Buck. Louis Green.

CHAIRMAN SMITH: Absent.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Absent. Tom Gray.

MR. GRAY: Yes, ma'am.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Joseph Garnie.

MR. GARNIE: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Amos Oxereok.

MR. OXEREOK: Here.

MS. DEATHERAGE: Fred Eningowuk. Charles Saccheus.

1 MR. SACCHEUS: Here.
2
3 MS. DEATHERAGE: And Timothy Smith.
4
5 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Here. And it's
6 Saccheus.
7
8 MS. DEATHERAGE: Excuse me?
9
10 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Saccheus.
11
12 MS. DEATHERAGE: Saccheus.
13
14 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Charlie Saccheus.
15
16 MS. DEATHERAGE: Oh, Elmer Seetot.
17
18 MR. SEETOT: Here.
19
20 CHAIRMAN SMITH: This is really going
21 to help the transcription, isn't it, Tina.
22
23 (Problems with teleconference)
24
25 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Before we start, I'd
26 like to welcome our new member, Joe Garnie. Joe
27 Garnie's a good friend, and he's run the Iditarod 17
28 times.
29
30 (Applause)
31
32 CHAIRMAN SMITH: His dogs are the best
33 team I've ever seen, and we're really glad to have him
34 here. He's a true subsistence user, and kind of the
35 last of the breed.
36
37 I guess we could go around the room and
38 introduce ourselves and then introduce the guests. Do
39 you want to start out, Elmer? Or maybe you should
40 start, Karen.
41
42 MS. DEATHERAGE: Good morning,
43 everybody. My name is Karen Deatherage, and I'm the
44 new Council coordinator for the Seward Pen Council.
45 And I'm with the Office of Subsistence Management down
46 in Anchorage. I'm glad to be here in beautiful Nome.
47
48 MR. SEETOT: Elmer Seetot, Jr. Brevig
49 Mission.
50

1 MR. GRAY: Tom Gray. I'm here in Nome.

2

3 MR. OXEREOK: Good morning, everybody.
4 I'm Amos Oxereok. I'm originally from Wales, Alaska,
5 but I just moved to Koyuk, and I'm really enjoying it
6 over there. And I just got here from Diomedes, so I was
7 enjoying it out there, too.

8

9 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'm Tim Smith, and I'm
10 in Nome. And I like Diomedes, too.

11

12 MR. KATCHEAK: Theodore Katcheak. I
13 live in Stebbins. I was born and raised there. I'm
14 also a reindeer herd owner, and I've been on this
15 Advisory Council for several years, and I like it. I
16 think it's going to do a lot of good, providing a lot
17 of good information and a lot of good decisions made.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 MR. SACCHEUS: My name is Charles
22 Saccheus. I'm from Elim. I've been involved with
23 organization for so many years. And I live off the
24 land if I'm in Elim, and so we've got to be real
25 careful how we manage our subsistence way of life.

26

27 Thank you.

28

29 MR. GARNIE: Yes. I'm Joe Garnie. I
30 was born and raised in Teller. Life-long resident to
31 the area. And I've hunted and fished in this region
32 all my life, so I hope to contribute by making sound,
33 wise decisions.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 MS. LAVINE: Good morning. I'm Robbin
38 LaVine, and I'm an anthropologist for the Office of
39 Subsistence Management. My first time in Nome, and I'm
40 so honored to be here.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 MR. MCKEE: Good morning. My name is
45 Chris McKee. I'm the Wildlife Division chief at OSM.

46

47 MR. LIND: (In Yup'ik) Good morning.
48 My name is Orville Lind. I'm the Native liaison for
49 Office of Subsistence Management. I'm happy to be here
50 in Nome.

1 MS. WORKER: Good morning, everybody.
2 My name is Suzanne Worker, and I'm a wildlife biologist
3 with the Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage.
4
5 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Does anybody else want
6 to introduce themselves.
7
8 (No comments)
9
10 CHAIRMAN SMITH: If not, we'll just
11 move on to review and adopt the agenda. And like I
12 said, maybe we can move Tony up to reports under -- we
13 can put him under item 7 so he can get out of here.
14 Any other changes to the agenda.
15
16 (No comments)
17
18 MR. GRAY: Move to accept the agenda as
19 revised.
20
21 MR. SEETOT: Second the motion.
22
23 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Moved by Tom, seconded
24 by Elmer.
25
26 MS. DEATHERAGE: Chair. We are
27 requesting to have an agenda change request to move
28 Proposals No. 37, or that proposal is No. 37, 43, and
29 45 until tomorrow morning. Fred Eningowuk is going to
30 be calling in from Anchorage from the OSM to address
31 those proposals.
32
33 Thank you.
34
35 CHAIRMAN SMITH: What are the Council's
36 wishes.
37
38 MR. GRAY: I'm fine with that being
39 part of my motion.
40
41 MR. SEETOT: Same here.
42
43 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. So let's vote
44 to adopt -- or, well, let's see, what do we have to do.
45 Do we have to do the whole.....
46
47 MS. DEATHERAGE: No.
48
49 MR. GRAY: Question.
50

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Call for the question
2 then. All in favor say aye.

3
4 IN UNISON: Aye.

5
6 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Opposed same sign.

7
8 (No opposing votes)

9
10 CHAIRMAN SMITH: The agenda's adopted
11 as amended.

12
13 Take a few minutes to review the
14 minutes if you have not done it already.

15
16 (Pause)

17
18 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Has everybody had a
19 chance to review the minutes? I've got to say these
20 are very nice, very good minutes. Are you ready for a
21 motion to adopt.

22
23 MR. OXEREOK: Mr. Chair. Could we make
24 a correction on my name on the first page of the
25 minutes?

26
27 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Sure can.

28
29 MR. OXEREOK: First name is A-M-O-S.

30
31 MR. KATCHEAK: Mr. Chair. I would move
32 to approve the minutes with correction.

33
34 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Very good. Do we have
35 a second.

36
37 MR. SEETOT: Second.

38
39 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Any discussion.

40
41 MR. SEETOT: Mr. Chair. Also I have a
42 couple typos I think on Page 10. The fourth sentence
43 from the bottom, strike out 2, from July 2 15 to
44 December 31. From July 15 to December 31.

45
46 And also third paragraph under NPS, the
47 second line, it says elated; it should probably read
48 related.

49
50 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Where was that second
2 one, elated?
3
4 MR. SEETOT: Page 13, third paragraph,
5 second line, and the third word over.
6
7 CHAIRMAN SMITH: You see it needs an R
8 in front of elated.
9
10 And what was the other -- what was the
11 one on Page 10?
12
13 MR. SEETOT: Remove the first 2.
14 Strike out the 2 on the fourth line from the bottom.
15
16 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Anything else.
17
18 (No comments)
19
20 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Call for the question
21 then. All in favor say aye.
22
23 IN UNISON: Aye.
24
25 CHAIRMAN SMITH: All opposed same sign.
26
27 (No opposing votes)
28
29 CHAIRMAN SMITH: The minutes are
30 adopted. And once again these are very good minutes.
31
32 Do we have any length of service
33 awards, Karen?
34
35 MS. DEATHERAGE: Chair. Yes, we do.
36 Chris McKee will be coming forward to present those.
37
38 MR. McKEE: So I have a couple. Do you
39 have a camera in case we want to make it official.
40
41 Well, actually I'm just going to read
42 just a little bit. And the first one I want to get to
43 is you, Mr. Vice Chair. Tim Smith. I just wanted to
44 recognize your five-year service award with this
45 Council, and recognize you that you've been working as
46 a wildlife management professional for quite a number
47 of years, and I think you've been a subsistence user
48 for some 40 years in this area. So the Federal program
49 very much appreciates all the work you have done and
50 continue to do for this program. So I wanted to

1 recognize you with the five-year service award here.

2

3 (Applause)

4

5 CHAIRMAN SMITH: If I could speak, I
6 really enjoy being on this Council. It's frustrating
7 that we don't have more jurisdiction because of the
8 lack of land, but I believe in subsistence.
9 Subsistence is the key to rural Alaska. Without it,
10 you have nothing. And we're in a real kind of a crisis
11 here on the Seward Peninsula and it's time that we
12 really do some -- we need to take this more serious of
13 supporting subsistence usage. It's dying as we speak,
14 and we have to do something about it. It's an
15 obligation of both the State and the Federal Government
16 to protect the people and protect subsistence rights.
17 It's the most important right to use of fish and
18 wildlife and plant resources as far as I'm concerned.
19 And I think the law supports that, too.

20

21 So I thank you for this award.

22

23 MR. McKEE: And last, but certainly not
24 least, I have a 10-year award for Tom Gray. He is also
25 a member of the Fish and Game Local Advisory Committee
26 and president of the Reindeer Herders Association with
27 Kawerak, Inc. And so I've had quite a few interactions
28 with Tom over the last few years, and great amount of
29 knowledge on subsistence resources. And we really
30 appreciate a decade's worth of your time on this
31 Council. So I'd like to recognize Tom Gray with the
32 10-year service award.

33

34 (Applause)

35

36 MR. GRAY: Well, I'm not much of a
37 speaker, but, you know, subsistence to me is a way of
38 life. I go season by season. Right now we're in the
39 whaling season. There's berry picking, there's salmon,
40 there's -- you know, my life, if you look at it, I go
41 season to season to season. This goes year around. So
42 subsistence to me is far more important than money and
43 a lot of things that we do in life.

44

45 And, in fact, we caught two seals in a
46 whale net yesterday, and my wife is at the school today
47 working with school kids, teaching them how to take
48 care of a seal. So, you know, our world is
49 subsistence.

50

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah. Thanks, Tom.

2

3 And then I guess that brings us to
4 reports. Let's start with Council member reports, and
5 I'm going to start off with Elmer.

6

7 MR. SEETOT: Good morning. Last year I
8 wasn't able to make it due to weather.

9

10 However, during this year or last
11 April, we were able to get caribou off Davidson Landing
12 area. That's the closest place that we ever got
13 caribou. That was in April. We were able to get some
14 bulls, and they were showing some fat. That's very
15 unusual to get bull caribou during the spring season
16 where they're showing fat.

17

18 One of the main reasons I think that
19 they were showing fat like that, they've got pretty
20 good feed west of Kuzitrin River, boundary toward
21 Coffee Dome, that has been unused for many years, and
22 there's good feed for both caribou and reindeer, much,
23 much less muskoxen. So that's very good that we have
24 seen over there.

25

26 However, it has been so dry during the
27 breakups that our berry crops ave been it and miss in
28 our area.

29

30 We have been able to keep the wolves in
31 check within the Imuruk Basin, because, No. 1, the
32 wolves have reindeer toward Tissue River, towards the
33 southern part of Seward Peninsula, for them to
34 constantly make their rounds. The caribou come and go,
35 but the majority of the caribou had already left
36 towards Serpentine River, or toward the upper reaches
37 of the Seward Peninsula.

38

39 And salmon has been plentiful this year
40 for our residents, and also probably for Nome
41 residents. This year is first time in years that I
42 have heard the escapement goal of about 35,000 plus red
43 salmon towards Salmon Creek.

44

45 Even though the subject matter that I
46 speak about, that's not pretty much go toward Federal
47 land. That's pretty much our subsistence life style
48 that we've been able to do over the past year, along
49 with State and Federal regulations that we have to keep
50 checking to make sure that we are in season, that the

1 limits are caught within that boundary.

2

3 Thank you very much.

4

5 MR. GRAY: I'd like to echo his comment
6 about the caribou coming down to Davidson's Landing. I
7 was muskox hunting with my wife, my wife got an ox
8 permit. In January there was caribou all the way down
9 to Davidson's Landing. The caribou came in early, and
10 they went far. So, you know, I guess I'm a little bit
11 concerned about where the regulations and what we can
12 do and can't do with caribou, where that's going to
13 settle, because I sit on a caribou committee, and
14 there's probably 30 of us that sit on it, and we'll
15 have a meeting mid December. I requested to the Staff
16 that we know how many caribou there are, and what to
17 expect as far as any changes in regulations and such.
18 This is going to really impact our people on the Seward
19 Peninsula. And, you know, it's fine to have changes in
20 places where there's core -- the core herd is, but when
21 we're working on the fringes of that herd, we need to
22 be careful about how the regulations are going to
23 impact those people.

24

25 You know, this year was a good and bad
26 year. Fortunately my son got a moose real quick, the
27 first day. Moose hunting happened so quick this year
28 that if you blinked, you missed hunting. Some areas
29 went longer in the season, but there was a lot of
30 aggressive people here in Nome that put these quotas
31 out very fast nowadays. And so, you know, that needs
32 to be considered and looked at.

33

34 Crabbing was excellent this year. You
35 know, towards the springtime, I commercial crabbed, and
36 it was good.

37

38 Bear hunting, I'm a hunting guide, and
39 I hunted probably two months this year. I was out in
40 the field two months. And I probably saw 30 bears. I'm
41 getting very frustrated. I saw lots of little bears.
42 It's frustrating when you're a hunting guide looking
43 for eight-foot animals and you're not seeing them. So
44 I'm a little concerned that the bear population -- I'm
45 not a little concerned, I'm very concerned, the bear
46 population has taken a dive. And I know it's taken a
47 dive from what I'm seeing out in the country. So the
48 management of that population we need to be careful of.

49

50 You know, we hear lots about people, my

1 cabin got tore up. Well, take your trash out of that
2 camp, you know. There's -- what kind of bears are
3 tearing these camps up? I feel they're smaller bears,
4 they're not big bears.

5
6 So anyway, I'm not going to dwell on
7 that, because that's going to be an issue later on.

8
9 The fish this year, I don't think
10 anybody can say our fish population this year was bad.
11 We had an awesome, awesome year. And I pray to God
12 that in the future we have runs like we did this year.
13 You know, I don't know who's to credit for it, if it
14 was high seas, or Fish and Game, or NSEDC, or who it
15 was, but we sure had a good year of fishing.

16
17 This year was one of the few years that
18 we didn't have a lot of water and our rivers were
19 really, really low, for the most -- most of the summer.
20 Now the rivers are high, but we had a low summer. When
21 the salmon were coming in, it was low water.

22
23 Anyway, beluga hunting, I'm struggling,
24 trying to get a beluga right now. Every year we get a
25 few belugas. So we'll get there.

26
27 Had a good though.

28
29 MR. OXEREOK: Personally our spring
30 hunt started really late this year due to mechanical
31 problems with our machines, but once we got out there,
32 there was a lot of game out there this year. We got
33 more than our share of walrus. We were able to put
34 some away for the dance festival. And, you know, the
35 first catch goes to the elders, so that's always good
36 to get that first catch down, and go back out there.

37
38 We didn't get enough Ugruks to go
39 around like we usually do in Wales.

40
41 But after this spring I ended up moving
42 to Koyuk, and so far in Koyuk I was been able to out
43 with Sam Oton (ph) and take my first seal out there in
44 Norton Sound, and it was awesome. I've got 15 meals
45 put away from that.

46
47 I went down to Unalakleet for a teacher
48 in-service, and was able to pull -- over a couple of
49 days I got six silvers and there was a lot of fish and
50 a lot of people fishing out there. It was really good

1 to see. And talking with a couple friends that work at
2 the processing plant, I guess they had a record year or
3 near record year for silvers, so much that they had to
4 turn some of the fish away to one of the processing
5 plants down south. So that was real good to hear.

6
7 The only problem we had in Unalakleet
8 was a water shortage. But they cut down the hours of
9 the plant so that the tank could start filling up a
10 little bit, so they took their 24-hour shift and cut
11 out one of the shifts.

12
13 Koyuk it was -- since I moved there in
14 August, I've had fresh caribou, fresh moose, fresh
15 beluga. The cooked it right on the beach, and anybody
16 could come down and get some. It was really good.

17
18 I'm really looking forward to one of my
19 friends taking me out this year for my first caribou
20 hunt in that area. I've gone from Shishmaref up
21 towards Deering to get females before, and that was
22 really awesome.

23
24 I just got back from Diomedede, and
25 talking with several of the hunters out there, they've
26 had a really bad spring hunt due to really poor ice
27 conditions. When we were out walrus hunting, we did
28 run into one Diomedede boat, and we were able to share
29 clams from a walrus stomach with them. And they ended
30 up -- when they got back to Diomedede, it was so rough
31 that they had to off-load on the north side of the
32 island. And they didn't put their meat high enough up,
33 so by the time they got back to their meat, that chunk
34 of ice or that part of the shore ice had blown away and
35 they lost their catch.

36
37 And talking with some of the other
38 hunters, I think their meat cache is really empty, so
39 they're really struggling with the change in the
40 weather that they've had up there. It's made it a
41 little bit poor for hunting.

42
43 From looking forward to talking more
44 with them and with the hunters from Koyuk and from
45 Wales and also from Shishmaref, because with my new job
46 with the Bering Straits School District, I get to
47 travel. I'm based out of Koyuk and I travel to
48 Diomedede, Wales, and Shishmaref, so that's going to give
49 me more chances to interact with everybody up there.

50

1 When I was in Wales, I got to have some
2 really good salmonberries that my mom picked. And my
3 sister saved me a gallon and I got to bring back a
4 gallon of really, really yummy salmonberries. So I
5 know how far they had to go, but they were going out
6 every chance they got, as soon as the weather was nice,
7 meetings were canceled, and local events were canceled,
8 because there was nobody in town. They were all out
9 gathering.

10

11 This is my second year here. I'm
12 really excited, and I'm really honored to be on this
13 Council. And that's it.

14

15 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Speaking for myself,
16 and probably for everybody else, we're glad to have you
17 here. You're a real good addition to the Council.

18

19 MR. OXEREOK: Thanks.

20

21 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Ted, do you want to?

22

23 MR. KATCHEAK: Good morning, fellow
24 Council members and visitors.

25

26 We had a very good summer with the
27 exception of walrus hunting. All these years Stebbins,
28 we regard ourselves how the rest of the State is. We
29 always had plenty of fish: kings, silvers, chums, and
30 the other variety of fish, so we had a good summer.
31 Everybody fished, dried fish, and all.

32

33 And the other people go out and hunt
34 whale, beluga. And we have plenty of belugas. It
35 seemed like year around animal for us now, because of
36 the climate changing.

37

38 A lot of migratory birds, we're almost
39 probably every route of migratory birds.

40

41 And the rest of the summer there were
42 lots of salmonberries, a lot of different berries.

43

44 So I think we're -- because we live in
45 (Indiscernible) Cape, and we're surrounded by other
46 lands. We've a unique place where we enjoy hunting and
47 eating seabirds or sea animals. And then we have land
48 animals. A lot of moose. And so a lot of animals. A
49 big variety of animals year around.

50

3

4 MR. SACCHEUS: Good morning. My name
5 is Charles Saccheus from Elim. And I do a lot of
6 subsistence hunting in Elim.

7

8 And over the past 25 years, I've been
9 pretty involved with beluga, and those animals are
10 pretty intelligent animals. They're even smarter than
11 some people. And we've got five stocks of beluga in
12 Alaska, and they've got different DNA like human
13 beings. You could get a skin sample and look them
14 through a -- and you could find out where they come
15 from, where they mix a whole bunch, like 10 beluga, and
16 you could get 10 beluga and mix all their muktuk and
17 you'd know exactly where them -- it's just like humans,
18 they're samples go exactly where you could put exactly
19 where them beluga muktuk come from. Just like human
20 beings.

21

22 And them animals are pretty intelligent
23 in our studies. When the Alaska Marine Fisheries
24 Service, I work with them a lot, and I tagged belugas
25 in Point Lay, and I tagged belugas in Bristol Bay, and
26 we put some tags on some belugas in Norton Sound. But
27 anyway those belugas, they got different -- they're
28 just like human beings, they're even smarter than some
29 human beings, too. And we tagged belugas in Port Lay
30 one time, and two belugas went up to that polar ice
31 cap, and they mill around up there, and 100 miles north
32 of Point Barrow, four Belugas get to 100 miles, the
33 ones we tagged. And the were all together. And two
34 belugas went to --all the way to Greenland, and around
35 Greenland, all them come back. And you can't imagine,
36 they get 100 mile north of Barrow where they separated,
37 them two belugas that went Greenland, and two belugas
38 that were up to polar ice cap. The same day they get
39 -- I know they don't have cell phones or anything like
40 that, but they get to 100 miles north of Point Lay -- I
41 mean, Point Barrow on the same day, same hour. They
42 had radios on their tanks, and so like I said, them
43 belugas are pretty intelligent, and they're smarter
44 than some people.

45

46 But anyway in one year I was out in the
47 Bering Sea with a 375-foot research boat in the Bering
48 Sea. I sail out there for a whole month and we put the
49 radios on our ring seals. And you can't imagine where
50 them ring seals go. They go all the way up to

1 Greenland and swim around up there all summer. And the
2 season is pretty short up there, so they started coming
3 back in August. And both animals are pretty amazing,
4 what they do. They don't just stay in one spot, but we
5 figure out what they eat, those seals, and they're
6 amazing animals, too. They're just like human being.
7 They travel a lot.

8

9 But anyway this year on my moose
10 season, we got 316,000 acres, over, but either one
11 Native corporation, and for some reason that hardly
12 anybody in Elim get any moose this year. It's not the
13 way they hunt them, but that cycle, kind of like a
14 cycle like caribou, you know.

15

16 And this fall I got some, they call it
17 caribou from up north, first caribou, and they got real
18 thick fat, over two inches, maybe. And when we cooked
19 them, I noticed that they weren't caribou. There's
20 caribou or reindeer, what I was eating. You could tell
21 the difference if you eat caribou and reindeer. So
22 these were reindeer what we were having for supper in
23 Elim. And I don't know if they have any tags on their
24 ears or whatever, because a lot of times when they --
25 when the people that hunt caribou, when they find out
26 that they lost one, two, three, four herds in the
27 Seward Peninsula area, southern Seward Peninsula, them
28 people, they don't look for caribou, they look for
29 reindeer. And in the districts, you could go and get
30 steers, look out with binoculars and you could tell the
31 difference between steers and regular reindeer. And
32 that's what most of the hunters go look for.

33

34 The caribou were abundant in our area
35 last year, and I don't know about this year, but Elim
36 people always go out and hunt with their family, and
37 look for reindeer. There's no question that you could
38 -- I don't know. That's the world we are in.

39

40 But anyway they say the bearded seals,
41 the ring seals were declining a couple years ago, and I
42 never believe them, because I hunt out there almost all
43 the time in front of Elim and out in the southern
44 Norton Sound, and I always see 10, 20, 30, 40 seals in
45 front of me. Ring seals. And they say they were
46 declining. I don't believe what they report, because
47 most of the time those scientists that study bearded
48 seals, they're just sitting around and look at a
49 computer, and they say our ring seals are declining,
50 but I don't believe it. But anyway we've got plenty of

1 ring seals up in the bay. And one year, maybe a couple
2 of years ago, all them ring seals were -- for some
3 reason all their hair was peeling off like in March,
4 and I don't know what happened to them. But anyway
5 this year they look pretty healthy, them ring seals
6 and, you know, oogruk.

7
8 Crabbing was good. During the winter
9 we get quite a few crabs. But with Fish and Game
10 riding our backs, you've got to have a permit and your
11 name on it. Right on your crab boat you've got to have
12 your name and address or whatever. But anyway we got
13 -- and we know since time immemorial, my ancestors,
14 they never used no numbers when they put crab out --
15 when they fished for crab, they never put numbers on
16 their crab boat. But today if you don't put your
17 name, address, and everything, you get fined for it.
18 And, I don't know, maybe the State is going broke or
19 something. I don't know. That's what really bothers
20 me, because we try to make a living, and with Fish and
21 Game out behind our back, trying to find us. I don't
22 know, maybe they're broke. I'm not Donald Trump, but
23 that's what I think. But anyway we try to survive in
24 Elim.

25
26 And the salmon run was pretty damn
27 good. And everybody was satisfied with the chum run,
28 and especially the silver run. That's where the money
29 come in when we fish for silvers. The silver salmon
30 skyrocket this summer, and all over the Sound. And
31 king salmon, 20 years there used to be -- you're lucky
32 if you get one king salmon during the summer. But
33 today you could get 10, 20 king silver -- I mean king
34 salmon in one day. So king salmon are kind of on the
35 rise right now. And they pay a good price for the --
36 NSD this year paid a good price for the king salmon and
37 also the silver salmon.

38
39 But anyway I'm pretty satisfied,
40 because last summer the only thing we didn't have was
41 salmonberries. If anybody want to sell some
42 salmonberries, you let them know, I'll buy it. I'll
43 but it, because they were pretty scarce, salmonberries
44 for some reason. And also the cranberries were
45 abundant, and blackberries were abundant, blueberries
46 were abundant, but the salmonberries declined this
47 year. And my people could pay any price for five
48 gallons of salmonberry. They'll pay since everybody
49 get their dividends. They don't always come to Nome.
50 And I know some people come to Nome and send their

1 monies in the bars, but that's not the case with your
2 dividend check. You could put it in the bank and
3 forget it, and let it grow.

4
5 But, I don't know, you guys have got to
6 watch how you vote this year. I don't know, what are
7 you going to vote for as for President. There's some
8 odd people are running for President right now, and
9 some of them are kind of gung-ho or something. But you
10 guys make sure you vote for the right person.

11
12 And thank you very much

13
14 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Charlie, I think we've
15 got to be careful about not.....

16
17 MR. SACCHEUS: Pardon?

18
19 CHAIRMAN SMITH: We've got to be
20 careful about not politicking this Council I think.
21 You know, there's nothing wrong with what you said, but
22 you just have to be careful.

23
24 MR. SACCHEUS: Yeah, whenever you meet,
25 you've got a kind of problem.

26
27 MR. KATCHEAK: Just a suggestion to
28 Charles.

29
30 MR. SACCHEUS: All right. Okay. Thank
31 you.

32
33 MR. KATCHEAK: If you want
34 salmonberries, Stebbins people should have some.

35
36 MR. SACCHEUS: Thank you very much.

37
38 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I just wanted to point
39 out, I mean, Charlie is a perfect example of local
40 ecological knowledge contributing to management. He
41 was the first one I know to recognize how important
42 beluga predation on salmon is. I never thought out it
43 before, but when you've got 25,000 belugas running
44 around, they eat a lot of salmon. An awful lot of
45 salmon, you know, they can eat three in a meal. And
46 he's the first one I ever heard point that out. I
47 mean, the other people were studying didn't see the
48 pattern. And that's where local people really come in.

49
50 MR. SACCHEUS: Yeah. When we count the

1 beluga, we always count like maybe between 10 miles out
2 of Cape Darby and Yukon. When we count them up there
3 with Air Commander and they've got big windows on the
4 side, you could count them. And you know how many
5 beluga we count out there? About maybe 60,000 between
6 Cape Jarvis and the mouth of the other cape all the way
7 to -- most of them mill around in the mouth of the
8 Yukon where the fish are milling around out there. And
9 one day, the times, those big belugas, like 15 to 16
10 feet beluga, we counted like maybe 11, 12, 13 silver
11 salmon they eat. And the beluga know exactly what to
12 eat. They are -- I could part the middle, and they
13 like a lot of things. They like to eat crab eggs.
14 They don't eat the whole crab, they just -- I don't
15 know how, they open the eggs in the crab and they eat
16 them. You find them in their stomachs.

17
18 But them animals are pretty intelligent
19 animals. And they know exactly. They're pretty
20 intelligent. A lot of times I think them beluga are
21 smarter than some people. But that way, I've been
22 studying with the Fish and Wildlife Service, National
23 Marine Fisheries Service, I've been studying beluga for
24 the past over 20 years, and they're amazing animals.
25 They're almost -- a lot of times I think they're
26 smarter than some people. Intelligent.

27
28 Thank you very much.

29
30 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Joe, you're up next.

31
32 MR. GARNIE: Yes. Thank you for this
33 opportunity to be on this Council. I'm new on here,
34 so I'll get myself familiarized with the operation.
35 But I'm here to try and help my community and voicing
36 their concerns here. And I didn't have a chance to go
37 to my tribal council and hear exactly what their
38 concerns are, but living there basically seven days a
39 week all my life, I was born and raised there. I was
40 born on a creek called King Salmon Creek during salmon
41 season in June. So I've fished all my life.

42
43 So, you know, we had a little better
44 season on salmon last summer. A little better. Not
45 necessarily astronomically better, but probably a
46 little better than -- you know, we went so long with
47 very poor seasons that we get a little bump, and we
48 think, oh, man, salmon are back and things are going
49 good. but, my lord, I've fished all my life, and
50 salmon sustained our lifestyle. And today it can't do

1 that. We're fishing with -- what we forget is we're
2 fishing with a lot better equipment now. All my life I
3 fished and we had a 150-foot net. And that was a big
4 net. And now we're throwing out whole shackles of
5 monofilament gear and still not catching as much as we
6 did in the past. So I know for a fact that fishing is
7 down.

8

9 I had 44 -- king salmon is extinct in
10 my neighborhood. They were extinct. They're gone. I
11 fished king salmon all my life. I hung a minimum of 20
12 kings a year in my smokehouse. And in the last 15
13 years I'm lucky if I catch an incidental king. I don't
14 set a king net any more, because there isn't any kings.
15 44 made it to the spawning ground, and that's -- I'm
16 pretty sure that could be considered extinct. That's
17 been the highest number in the last five or six years.
18 And I haven't -- I think I ate a little piece of king
19 last summer that somebody gave me, he had incidental
20 catch. And that's a real concern. I wouldn't wish
21 that upon anybody to have king salmon got extinct in
22 their neighborhood.

23

24 We have bycatch issues going on that's
25 very alarming. I sit on the NSEDC board and I've
26 attended a few North Pacific meetings and gave
27 testimony on behalf of salmon. And it's very alarming
28 what is happening with salmon.

29

30 And that's where our community is on
31 fish. You know, we had a little better season, I'll
32 admit. Last summer we got a few more reds and a few
33 more chums, but as far as historical runs go for the
34 last 15 years, it's steadily been decreasing. You
35 know, it definitely helps us as far as the dinner table
36 goes, but as far as literally subsistence life, it's
37 basically becoming thing of the past.

38

39 Moose hunting. My community this year
40 took two moose versus 38 from Lord knows where else.
41 The season was short as the quota got filled. So
42 there's a big concern there in my community as far as
43 what is happening with moose hunting. We basically
44 felt robbed of moose hunting. So there's definitely a
45 red meat shortage in my community this year with this
46 moose hunting issue.

47

48 We had a reindeer herd in Teller for
49 over 100 years, and this basically sustained our
50 community. But with new management, or lack of

1 management, or whatever the cause is, the herd is
2 basically non-existent. Reindeer meat is non-existent
3 in my community.

4
5 It basically paints a pretty picture of
6 what is happening in my community. So that's why I'm
7 here, and I hope to make a difference.

8
9 Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thanks, Joe. Joe is
12 another example. He's the first one that I know that's
13 identified that spotted seals seem to target red salmon
14 smolts. And I never heard that from anybody else, but
15 he's a seal hunter, and he noticed it, and it may be
16 really important, you know. It's just something that
17 everybody else missed, and I think that's -- it really
18 points out the value of people that have a long history
19 with subsistence resources.

20
21 I've been following the Pilgrim River
22 red salmon run and Glacier Lake red salmon run for many
23 years. And I spent a lot of time out on the Pilgrim
24 this year, and it was a decent run, but, you know, as
25 Joe says, we forget what it used to be. You know, we
26 forget what salmon fishing used to be like, because
27 we've got such a long dry spell. So we get a semi-
28 decent season like this, and very is fixed, you know,
29 and I don't think that's true.

30
31 One thing what -- it was a better run,
32 but one thing I hope that we can conclude is that lake
33 fertilization works for red salmon numbers. We started
34 fertilizing in 1997, quit in 2001, and the run went
35 from 3 to 5,000 a year to 100,000 in 2004. And then
36 after fertilization was suspended in 2001 and started
37 up again in 2007, this is the first decent run since
38 2007. To me, that's definitive that lake fertilization
39 works. But I'm sure that that won't be -- there won't
40 be a general agreement on that. So I think we need to
41 continue to fertilize and support that run, and I think
42 it will work.

43
44 I'm very concerned about the moose
45 population and the muskox population and reindeer.
46 Well, actually I'm concerned about everything except
47 beluga and herring. And beluga and herring are the
48 only two subsistence species that are really abundant
49 right now.

50

1 Reindeer. When we used to do a lot of
2 -- Suzanne in her former career was a reindeer
3 researchers. And when we had a lot of radio collars on
4 reindeer, one time they plotted all the mortalities,
5 where reindeer died. You know, some of those reindeer
6 wear collars for year, 7 to 12 years sometimes. And
7 there's a -- we found there's a lot of death out in the
8 -- on the Kuzitrin. When they left their range, they
9 only got so far, and then something got them, either
10 people or predators. And it just shows you how hard it
11 is for reindeer to migrate. They really can't. And if
12 they get forced off their range, I think a lot of the
13 caribou that people are hunting are probably reindeer.

14
15 I'd be interested to hear from Tony how
16 the genetics are going on that, but I think there's a
17 problem. People haven't seen reindeer for so long --
18 I've been asking people, when's the last time you saw a
19 reindeer roundup. People can't even remember how many
20 years it's been. I can hardly remember how many years
21 it's been since I've seen a reindeer roundup. It's
22 hard to identify -- it's hard to discriminate between
23 reindeer and caribou if you don't look at them all the
24 time. It's hard anytime anyway, but if you don't look
25 at them for a long time, I think a lot of the people
26 are misidentifying reindeer. So that's something to
27 talk about.

28
29 I think things are generally poor when
30 we get a good year like this, and we had a good berry
31 year. It was actually a pretty good year for
32 subsistence.

33
34 People think, well, everything's okay,
35 and want to put a trend line on it. I think we need to
36 keep in mind that we've been going long periods of time
37 when things are very bad, and then when we get a little
38 bit of a bump up, people tend to be overlapped and
39 missing about that. I think in general things are not
40 very good for subsistence.

41
42 So that's all I have.

43
44 I'd like to -- oh, well, let's --
45 before we do that, let's ask for public and tribal
46 comments on non-agenda items. Is there anybody that
47 wants to make a comment.

48
49 (No comments)
50

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Hearing none, I'd like
2 to invite Tony to come up and give us his report.

3
4 MR. GORN: Thank you, Mr. Chair and RAC
5 members. I greatly appreciate your flexibility in
6 letting me come up here early so I can go do some field
7 work over the -- for the rest of the week.

8
9 For the record, my name is Tony Gorn.
10 I'm the Unit 22 area biologist here in Nome. I've been
11 in the Nome office for 15 years.

12
13 What I'm going to do is just basically
14 provide an overview of the work that I've been involved
15 in since the last time I talked to this committee. You
16 should have some handouts in front of you I believe.
17 And there's a lot of -- I provided you guys with a lot
18 of information, and frankly there's not time to go over
19 everything.

20
21 What I'm looking at now is this Unit 22
22 wildlife report. Table 1 just goes over some the
23 different types of moose hunts and what the quotas are.

24
25 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Does everybody have
26 the handout.

27
28 MR. GORN: Is it okay to continue? Oh,
29 okay.

30
31 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah, we're ready.
32 Sorry. Go ahead.

33
34 MR. GORN: Okay. So Table 1 goes over
35 the different hunt areas along the Nome road system
36 primarily related to this fall's moose hunts. I won't
37 go through all those, but there's reported harvest and
38 quota information there.

39
40 Last spring, as many of you remember,
41 we had a pretty warm winter, and then not a lot of snow
42 early on. And basically that prevented us from
43 counting moose last spring. I really can't remember
44 the last time that's happened to me. But we were
45 supposed to count moose in Unalakleet in the central
46 portion of Unit 22A last spring, and we just couldn't
47 do it. We never had the snow. So we're going to try
48 to go back there this spring.

49
50 Whenever I try to estimate moose

1 abundance, moose density in the springtime, the fall
2 before that survey I try to estimate composition in the
3 same area. So I'm going to go down to Unalakleet and
4 get moose comp data out of the moose population this
5 fall, and then if I have a little bit of luck, I'll get
6 Unit 22B and C done, a little bit closer to home.

7
8 Table 2 goes over brown bear harvest
9 information. Again I won't go over that in detail. If
10 we turn the page, there's a graph there that you have
11 all seen many times before. We just keep adding a year
12 to it. And it kind of talks about Unit 22 reported
13 brown bear harvest through time, beginning in 1990,
14 going to 2014 now. No real dramatic increases or
15 decreases that we're picking up in overall brown bear
16 harvest. It seems like a lot of our harvest is driven
17 by spring traveling conditions, but you can see we
18 basically since, well, going back into the late 90s we
19 kind of fluctuate between the mid 80s to 100 bears a
20 year.

21
22 We are in Tier II muskox situation, if
23 you turn the page, for hunt management. Table 4 just
24 talks about how -- or what we saw for muskox harvest.
25 We have a story related to muskox hunt management out
26 here that we should be very, very proud of. And I want
27 to make sure that I always take time to remind people
28 like this committee that we have been hunting jointly,
29 the State of Alaska and the Federal Government,
30 applying the best parts of our two systems since 1998.
31 That sounds so simple to say, but it's not very common,
32 and it represents a lot of work from a lot of people
33 over a very long time period. So we continue to have
34 muskox hunts in all the
35 Seward Peninsula communities, using the Federal system
36 and the State Tier II system. And those Tier II
37 permits are going to the villages; they're going to
38 where they should be. And the Federal system is able
39 to fill in holes per se in certain areas, so it's a
40 good system.

41
42 I'm going to take a few minutes now and
43 talk about some of the spring field work we did last
44 year, so this would have been the spring of 2015.

45
46 I already mentioned that snow didn't
47 allow us to count moose down in 22A. We -- I forget
48 the date. I could probably pull it off here. March
49 6th and March 8th. The Seward Peninsula and the Nulato
50 Hills experienced just this incredible snow event.

1 Prior to March 6th, we had not very much snow anywhere,
2 and then we received about 72 hours of blanket snowfall
3 that covered everywhere from Wales to Talak Ridge out
4 in the Nulato Hills. So that was a pretty significant
5 weekend, because after not being able to count moose, I
6 was wondering what I was going to do with my life,
7 because the muskox survey looked like it was not going
8 to take place, and I came back to work on Monday, and
9 we started to count muskox.

10

11 The significant thing, and just please
12 be patient with me, that muskox survey is huge. It's a
13 monster of a survey. I've been told it's the largest
14 wildlife survey in the State of Alaska. It normally
15 takes us about six weeks to finish it.

16

17 After we got that big snow dump between
18 March 6th and March 8th, the next week was clear skies
19 and no wind, which was just like winning the lottery.
20 And we did that six-week survey in five days. I mean,
21 each day you would fly, you'd just think it could never
22 get better, and the next day would just be better. So
23 we had aircraft, pilots and observers from Fish and
24 Game, Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park
25 Service, BLM, and we were based in Nome, Kotzebue, and
26 Galena and we knocked that thing out in a week.

27

28 I believe you have a pretty lengthy
29 report in front of you. It's my survey memo from that.
30 If you turn through that document to Table 1, that has
31 a bunch of different types of estimates from that
32 count. The big one that we should focus on is way on
33 the bottom of Table 1. There's a row that says,
34 SewPen.all. And what that is, is that's the estimate
35 for the entire survey area. It would be on Page 4.

36

37 Yeah, the muskox survey memo. I think
38 you might be in the wrong document, Tom. It looks like
39 the composition survey.

40

41 (Pause)

42

43 MR. GORN: So now that everybody has
44 their place on that table, I don't want you to turn the
45 page, but if you do turn to several more pages, you'll
46 see a map that shows the survey area. And you can just
47 see how large it is. It goes from Wales basically over
48 to the Yukon River, so it's a large area.

49

50 And in Table 1, when you look at that

1 row that that says Seward Peninsula all, you'll see
2 the estimate for our muskox population is 2,287 muskox.
3 Since 2012, that's a three percent increase. In our
4 business, when we talk about populations, that's a
5 stable population. It's a pretty precise, it's a
6 pretty tight estimate, plus or minus 10 percent. For a
7 wildlife survey, you feel pretty good about the quality
8 of that survey.

9
10 So if you remember some of my previous
11 talks, we've just come off a short time period where
12 the muskox population was declining, so this last
13 survey showed potentially a stabilization. And a big,
14 big change, if you look at Figure 1 in that document, a
15 big shift in the distribution of muskox groups in our
16 population. Basically muskox groups are moving to the
17 southeast. 22A, we detected more groups in the Nulato
18 Hills than we ever have before. And on the back end of
19 that, up in 22E, just finding less and less muskoxen up
20 in 22E. And I don't have that number memorized, but --
21 yeah, up in 22E, if we just look at that area's number
22 of muskox, it declined 32 percent since 2012, and
23 that's coming off of another big decline since 2010.

24
25 Yeah, that's pretty much the summary of
26 that survey.

27
28 After we go out and estimate how many
29 muskox are out across the landscape, then we do what's
30 called composition surveys, and that's another handout
31 in front of you. Now, this is the surveys that we do
32 to understand the makeup of individuals that make up
33 the muskox population. So how many males, how many
34 females; but then also how many two-year-olds, how many
35 three-year-olds, how many four-year-olds, how many
36 short yearlings. So we really get to understand the
37 sex and age class breakdown of the population. We
38 completed these surveys between April 7th and May 3rd
39 of 2015. Oh, where is it? It's in here, I don't see
40 it right in front of me, but we classified something
41 around 14 or 1500 muskox, equally distributed. We did
42 our best sampling to get equal distribution of groups
43 across the landscape, so we just didn't do them all in
44 22D or C, you know, we moved across the landscape. We
45 tried to sample the different group sizes that are out
46 there across the landscape. We tried to survey those
47 proportionately so we're not doing just big groups,
48 we're not doing just small groups, trying to do
49 everything the same. Yeah, we did a little over 1,000
50 muskox, which is just about 50 percent of the abundance

1 estimate.

2

3 Again this is a lengthy document. I'm
4 not going to go through all of it. But a couple of the
5 highlights is within hunt management right now we are
6 hunting muskox at a lower harvest rate that we have in
7 the past, and we're doing that surgically to try to
8 increase mature bull/cow ratios. And we saw a little
9 bit of a bump in those ratios from the survey, so
10 perhaps hunt management is working. But we saw the
11 mature bull/cow ratios go up to 39 mature bulls per 100
12 cows, so that's trending in the right direction.

13

14 Just for context, back around 2000-ish,
15 we had between 60 and 80 mature bulls per 100 cows.
16 When we were in that registration hunt for several
17 years, we saw that ratios go down to below 30, and
18 that's when we put the brakes on and tried to get it
19 going back the other way. So it seems to be trending
20 in the right direction at this point.

21

22 The very discouraging population metric
23 that we got from our composition surveys is what's
24 known as recruitment. Recruitment is just the
25 percentage of short yearlings in a population. Those
26 are your babies, those are the ones that are living
27 that are going to be part of the population into the
28 future. And we found nine percent recruitment. That
29 is not good.

30

31 Just to put that into context for some
32 of you folks that live in 22B, if we think about moose
33 in 22B, since moose population crashed in the late 80s,
34 we find about 8 or 9 percent recruitment every time we
35 go count moose over there, and populations on the
36 Seward Peninsula just don't appear to grow when you
37 have single digit recruitment rates.

38

39 So having a single digit recruitment
40 rate in this muskox population, not a desirable thing
41 as we go into the future. I suspect we're going to
42 need to see that increase before we see that population
43 increase.

44

45 That's probably enough of the muskox
46 count data. The only thing that I will point out, just
47 because I think it's got a lot of interesting
48 information in it, is Figure 10 in the comp survey
49 memo. It shows some really interesting things. It
50 looks at muskox harvest going back to 1995, and it's

1 got every year in there since 2014. And basically many
2 of you guys remember being on that Seward Peninsula
3 Muskox Cooperators Group when it was meeting. The
4 recommendations, the harvest guideline recommendations
5 from that group is what we used, what the managers used
6 for muskox hunts. And, of course, we had the Federal
7 system and we had the State system, and we just were
8 doing the best that we could. But the blue line on
9 that graph is what the recommendations were through
10 time. That yellow line is what is referred to as
11 realized harvest, it's a realized harvest rate. And
12 that's what we were actually taking through time. And
13 I just show that to you guys so you can put into
14 perspective the big differences right now with hunt
15 management related to muskox.

16

17 I oftentimes hear from people, and they
18 tell me, man, I used to get a Tier II permit every
19 year, and I just don't get them any more. You know,
20 what's going on? Well, what's going on is we're just
21 not giving out that many any more. Back in the late
22 2000s we were giving out over 200 Tier II permits a
23 year, and now we give out 29.

24

25 So this muskox population is an amazing
26 resource, it's an incredibly successful story, but we
27 are in the middle of a serious situation and it takes
28 some serious action on our part to try to mitigate it.

29

30 So I just wanted to point that graph
31 out, because there's a lot of good information in
32 there.

33

34 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Go ahead, Tom.

35

36 MR. GRAY: I guess I have a question.
37 To me, I'm looking at this graph, and there's been a
38 big movement of animals over into Granite Mountain,
39 Nulato Hills, that area. It looks almost to me like
40 probably half or a third of the herd has moved over in
41 that area. And has the harvest changed to accommodate
42 those animals in that area? I guess what I'm thinking
43 is, they're not very accessible, and maybe that herd --
44 those animals aren't being harvested as they have been
45 on the Seward Peninsula. Has the harvest -- is there
46 more Federal permits because of the Federal lands, or
47 State permits in that general area over there?

48

49 MR. GORN: Through the Chair to Tom.
50 So just with the -- you're going to have to bear with

1 me here. I'm going to sound a little bit like a
2 bureaucrat. But just because of things like
3 publication deadlines for reg books or Tier II
4 supplements, all that nonsense, by the time we go out
5 and do our surveys and generate the estimates and get
6 these results, we're always a little bit behind the
7 power curve for hunt management. So, for instance, in
8 December of last year, the muskox hunt winners got
9 selected for this year. And then last spring we
10 counted muskox and got all new data, but a new group of
11 people now have applied, and those permits were given
12 out. So we're always kind of a year behind. So next
13 year we'll use all the information I just laid out, and
14 for next year's hunts, those permits will be
15 redistributed to represent the current information.
16 But we're always just -- almost about a year behind for
17 the muskox stuff.

18

19 MR. GRAY: And I understand that part
20 of it. The concern that I'm a little bit concerned
21 about is it looks to me like a lot of these animals
22 have gone on the Federal lands. And if harvest --
23 let's say those animals take off and do really good,
24 and there's a big boom in the population. I guess in
25 my mind, if they're on Federal lands, there should be a
26 lot more Federal permits given out, and, you know, you
27 guys work that out. But if the Federal people aren't
28 paying attention, there may not be opportunity for
29 those people that are living in that area or people
30 that want to go into that area and hunt muskox.

31

32 So, you know, I understand the year
33 behind, the year late. I don't have any problems with
34 that. It's just I'm concerned that, you know, my
35 feeling is if this hunt gets too -- hits too hard, shut
36 it down. Let it recuperate. But I think places like
37 the Nulato Hills, those animals are going to take off.
38 And maybe the wolves and the bears will keep it
39 hammered down, I don't know. But opportunity, that's
40 what I'm concerned about.

41

42 MR. GORN: Yeah, I have a better
43 understanding of perhaps your question now. And so
44 there's a couple things going on in the background.

45

46 Right now in Unit 22A there's no muskox
47 hunting. There's no season there. Well, up until this
48 year there were hardly any muskox even in that country.
49 And just as in the early years, just as the Department
50 and the Park Service, and all the Federal agencies

1 worked with Seward Peninsula residents and had
2 meetings, and this stuff was talked about ad nauseam at
3 advisory committee meetings and RAC meetings, those
4 same types of conversations have begun to take place
5 with the Southern Norton Sound Advisory Committee. And
6 so communities like Shaktoolik and Unalakleet have
7 their thoughts and opinions on where they'd like to see
8 their local muskox numbers go. And so for the time
9 being there is no hunting in Unit 22A.

10

11 The results of the last survey suggest
12 that in the future potentially there could be some
13 hunting. But this is one data point. You know, we've
14 got one data point from one survey. So these animals,
15 when we look at the 2012 data, those animals, what they
16 turned into in 2015, that's not from productivity
17 alone. You know, there was animals that have walked
18 into that country. They expanded their range. So we
19 need to make sure they're going to stay there and see
20 what trajectory the population takes, and then
21 collectively be prepared to make recommendations for
22 seasons and bag limits.

23

24 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Go ahead, Tom.

25

26 MR. GRAY: Well, I would encourage not
27 only State, but the Federal guys to make sure that
28 people that will take advantage of these animals are
29 incorporated and made players in this thing, you know.
30 For example, if Tom Gray didn't get a permit, and I can
31 go down and hunt on Federal lands down there, I would
32 travel down there to go get a muskox.

33

34 So, you know, if there is no hunt, and
35 it takes five years, understandable. But involve the
36 people, involve the locals. You know, I think that's
37 as important as knowing how many animals are out there.

38

39 MR. GORN: One last survey I'll mention
40 from last spring is the State and the Feds all got
41 together and we estimated brown bears on the Seward
42 Peninsula. That estimate, a preliminary estimate was
43 just produced within the last couple days, but the
44 biometrician that's working on that estimate is going
45 to dedicate some more time to finalizing that survey.
46 So I suspect we will see a really detailed,
47 comprehensive report from that survey within the next
48 couple months.

49

50 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Go ahead, Tom.

1 MR. GRAY: I'm very interested in this
2 survey. Very, very interested, because I think the
3 bears on the road system have taken a real beating.
4 And again I spent two months out there this year, and I
5 have my opinions of how that population's going,
6 especially around the road system. There's a lot of
7 sows and cubs and smaller bears.

8
9 But if I could get a copy of that, or
10 be involved in that somehow, I would sure like to be
11 involved.

12
13 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Is there any more
14 questions for Tony.

15
16 MR. KATCHEAK: Mr. Chair. Tone, are
17 you -- is it correct to say that these yellow dots that
18 you have shown east of Shaktoolik and Unalakleet, are
19 these muskox on the figure on the muskox map.

20
21 MR. GORN: Now I'm confused with all
22 the papers in front of me, but, yeah, Teddy, those are
23 -- all the dots on that map are the groups that we
24 detected during the line transect survey.

25
26 MR. KATCHEAK: So this is current?

27
28 MR. GORN: Well, that was current, that
29 was hot off the presses as of last March.

30
31 MR. KATCHEAK: Last March.

32
33 MR. GORN: Yeah.

34
35 MR. KATCHEAK: The reason why I show an
36 interest on this is because in 1983 I drove a herd of
37 reindeer from Shaktoolik to Stebbins on the coast, and
38 I ran into at that time a muskox farm in Unalakleet.
39 So I'm wondering if these muskox are from that era.
40 Why they're in the area -- why they're there, and it's
41 showing that they've spread all over.

42
43
44 MR. GORN: Yeah, that's an excellent
45 question, Teddy, and frankly the most honest answer is
46 we don't know. So we have had during several time
47 periods different muskoxen collared on the Seward
48 Peninsula, and we've never seen collared movements that
49 went all the way down to Unalakleet. At least we
50 haven't on my collars, and I don't believe that those

1 were ever documented in the 1980s. But there's a clear
2 understanding that there are muskox that only move
3 north to south off the Seward Peninsula into the Nulato
4 Hills, but they also move north from the Bethel area of
5 the coast. And we occasionally get reports from real
6 curious places, all the way over by Ruby even about
7 people seeing a muskox.

8

9 I'm almost done. Thank you for being
10 patient.

11

12 This fall several projects that we were
13 involved in, we put caribou collars out on the Kobuk
14 River in September. We had a wonderful project, we did
15 both adults and calves this year. And the Noorvik kids
16 came. They were a great group of kids to have on that
17 project with us.

18

19 We're currently putting out muskox
20 collars in Unit 22, out in Nome this fall.

21

22 And then after we get some snow we'll
23 do fall moose comp surveys down in 22A and then B and
24 C.

25

26 So that's all the survey stuff.

27

28 If there's a moment, Mr. Chair, I guess
29 I would like to just spend a few minutes about talking
30 about one of the proposals.

31

32 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Go ahead.

33

34 MR. GORN: So local comments, and this
35 is related to I think it's 16-47.

36

37 CHAIRMAN SMITH: What page? What page
38 number?

39

40 MR. GORN: 75. I know you guys have a
41 lot of work ahead of you. You have to look at a lot of
42 wildlife proposals. This proposal, from my
43 perspective, is very concerning biologically. And I
44 guess I want to spend a few minutes and provide you
45 with some information for you to consider as you
46 deliberate on this proposal.

47

48 In a lot of ways I kind of wonder if
49 maybe I've been here too long now, because we've been
50 here before. We were here in 2001 with the same type

1 of situation. You know, in 2001 we were finding lower
2 moose numbers in 22E. Residents of Wales, residents of
3 Shishmaref had questions about what was going on with
4 their moose population. And through a lot of hard work
5 between Fish and Game and the Park Service and this
6 committee and the advisory committee on the State side,
7 and people that lived out there, we kind of figured out
8 that maybe more cow moose were dying than we thought.
9 We kind of realized that we needed to enhance some of
10 our surveys we were doing. And at the end of that
11 process, at the end of all that communication, we
12 realized we needed to tighten our belts a little bit.
13 And most notably, we needed to get rid of that
14 antlerless season.

15
16 So since that time, we've seen modest
17 increases in that area's moose population. Going to
18 2003 all the way to 2014, that was the last time we
19 were there, we completed four different surveys of
20 moose in 22E. And every year there's a little bit
21 more. And frankly, although between 2011 and 2014
22 those surveys showed a stable population, but if you
23 just look at the 2014 population estimate, it's the
24 most moose we've ever seen in 22E. So that's a good
25 piece of information.

26
27 Additionally, last year I flew the
28 first ever fall moose composition survey for 22E, and
29 the results from that survey were very good. 40 bulls
30 per 100 cows. That's just not too shabby. And all the
31 age classes on the male side were represented. So
32 we've got a pretty high population estimate for the
33 area, and we've got pretty good bull/cow ratios.

34
35 But the thing we can't forget is it's
36 still a very low moose density area. It is wickedly
37 low moose density. It's below a half moose per square
38 mile. And we know nothing up there about the moose
39 habitat.

40
41 So when you start to talk about moose
42 habitat and moose populations, you always hear
43 biologists use the phrase resource limitation. It's a
44 big fancy phrase for is there enough moose browse out
45 there to sustain the population, and how healthy are
46 the animals? How fat are the animals? And we just
47 don't have any knowledge right now of that part of the
48 moose population, of that system up in 22E.

49
50 Now, I mentioned where we were in 2002.

1 And when all of us together realized we had to get rid
2 of that antlerless moose season, and we had to just
3 protect the cows. Well, one thing, one very
4 significant thing has happened since 2002 for People
5 like me, for biologists. We had the benefit to learn a
6 lot about the power of antlerless moose hunts.
7 Biologists have been studying moose for decades in the
8 State of Alaska and around the world. But over the
9 last 15 years, we really have gained understanding of
10 the power of antlerless moose hunts. And basically we
11 have an understanding of the power of an antlerless
12 moose hunt when the harvest rate is above three
13 percent.

14
15 Locally we have even a better
16 understanding of that, because we used an antlerless
17 moose hunt in 22C, around the Nome area, to lower this
18 areas moose population, and it worked. It worked very
19 well. And it did not take long once we started killing
20 moose above four percent, it took two years, and we
21 lowered this areas moose population by a third.

22
23 That was under a very strict permit
24 system, and that was under a situation where we had
25 really good data, We had calf weights, we had four
26 years of calf weights that showed the health of the 10-
27 month old moose calves in the area, the short
28 yearlings. And we also had browse information. And
29 those pieces of information were telling us we needed
30 to lower the density in 22C.

31
32 We have none of that up in 22E. We
33 have zero information that would say we should go have
34 an antlerless moose hunt there. Now, that doesn't mean
35 that maybe we can't. What I'm saying is, we don't have
36 the information that tells us that we should.

37
38 And what I'm telling you is that in
39 this proposal, what you're suggesting is an unregulated
40 antlerless moose hunt during the springtime or
41 wintertime where snow-go access is going to be
42 available. And from a hunt manager and a biologist,
43 I'm looking at that thinking, we could blow through
44 three or four percent harvest on cows like that. And
45 without having information to say we really want to
46 lower that moose population up there, that's alarming
47 to me.

48
49 So you guys have a lot to think about,
50 but I just wanted to pass that much information on to

1 you.

2

3 MR. OXEREOK: May I ask a question?

4

5 Without having the data, what would you
6 suggest for an antlerless hunt? Would you like say
7 something like until two antlerless moose are taken in
8 that area? Is there anyway to restrict the antlerless
9 moose hunt that would make you comfortable without
10 having the data, to say until three, four, five
11 antlerless moose are taken?

12

13 MR. GORN: Well, that's a very good
14 question, Amos. So there's one other thing that I
15 forgot to mention. During this time period where Unit
16 22E has incrementally been increasing, the bread basket
17 of the Seward Peninsula muskox population, which is in
18 22D, has been declining. Now, we know from a collaring
19 study and observations from subsistence hunters and
20 Fish and Game Staff, guides that moose move between
21 Unit 22D remainder, between the Agiapuk and Unit 22E.
22 Moose go back and forth in here.

23

24 So another thing that I just feel
25 obligated to mention is that it's plausible that the
26 22E population hasn't even really increased through
27 time. It's just that there's just a redistribution of
28 the herd in 22D. And that's particularly significant
29 during low snow years, which we picked up in 2012 up
30 there. That was a super low snow year, and there were
31 just a lot of moose up around the continental divide.

32

33 I'm not naive enough to suggest that
34 there's no cow moose that die every year all over the
35 place, even in areas where there's not seasons.

36

37 So you asked what would I be happy
38 with? You know, if we could agree that it was really
39 an experiment, that we were testing the system, you
40 know, perhaps we could have a one percent antlerless
41 hunt. Now that's going to be probably like two permits
42 or maybe three permits up there. And if it's a Federal
43 hunt, I don't know who's going to administer that hunt.

44

45 With all my experience out here
46 managing hunts, I would -- I guess I don't have a full
47 understanding right now of why that would be so
48 important. There's a very long bull season in 22E.
49 There's a season that exists to allow hunters to use
50 snowmachines, cover a lot of ground. The only rub is,

1 is you've got to find an antlered bull, but we know --
2 I mean, you guys all know that there's antlered bulls
3 that exist even into the springtime.

4
5 So before I would really support any
6 kind of an antlerless hunt, I would just like a better
7 understanding of why the push is there to have it in
8 the first place, which right now I don't have.

9
10 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Like I said, I think
11 -- does anybody else have a question. Go ahead.

12
13 MR. SACCHEUS: Yeah. I've got a
14 question, like for the moose population you guys are
15 prepared to move moose like from Anchorage or some
16 place to Seward Peninsula if it decline? Just like you
17 waste all that money on muskox, so it would be nice if
18 you'd just transfer some moose from Anchorage or some
19 place where they've got a lot of moose instead of them
20 traffic killing the moose down there. It would be
21 nice.

22
23 And another thing is when we got a lot
24 of snow at our area, because we own 3,016 acres of
25 land, what we own, and it's all timber, and that's the
26 time them bears take advantage of it and they go out
27 there and kill both the mother and the calf, sometimes
28 two calves and the mother. I see that many times in
29 our area, because we've got a lot of timber, and the
30 bears take advantage of a lot of snow. And that's kind
31 of like I could say it, break my heart, you know, just
32 to see our moose going to waste. So a lot of times I
33 call. When there's a lot of snow in the Elim area and
34 our land, maybe I'll call Fish and Game, and why don't
35 you go out there and collar all those bears so they
36 won't kill our moose population. Not only the humans
37 get moose, the bears are real bad. And you people
38 don't see it, you just sit in your office in Nome and,
39 I don't know, look at the computer or something. But
40 that's what always happen in our area, the bears always
41 be the ones that make the moose decline.

42
43 And it would be nice if you waste all
44 your money on transferring muskox to Seward Peninsula.
45 Every time I read the Nome Nugget now I see, oh, them
46 muskox are killing our dogs in Nome, all tied up and
47 toward the airport or somewhere. I mean, it's not too
48 nice when you read that kind of stuff in Nome, that
49 muskox. Moose don't come too close to Nome and will
50 kill them dogs. So you've got to be kind of careful.

1 It would be nice if you transfer some -- where there's
2 a lot of moose, transfer them to Seward Peninsula.
3 That way everybody could be satisfied with moose
4 hunting.

5
6 Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Tom and then Amos.

9
10 MR. GRAY: Okay. My question is not so
11 much on these proposals, but I'm curious about what's a
12 life of a female moose, and what's the productive life
13 of having calves with that moose? Do we have any idea
14 of that?

15
16 MR. GORN: Yeah, we have. There's
17 actually a tremendous amount of information out there
18 related to this, so the question is how much of it can
19 I remember and repeat right now.

20
21 (Laughter)

22
23 MR. GORN: So a cow moose. First of
24 all the life span can be into 20s. Generally speaking,
25 as they get older, they become less productive. As I
26 sit here right now, I forget what the first age of
27 reproduction is. I want to say three or four.
28 Naturally they want to have twins ever three years.
29 That would be ideal, assuming that they're in an
30 environment that their body can get enough food and is
31 healthy enough to do that. And in the off years they
32 can -- you know, they'll produce singletons.

33
34 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Amos.

35
36 MR. OXEREOK: Yeah, back to this
37 proposal. I guess my reason for wanting this was a
38 little selfish, because the female meat is really
39 delicious. But if it's going to affect the population,
40 and we don't have that data, then I'm with you until we
41 could see that the population is not a migration one,
42 and it's really growing. I'd like to hear that coming
43 out of your mouth that we could sustain some type of
44 antlerless harvest, but thank you very much.

45
46 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Tony.

47
48 MR. GORN: I appreciate those comments,
49 Amos. And to some extent this was a little bit funny
50 for me to be doing this, because every year I

1 administered this antlerless hunt in 22C, I had a bunch
2 of people in front of me, Mr. Gray was one of them,
3 telling me I shouldn't do it. And here I am in front
4 of you, looking at you, saying don't do it. So I'm not
5 sure you can ever win with these antlerless moose
6 hunts. But I appreciate your comments.

7

8 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Joe, you're next.

9

10 I just want to jump in there. You
11 know, I think that you did exactly the right thing, and
12 it took a lot of courage to do that, because the public
13 in the general is opposed to hunting female ungulates,
14 you know. And it's just pretty much nationwide. And I
15 believe it was the right thing to do, and I think
16 history has shown that it was the right thing to do.
17 So I'm glad you did it.

18

19 Go ahead, Mr. Garnie.

20

21 MR. GARNIE: Yes, Mr. Chair. Mr. Gorn.

22

23 Of course, I hear a lot of questions in
24 Teller this year especially. It seems like, you know,
25 the season was exceptionally shot, and so we just only
26 took two moose out of our community, and all of a
27 sudden the moose is closing. Of course, this caused a
28 lot of uproar in the community and a lot of questions
29 arise. And one was, of course, about the moose hunting
30 operation that we saw in I guess it was in the American
31 River, over what we call the Gungpuk (ph) for a number
32 of years. And apparently they moved over to Kelly
33 Creek. I don't know exactly where Kelly Creek is.

34

35 But the question is there in my
36 community is how many moose a year are these guys
37 costing us, you know. And especially when we had such
38 a very poor season. So they're in an uproar over this,
39 and who is in charge and who allows this to happen when
40 we aren't having any moose? Who's allowing somebody to
41 capitalize on selling moose, you know, when there seems
42 to be a very shortage of moose. And the taking of the
43 nice big healthy bulls is just affecting the health of
44 our herd. There's getting to be a lot of concern, you
45 know, with our red meat source, you know, just
46 declining both for the reindeer herd being decimated,
47 and then this big assault on moose where we don't stand
48 a chance to hunt.

49

50 All these questions are arising.

1 Number 1 is this moose hunting operation.

2

3 MR. GORN: Well, Joe, I appreciate your
4 comments, and they're well understood. I've heard some
5 concern out of the community of Teller over the years,
6 but admittedly it hasn't been a lot.

7

8 I think first we need to understand if
9 truly there is a concern, and it sounds like indeed
10 there is. Beyond that now I think there's some
11 options. There's some things that we can do, certainly
12 on the State side of things. I can't speak for the
13 Federal side. But one of the things that comes to mind
14 is perhaps we could do something similar in 22D
15 southwest, the Teller country there, that we do in the
16 western part of 22B over by Golovin and White Mountain.

17

18

19 In 2001 the Nome road system went
20 primarily to these registration permit hunts, that's
21 when the season went from September 1st to 14. It's
22 when these harvest quotas, you know, showed themselves
23 for the first time. Over in White Mountain and Golovin
24 it just became quickly known and understood that they
25 wanted to preserve some of the available moose harvest
26 for a winter hunt. And so what we did there, and this
27 was through the northern Norton Sound Advisory
28 Committee, is we basically said, let's say we're going
29 to harvest -- for the whole hunt there, we're going to
30 use a four percent harvest rate. Well, what we said
31 is, well, maybe for the fall we'll use a three percent
32 harvest rate, and then we'll set up this winter hunt
33 with a one percent harvest rate, with the idea being
34 that in the -- with the winter hunt the permits would
35 be available in Golovin and White Mountain, and it
36 would give those guys an opportunity to harvest moose
37 using snow-goes. And it seemed -- that things been on
38 the book now for almost 15 years. So perhaps we can
39 investigate some type of idea like that. but I think
40 there's a solution out there somewhere for some of your
41 concern.

42

43 So on the State side, I guess the one
44 last thing I'll say, just so I don't sit here and bring
45 that up and walk away and we do nothing, we have a
46 Board of Game proposal deadline. I believe it's May
47 31st, but we should figure that out. But that would be
48 the deadline here. You know, we've got a little bit of
49 time to come up with an idea and run it through this
50 group, run it through the Northern Norton Sound

1 Advisory Committee, and take it to the Board of Game.

2

3 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I see that I neglected
4 to take a break this morning. I'd like to continue
5 this discussion, and I think everybody else would, too.
6 Could we take a quick break and come back.

7

8 MR. GRAY: Let's finish up with Tony.
9 Let's finish this up.

10

11 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. We can go
12 ahead.

13

14 MR. GRAY: I guess, Tony, I have a
15 question.

16

17 And, Joe, I sit on the advisory
18 committee for Fish and Game, and you guys have people
19 that sit on that committee. I will take the
20 opportunity to -- or your people should come in
21 requesting that the Fish and Game Advisory Committee
22 address just what you're talking about. That's a
23 proper place to start.

24

25 The question I have for Tony is, if you
26 look at the moose hunt, for a long time now it's been a
27 frenzy out there. The season opens and you've got four
28 or five days to hunt. And, you know, the season may be
29 open for two weeks, but a majority of these places,
30 they're are shut down in a week. Where is Fish and Game
31 on going to a Tier II system on moose? Is that being
32 talked about? Is that something -- and I guess looking
33 at it in the past, you know, I feel we've been in a
34 Tier II system. It just depends on how good you are.

35

36 MR. GORN: Well, Tom, again, you're
37 making some real good points. So the first thing I'll
38 just mention is I am very, very impressed with the
39 community of Nome. Going back three years now, we
40 lowered the harvest quota for book in 22C to nine
41 antlered bulls. Nine moose. I'm not very good at this
42 stuff, but there's got to be close to 3,000 living in
43 this town. There's a lot of people going after nine
44 moose. We did that because, again, I'm just really
45 uncomfortable with having bull/cow ratios down around
46 10, 11, 12, bulls per 100 cows. During those three
47 years I've been doing fall comp surveys and that
48 bull/cow ratio is slowly coming up. And it was up to
49 the low 20s last year. Ideally it would be great if we
50 could get that thing around 30, and we would see that

1 harvest quota of nine, you know, be increased.

2

3 Before I talk about the Tier II thing,
4 I say that we have flexibility. We just haven't gone
5 there yet to further apply some discretionary permit
6 authority on our registration hunts. And in the
7 section of code, and I believe it's 92.052, there's a
8 list of basically the options I have as an area
9 biologist to administer hunts on a permit system. And
10 right we're not really utilizing too many of those
11 things. I mean, 40 permits are available all year
12 around. They're available on line. It's a hunt that
13 gives a lot of opportunity to a lot of people. So
14 that's something that perhaps we could look at, but
15 before we make any changes, we have to really be able
16 to respond to why we're doing this.

17

18 As far as the Tier II stuff is
19 concerned, that is just a numbers game. Our ANS,
20 Amounts Necessary for Subsistence, for the Seward
21 Peninsula is 200 to 250 moose. And looking at, knowing
22 what we know about moose abundance in Unit 22 -- and
23 I've got to go back, because I think I just said the
24 Seward Peninsula, and I meant to say Unit 22. Our ANS
25 for Unit 22 is 200-250. And when we look at our
26 population estimates and apply conservative harvest
27 rates to what we think is out there, we can produce
28 that many moose. So we're not in Tier II. And that's
29 just how it is.

30

31 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Elmer and then Ted.

32

33 MR. SEETOT: You mentioned something
34 about moose in Unit 22E. I think there's small willow
35 cover, small brush cover for moose to slide over there.
36 And the climate is good, the weather is good for them
37 to survive, but how can animals survive without food,
38 and there's very little. From looking at the area, the
39 Niukluk River west or something like that, on the
40 western side.

41

42 The other thing is we had a lot of
43 fires during the past summer. The smell of smoke would
44 drive an animal somewhere. Does that really affect the
45 movement of moose and caribou and reindeer to other
46 places where there's no smoke?

47

48 There's also predators that move the
49 animals around a lot. I mentioned in one of these
50 meetings many years back when I was riding Kuzitrin,

1 the Agiapuk, the American River system, within a three-
2 month period, going around that same route, we counted
3 over 20 moose kills by wolves. So that's one of the
4 problems I was thinking with.

5
6 Moose placement is -- predators move
7 them around. You have to have good feed. And then
8 fire displacement.

9
10 We had a real bad fire towards Kuzitrin
11 River, or the Kuzitrin River Basin during the past
12 summer. It was very thick in Brevig. Two hunters that
13 I know that usually go around probably saw, they saw
14 caribou west of California. And that was after the big
15 fires. So they might have migrated from north of the
16 Seward Peninsula where they usually hang around Good
17 Hope Bay, and that area. They're talking about moose
18 or caribou being present there all the time. So I
19 think that they might have made a movement towards
20 smoke-free areas, but I'm not really too sure.

21
22 And then, man, you know, like us,
23 regulatory agencies, the wildlife biologists. Many,
24 there's anyone that's associated with regulating
25 wildlife, we try to play referee too much. When
26 there's a fire, we try to turn it off, because there's
27 buildings, people's buildings, people's personal
28 property. Wildlife I think and plant resources have
29 survived many, many generations since time immemorial I
30 would think. There have been floods, there have been
31 fires, pretty much two most destructive elements that
32 are pretty destructive nature-wise. One is that
33 saltwater covers everything and doesn't really let the
34 plants grow where they're supposed to grow. Fire
35 destroys some of the vegetation but they really don't
36 know what fire can do to other plant life. And then
37 I think that's one of the things that we kind of
38 overlook. We try to play referee too much. Let nature
39 take its course. That's how we have survived over the
40 years.

41
42 Moose are a new addition. I remember
43 growing up, Alaska became a state recently, and then
44 after that time I think we start hearing moose coming
45 to the Agiapuk River. So they're a new resource. And
46 then we're trying to micromanagement resources,
47 wildlife resource. Muskox, we try to micromanage too
48 much. And now we're trying to micromanage moose. Why?
49 Because people are demanding that regulatory agencies
50 do something. Let nature do its course and everything

1 will work out pretty much like the red salmon run.

2

3 I think we have been arguing over
4 subsistence versus commercial fishing in the Port
5 Clarence area. From what I remember from our elders,
6 that they did not want commercial fishing for the fish
7 there. Why? Subsistence I always think was their
8 number 1 priority. I don't really see any money
9 changing hands within the Port Clarence district
10 concerning fish compared to Norton Sound. Look at
11 where Norton Sound is right now. Money counts, but
12 there's also greed, there's everything. You start
13 arguing, okay, this is my resource. The subsistence
14 commercial fishermen say, no, that's mine. It's there
15 for the benefit of everyone, but somehow we forget to
16 manage it wisely for all people to use. And that's
17 what the State constitution says that, it should be
18 managed for all people, sometimes it's just managed too
19 closely.

20

21 And like I said, we have followed TEK
22 for a number of years. Pretty much what biologists do
23 to keep the numbers healthy, and resourceful for the
24 people that use them. And then I think we try to focus
25 too much on western science. Don't forget about the
26 Natives, too. We have TEK that have sustain us for
27 many years: Be not wasteful. Take what is needed.
28 Use the resource, it will be there for you. These are
29 some of the things that were passed on down to us, yet
30 we have been managed by western science management and
31 regulations for so long that we just kind of give in.
32 And then I think there's some us that really have said
33 these things over the years, that we're against ADF&G
34 and Federal management, but that's the world we live
35 in, and I think that we just need to look at all sides
36 instead of just trying to look at one side of the
37 other. And then that's how come we have these
38 meetings.

39

40 Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Ted.

43

44 MR. KATCHEAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45

46 Tony, Mr. Gorn, do you have an exchange
47 of ideas, do you share ideas with other agencies, like
48 Yukon Delta biology or Kuskokwim? Because we have --
49 all summer long and probably still today, we have three
50 moose in between Stebbins and St. Michael, that

1 distance between Stebbins and St. Michael. Since
2 they're on the same island, it's only like eight miles.

3

4 So it is kind of strange for the people
5 of Stebbins and St. Michael. They go down to Yukon
6 Delta to hunt just about every day, hunt moose. And
7 the question I wanted to raise is do you have any
8 exchange of ideas with those other biologists in Yukon
9 or Kuskokwim.

10

11 MR. GORN: Well, Teddy, I mean, I
12 guess, yeah, to some degree my communicates with the
13 office down in Unit 18, and the Federal office in
14 Bethel. I guess what's your specific question, like
15 what ideas.

16

17 MR. KATCHEAK: The question, since
18 earlier it was brought up that transporting muskox is
19 beginning a very popular things, and transporting moose
20 from the Yukon Delta would be seen like a feasible
21 idea, something that's doable. If you can transport
22 muskox from one area to another area, don't see too
23 much difference in transporting moose from one area to
24 another area, if that area is critical and have hardly
25 any moose left.

26

27 MR. GORN: Okay. Well, thank you for
28 that, and, yeah, I have a clearer understanding of
29 where you're going with that.

30

31 There is no doubt there are areas of
32 the Yukon Delta right now that their moose population
33 is just blowing up. It is escalating very quickly. It
34 is increasing rapidly. It's almost unbelievable, some
35 of the population metrics that you see, the high
36 numbers of moose they have down there in Unit 18.

37

38 You're idea is very interesting and
39 frankly I don't know about the mechanics of directly
40 moving moose a little bit further north. But I can say
41 that, you know, there are some things that we know
42 about moving moose into areas like the Seward
43 Peninsula, both from other places in the world and then
44 just from -- well, physically trying to move moose,
45 people moving moose into a new area, but then also
46 populations naturally moving by themselves. And in
47 those two different circumstances there's been one
48 thing identified between the two of them, and that is,
49 is that these movements are not successful into areas
50 with high number of predators. And beyond that, it's

1 generally understood in moose populations that as moose
2 populations grow and expand, the population will select
3 against, they will avoid areas with high numbers of
4 predators.

5
6 So I guess one consideration to think
7 about is that there still continues to be a thought for
8 at least some areas of Unit 22, that the primary factor
9 depressing the moose population or preventing it from
10 growing is brown bear predation on moose calves. So
11 you're idea is very interesting. I'm not just sure we
12 have enough information to suggest that it would work.

13
14 MR. KATCHEAK: It may not be certain,
15 but transporting animals, and I've done it for years
16 now. And if you do it to one animal and you're
17 successful in it, to transport animal to one place and
18 populate that area, then it seemed to me that idea is a
19 workable idea if you make it happen.

20
21 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'd like to expound at
22 length on this, but you know the time is pressing, and
23 so I'll try to keep it brief.

24
25 I think that Tier II on moose for some
26 of Unit 22 is something we need to seriously look at,
27 as much as I dislike Tier II. I think the problem that
28 I see is that there is such a disparity in wealth
29 amongst subsistence hunters. You know, we have local
30 subsistence hunters now that I see -- I've never seen a
31 moose season like this before, and I've been around a
32 long time. It used to be if you had to walk -- if you
33 had to put on your boots to go get a moose, you didn't
34 want it. You know, it had to be right on the edge of
35 the road or nobody wanted it. And they'd just drive
36 the road until you found one close enough. And now I
37 see people going out with \$100,000 of gear. I saw an
38 outfit going out the other day, and with it was like a
39 \$70,000 pickup, a big Catamask (ph) trailer, and two
40 side-by-sides on board.

41
42 Well, think about what it feels like
43 if you're living in Teller and you have nothing. You
44 don't even have a fourwheeler that works right, and you
45 have to compete with people like that. They're
46 subsistence hunters, too. Under State law, they're
47 subsistence hunters, too. It's just crushing to be in
48 that position, to know that, you know, you have to risk
49 what little resources you've got to go out there and
50 buy gas and equipment to go out, and you're just not

1 going to get a moose, because the boys with the good
2 equipment area ahead of you.

3
4 And so I wish there was a better way
5 than Tier II. Tier II is not a good system. And I
6 wish we would have amended the State constitution long
7 go to
8 amend the constitution long ago to allow more like what
9 we have with the Federal system, but that's probably
10 not going to happen. So I think we really need to
11 think very seriously about giving the poorest
12 subsistence users an edge. And I don't like Tier II,
13 but I think it's something we need to think about
14 doing.

15
16 Boy, it's just like -- there's more
17 than one way to interpret the data, too, on -- you
18 know, I think mass movements of moose or any ungulate
19 are unlikely. It just hasn't been established. People
20 believe that. People believe that moose were driven
21 onto the Seward Peninsula by fires from the Interior.
22 I think it's very unlikely. It's never been
23 demonstrated that that happens.

24
25 And it's with muskox in moving east, I
26 think it's probably unlikely, too. I think what's
27 happening is the animals in the western part where the
28 population's older, are just not productive. And that
29 the animals in new range, that are primary new range,
30 are much more productive. And so those groups in the
31 east are growing faster than the ones in the west. And
32 so I think that's more likely to explain them. But we
33 don't have -- you know, we don't have sufficient data
34 to say that.

35
36 I remember the days -- you know, I've
37 been around a long time. I remember the days when
38 particularly people on the north side, in 22E, didn't
39 really want to eat moose. And then they've -- then
40 they certainly didn't want eat muskox. But all that's
41 changed now. And the reason -- and the only thing that
42 was really decent to eat was reindeer. And not even
43 caribou weren't even preferred. And I think the reason
44 that's changed is that the alternative resources are
45 going away. The preferred resources are just not
46 available, and so people are working their way onto --
47 they're convincing themselves that they like things
48 that they didn't like in the past. That's a disturbing
49 trend.

50

1 And as you put more and more pressure
2 on moose and muskox, and I think the continued
3 productivity of the populations is in doubt. And so I
4 think we need to put the clamps on.

5
6 Back to muskox, and I mean, I hate to
7 be in the position to say I told you so, but I never
8 really thought that we could harvest muskoxen at these
9 rates, at the rates that we started out with. It
10 hasn't worked any place else, it didn't work here. It
11 was like Allen Greenspan talks about, a rationale
12 exuberance, you know, and I think we're paying the
13 price for it now. I think the muskox population, you
14 know, you can't really put a trend line on it right I
15 don't believe. It could be stable, maybe it's not.
16 But I don't think it's growing because of lack of
17 recruitment, you know, and I think all the signs are
18 bad in the future. And so I would like to see some
19 clamps put on hunting in general, and then try to shift
20 the opportunity more to people who can't afford all the
21 equipment.

22
23 And so I'm going to stop there. We've
24 got a lot to work on in the future.

25
26 If there's nothing more.

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 CHAIRMAN SMITH: We're done, Tony, and
31 I'd like to take a break.

32
33 MR. GORN: All right. Thanks a lot,
34 guys. Appreciate.

35
36 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Should we just break
37 for lunch now? When do you want to come back. I've
38 got 3:00 o'clock there. Could I get another bid.
39 Okay. 1:30. All right.

40
41 Thank you very much, Tony.

42
43 (Off record)

44
45 (On record)

46
47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Is everybody ready to
48 get started again. We're missing Ted. Okay. We'll
49 call the meeting to order. Karen wants to make a
50 couple of announcement.

1 MS. DEATHERAGE: Hello, everybody.
2 That worked. Can I have your attention in the room.
3 The Chair has opened the meeting. We're going to
4 continue on.

5
6 I just had a couple of announcements to
7 make. Back on the back table there's an art contest,
8 some paperwork, and we would really appreciate it if
9 you would take some of that information back to your
10 communities and try to get the kids engaged in artwork
11 that can be displayed on the Federal subsistence fish
12 and shellfish and wildlife regulation books. We had an
13 exceptional one that was very well done, as you can
14 see, for the fish one this year. It's just fantastic.

15
16 The second thing is there are
17 nomination packets back there for Council membership,
18 and again we'd like to encourage folks to take those
19 back to their communities for anybody who might be
20 interested in applying for membership on the Seward
21 Peninsula RAC.

22
23 For the -- there's also back on the
24 small table with the food, strategically placed, out
25 sign-in sheets, so if you haven't signed in already,
26 please to that.

27
28 We're going to be working with a unique
29 little phone system here to try to get folks to call in
30 and actually a presentation will be done by the phone.
31 So if we could keep the noise levels down when this is
32 going on and somebody's speaking on that phone, that
33 would be super. And when you talk, make sure that
34 you're close enough to the microphone so that it could
35 be heard by the audience members and the person on the
36 phone.

37
38 And last, but not least, we had a
39 request for some -- to allow for some introductions
40 from the audience and anybody else who might be on the
41 phone once the Chair decides to do that.

42
43 Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, we'll do that
46 right now. Is anyone on the phone that would like to
47 introduce themselves. Is anybody on the phone that
48 would like to introduce themselves.

49
50 Hello, Drew. Welcome to the meeting.

1 Is there anyone else who would like to
2 introduce themselves. Oh, very good.

3
4 And anyone in the audience that hasn't
5 introduced themselves who would like to now.

6
7 (No comments)

8
9 CHAIRMAN SMITH: All right. This
10 brings us to rural determination process update. And I
11 think Chris is going to do that.

12
13 MR. McKEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
14 name is Chris McKee. I'm the Wildlife Division
15 supervisor for OSM. This is not an action item for the
16 Council. This is simply just a quick update for all of
17 you on the rural determination process and where it
18 stands now.

19
20 As you may have known, that during its
21 work session held on the 20th of July of this year, the
22 Federal Subsistence Board took action on the rural
23 determination process. The Board divided the rural
24 determination process into three phases.

25
26 Phase 1 addressed the Board's
27 recommendation on the current Secretarial proposed
28 rule. And the Board voted to recommend to the
29 Secretaries to adopt the proposed rule as written.

30
31 The second phase was determining a
32 starting point for non-rural communities and area. And
33 the Board voted to publish direct final rule adopting
34 the pre-2007 non-rural determinations.

35
36 And the phase 3 was direction on future
37 non-rural determinations. The Board voted to direct
38 Staff to develop options to determine future non-rural
39 determination for the Board's consideration.

40
41 All three requests passed unanimously,
42 and OSM Staff is expected to have a draft of options
43 for the Board by the January 2016 meeting.

44
45 Currently the final rule on the rural
46 determination process and the final rule adopting the
47 pre-2007 rural determinations are on the Secretaries'
48 desks in Washington for their approval.

49
50 And then finally, as I mentioned

1 briefly, after the Board provides guidance in January
2 of 2016 on which option it decides to pursue for future
3 non-rural determinations, OSM Staff will draft either a
4 policy or a proposed rule, and present it to the
5 Councils for your input and recommendation to the
6 Board.

7

8 So that's a quick and simple process.
9 It doesn't -- I don't really have too much to add other
10 than that. I just wanted to give you a quick update on
11 that.

12

13 Mr. Chair.

14

15 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Chris. Any
16 questions, Council.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 MR. McKEE: Okay. Thanks.

21

22 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Now we have a Refugees'
23 proposed rule on hunting. And I guess that's going to
24 be on the phone.

25

26 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. We're
27 going to try to do this on the phone, but if it doesn't
28 work out, we would like to request an agenda change to
29 have this presentation tomorrow hopefully we can get
30 the phone system working through this building.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRMAN SMITH: No, we can't hear you
35 well at all.

36

37 REPORTER: Okay. So whoever that was,
38 can you talk again.

39

40 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Test, 1, 2, 3, 4.

41

42 MR. DAMBERG: Okay. This is Doug
43 Damberg in Anchorage. And it's extremely hard to hear
44 you. I just wondered if you had called on the proposed
45 rule on hunting presentation.

46

47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yes, we did. And we
48 can hear you fine now. I hope you can hear us. You
49 can hear us okay?

50

1 REPORTER: So it's kind of a tag team
2 thing.
3
4 MR. DAMBERG: I'm sorry, I can't hear
5 you guys very well at all.
6
7 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Can you hear me now?
8 Is this okay?
9
10 MR. DAMBERG: That's an echo, but I can
11 hear you. My question was if it was time for our
12 presentation on the Refuge proposed rule on hunting.
13
14 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yes, we did call for
15 that. And maybe the way to do this is to keep that
16 microphone off while we're talking, and then turn it on
17 when he's talking. We can probably do it.
18
19 REPORTER: We can try.
20
21 MS. DEATHERAGE: So if you can just say
22 next slide, I will move it. And imagine that the very
23 first slide we have in front of the Board is your very
24 first -- the introduction and the title page of your
25 PowerPoint. So when you're ready to move on, you will
26 just say forward or next slide.
27
28 Is that agreeable?
29
30 MR. DAMBERG: Yes. That works for me.
31 I just want to check. Can you hear us okay?
32
33 REPORTER: We can hear you, go ahead
34 and begin.
35
36 MR. DAMBERG: Okay. So I'm going to
37 get going. Mr. Chair and Council. My name is Doug
38 Damberg. I'm the Refuge Supervisor of Northern Alaska
39 National Wildlife Refuges. I moved into that position
40 from a manager position in Alaska. Also on the line is
41 (indiscernible) who's the chief of our Regional Science
42 Division.
43
44 So we're stepping in to give the
45 presentation for the other folks who couldn't be
46 present. We apologize for not being there in person.
47
48 Many of you may have heard an earlier
49 version of the presentation. We want to present the
50 PowerPoint and ask for any questions and comments you

1 may have.

2

3 I believe in your package should be a
4 summary of the proposed rule. Any questions please
5 just let me know and then I will stop for them.

6

7 So to start my presentation.

8

9 So the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
10 is in the process of updating the regulations governing
11 non-subsistence hunting and trapping of wildlife on
12 Alaska National Wildlife Refuges. The U.S. Fish and
13 Wildlife Service is mandated to conserve fish and
14 wildlife populations and habitats in their natural
15 diversity and to maintain biological integrity,
16 diversity, and environmental health on Refuges in
17 Alaska.

18

19 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is
20 also required to conserve species and habitats on
21 refuges for the long term, benefitting not only the
22 present but also future generations of Americans. In
23 Alaska, this includes ensuring the opportunity for
24 continued subsistence uses of fish, wildlife and
25 plants.

26

27 ANILCA requires that Federal agencies
28 (indiscernible - microphone off).....

29

30 (Off record)

31

32 (On record)

33

34 REPORTER: Okay. Go ahead.

35

36 MR. DAMBERG: Okay. I'll start at the
37 beginning. I hadn't gotten too far, so just to keep it
38 smooth, I'll start at the beginning of the
39 presentation. And again my name is Doug Damberg, and
40 I'm calling from Anchorage.

41

42 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is
43 in the process of updating the regulations governing
44 National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska consistent with our
45 general mandate for managing these refuges. We are
46 mandated to conserve fish and wildlife populations and
47 habitat in their natural diversity and to maintain
48 biological integrity, diversity and environmental
49 health on Refuges.

50

1 Next slide. We're required to conserve
2 species and habitat on Refuges for the long term, not
3 just for the present, but also future generations of
4 Americans. In Alaska this includes ensuring the
5 opportunity for continued subsistence use of fish,
6 wildlife and plants.

7
8 ANILCA requires that Federal agencies
9 manage wildlife consistent with the conservation of
10 healthy populations of fish and wildlife. The
11 Legislative history defines that phrase to maintain the
12 fish and wildlife resources in their habitat in a
13 condition which ensures stable and continuing natural
14 populations and species mix of plants and animals.

15
16 We strongly support the sustainable
17 harvest of fish and wildlife and manage these
18 activities to ensure consistency with refuge
19 establishment purposes, including managing species
20 populations and habitats in their natural diversity on
21 refuges in Alaska.

22
23 We have been talking with folks in
24 local communities across the state through tribal
25 consultation conferences and various other meetings,
26 such as these RAC meetings, about these proposed
27 regulatory changes for about the last year. We've
28 heard a lot of helpful feedback so far. We're also
29 consulting with the State of Alaska on this matter.

30
31 Next slide.

32
33 The top of this slide should be what
34 are the proposed changes.

35
36 MS. DEATHERAGE: Yep.

37
38 REPORTER: Yes.

39
40 MR. DAMBERG: So the proposed Refuge
41 regulations we are considering can be broken into three
42 main components with the first component pertaining to
43 clarification of our existing mandates under ANILCA and
44 the Refuge Improvement Act in relation to predator
45 management. This part is in current Federal
46 regulations governing non-subsistence hunting and
47 trapping of wildlife on Alaska National Wildlife
48 Refuges under Chapter 50 and 36 of the Code of Federal
49 Regulation.

50

1 In short, predator control would not be
2 allowed on refuges in Alaska unless it is determined to
3 be necessary to meet refuge purposes, Federal laws or
4 policy, and is consistent with our mandate to manage
5 for natural and biological diversity, biological
6 integrity, and environmental health. The need for
7 predator control must be based on sound science in
8 response to a significant conservation concern.
9 Demands for more wildlife to harvest cannot be the sole
10 or primary basis for predator control on refuges in
11 Alaska.

12

13 Next slide.

14

15 The top of the slide should read, what
16 are the proposed changes, Part 2.

17

18 The techniques that go under the
19 proposed rule, for means, is the prohibition of
20 particularly effective methods and means for the non-
21 subsistence take of predators on refuges in Alaska due
22 to the potential for cumulative effects, the predator
23 population, and the environment that are inconsistent
24 with our mandate to conserve natural and biological
25 diversity, biological integrity, and environmental
26 health on refuges in Alaska. Specifically, the
27 following methods and means for predator harvest would
28 be prohibited on refuges in Alaska.

29

30 And just to note, that this does not
31 represent a change from current allowable methods in
32 your area.

33

34 So specifically these are the methods
35 and means for predator harvest that will be prohibited
36 on refuges across Alaska.

37

38 First, the take of brown bears over
39 bait. Second, the take of bears using
40 traps or snares.

41

42 Next is take of wolf and coyote during
43 the spring and summer denning season.
44 Next is take of bears from an aircraft
45 on the same day as air travel has
46 occurred.

47

48 And finally, take of bear cubs or sows
49 with cubs.

50

1 Originally we were considering a much
2 longer listing of potential prohibited predator harvest
3 methods and means for inclusion in the proposed
4 regulations, but the very concerns that were brought up
5 during the scoping process, we reduced the proposed
6 prohibited methods and means that are considered from
7 15 to 5.

8
9 Also in response to feedback
10 received, we decided to not propose language which would
11 close the Alaska refuges to the collection of natural
12 resources such as roots, berries, mushrooms, or other
13 things by recreational users as part of what we are
14 considering for inclusion under these regulatory
15 changes. These practices are currently open to
16 subsistence users, and this would not change.

17
18 Next slide.

19
20 The top of this slide should read what
21 are the proposed changes, part 3.

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

36
37 We are proposing these changes to be
38 consistent with other Federal regulations and to more
39 effectively engage the public. Under the elements for
40 consideration under this part are to: Include
41 conservation of natural/biological diversity,
42 biological integrity, and environmental health to the
43 list of closure criteria. Increase the possible
44 duration of an emergency closure from 30 to 60 days.
45 This is consistent with the time frame for emergency
46 Federal action under Federal subsistence regulations.
47 Update the temporary closure duration for only as long
48 as is reasonably necessary under the different
49 circumstances, and require a mandatory a mandatory
50 review at a minimum of every three years. We would

1 publish an annual list of refuge closures, including
2 contact information for Fish and Wildlife Service lead
3 personnel for public review and input. Temporary and
4 permanent closures would require consultation with the
5 State and affected tribes and Native corporations.
6

7

8 So we would retain the requirement to
9 have this public hearing in the area affected prior to
10 implementation of a temporary or permanent closure.
11

12 And finally, we're proposing to expand
13 the methods for public notice by adding the use of
14 internet or other available methods, in addition to
15 continuing to use the more traditional methods of
16 notification including newspapers, signs and radio.
17

18

19 Next slide. Why is the Fish and
20 Wildlife Service proposing these changes.
21

22

23 Hunting is a priority public use on
24 National Wildlife Refuges under existing law and agency
25 policy. Again we have and will continue to strongly
26 support hunting and the sustainable harvest of fish and
27 wildlife on National Wildlife Refuges, including
28 harvest of predators under State of Alaska hunting and
29 trapping regulations, including harvest limits, would
30 continue to be adopted and apply on refuges in Alaska.
31

32

33 I'm getting some feedback and echoing,
34 can you still hear me okay?
35

36

37 MS. DEATHERAGE: We can hear you, but
38 we're trying to switch the phones over from the cell to
39 the phone system here, and.....
40

41

42 MR. DAMBERG: Should we stop or should
43 I keep going?
44

45

46 MS. DEATHERAGE: I think we're going to
47 go back to the cell. Keep going.
48

49

50 REPORTER: We are. Go ahead.
51

52

53 MR. DAMBERG: Okay. Thank you. So
54 I'll start this slide again.
55

56

57 Hunting is a priority public use on

1 National Wildlife Refuges under existing law and agency
2 policy. Again we have and will continue to strongly
3 support hunting and the sustainable harvest of fish and
4 wildlife on National Wildlife Refuges, including
5 harvest of predators under State of Alaska hunting and
6 trapping regulations, including harvest limits, would
7 continue to be adopted and apply on refuges in Alaska.
8

9 The Fish and Wildlife Service must
10 administer hunting on refuges in a matter that's
11 compatible with refuges statutory purposes and
12 consistent with all other legal mandates.
13

14 The proposed regulations are aimed at
15 ensuring that the overarching establishment purpose for
16 refuges in Alaska as defined under ANILCA of conserving
17 all fish, wildlife and habitats in their natural
18 diversity is met. According to the Refuge System
19 Improvement Act, all National Wildlife Refuges,
20 including those in Alaska, must also be managed so as
21 to maintain biological integrity, diversity and
22 environmental health.
23

24 In the recent past, the Alaska Board of
25 Game has adopted hunting and trapping regulations and
26 intensive management for predator control areas in
27 various parts of the state which allow particular
28 practices for the harvest of predators, such as the
29 take of wolves and coyotes during the spring and summer
30 denning season, take of brown bears over bait, trapping
31 and snaring of bears and same day airborne take of
32 bears and wolves.
33

34 The Fish and Wildlife Service believes
35 that these recently adopted or considered methods and
36 means for take of predators conflict with our legal
37 mandates because they are intended or have the
38 potential to depress and manage predator populations on
39 Alaska refuges at levels inconsistent with conserving
40 all fish and wildlife in their natural diversity and,
41 again, maintaining biological integrity, diversity and
42 environmental health on these refuges.
43

44 The Fish and Wildlife Service is
45 required to the extent practicable to be consistent
46 with State regulations governing the take of fish and
47 wildlife on Alaska refuges and it is, in fact, our
48 preference to do so whenever we can.
49
50

1 That said, while we fully respect the
2 State's role and responsibilities for managing wildlife
3 in Alaska, we also recognize that differences do exist
4 between the State's mandates and Federal laws governing
5 administration of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges and
6 that these differences sometimes require a different
7 regulatory approach.

8
9 In addition, we aim to more effectively
10 engage the public by updating our public participation
11 and closure procedures to broaden notification and
12 outreach methods, ensure consultation with tribes and
13 the State, provide for increased transparency in our
14 decision-making and to allow for additional
15 opportunities for the public to provide input.

16
17 Next slide.

18
19 This should read who do these proposed
20 regulations apply to.

21
22
23 The changes that we are considering
24 under the proposed regulations would apply only to
25 State-regulated intensive management activities in
26 general or sport hunting and trapping, which is open to
27 all Alaska residents as well as people from the Lower
28 48 on Alaska National Wildlife Refuges.

29
30 These proposed regulations would not
31 apply to Federally qualified subsistence users hunting
32 or trapping under Federal subsistence regulations.

33
34
35 Next slide.

36
37 And this reads where would these
38 regulations apply.

39
40 These proposed regulations would apply
41 only on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska. They do
42 not apply to other Federal, State, private, Native
43 lands or waters even those within Refuge boundaries.

44
45 Next slide.

46
47 And this should read timeline for
48 proposed rule process.

49
50 The timeline for the proposed rule

1 extended a little bit. The rule will not publish in
2 mid-October as noted on the slide you're looking at.
3 The proposed rule is still in review at the Department
4 of Interior. And at this time we're anticipating
5 publishing the rule in early to mid-November. We will
6 still have a 90-day public comment period, and we will
7 inform the public when we will have publication.

8
9 We anticipate reviewing and responding
10 to public comment and finalizing the rule somewhere
11 between February and April of 2016. And we hope to
12 publish the final in April or May of 2016.

13
14 Thank you for the opportunity to talk
15 and give a brief update today. If you have any
16 questions or feedback, we welcome that at this time.

17
18 CHAIRMAN SMITH: All right. Council
19 members, so you have any questions. Comments.

20
21 Joe.

22
23 MR. GARNIE: Mr. Chair. If we could
24 get a copy of this rules. I can't read them very well
25 from where I was sitting. Some of the things that were
26 mentioned, I didn't hear them too well, because of the
27 interference with the sound. So if we could get a hard
28 copy of that presentation, it would help.

29
30 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. There's a
31 hard copy of that presentation in your blue folder of
32 your supplemental materials. There should be. I know
33 there's a -- if you keep going further back, there
34 should be a PowerPoint. That one right there. There's
35 two slides per page. Exactly.

36
37 MR. GARNIE: Thank you.

38
39 MS. DEATHERAGE: You're welcome.

40
41 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I would like to
42 comment. You know, at the last meeting we had, we had
43 presentations on intensive management. When I was a
44 beginning graduate student in 1972, Governor Jay
45 Hammond stopped aerial wolf hunting in Alaska, and I
46 thought it was the greatest thing in the world. But
47 since then I've seen the science that tells us that if
48 you don't do predator control in Alaska, you end up
49 with a climax situation of very low prey numbers and
50 very low predator numbers. So I'm convinced, you know,

1 by intensive management studies and other studies in
2 Alaska that predator control is necessary to maintain
3 healthy biological resources. And I think this is the
4 wrong direction myself. We've done everything other
5 than predator control on the Seward Peninsula and our
6 species continue to decline, and I don't see any hope
7 of recovery without something different. That's not to
8 say that predator control is the answer, but we need to
9 determine what the answer is, and that would be one
10 thing, one factor to eliminate it.

11
12 I think I am safe to say that the
13 majority of residents of Western Alaska believe that
14 predators are the issue with moose, caribou, sheep,
15 muskox population. We should put that to rest. If
16 it's not, let's do the study, and then we'll look for
17 something else if that's not it.

18
19 But I think eliminating this tool is a
20 mistake. What else are we going to do? We can't do
21 much with habitat. There's very little you can do with
22 habitat. All we'll do is just continue to monitor the
23 situation like we've been doing for the last 30 years.
24 All we do is count and determine that our subsistence
25 are declining.

26
27 And so I'm against these proposed
28 regulations. I think it's based much more on ethics,
29 hunting ethics, than on science. And there's this
30 constant problem with people from the greater society
31 imposing their cultural values on people in the Bush.
32 And I think this is another example of that.

33
34 MR. OXEREOK: Yes, I agree with Tim on
35 this. Yes.

36
37 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Go ahead, Doug.

38
39 MR. DAMBERG: I'm sorry to interrupt
40 you. Thanks for your comments. I just wanted to note,
41 too, that predator hunting under recreational and
42 subsistence laws would still be permitted. It
43 restricts nothing but means on the intensive management
44 (indiscernible), but it doesn't completely outlaw the
45 predator hunting and trapping that can go on on
46 Refuges. And there are circumstances where potentially
47 some predator management could happen as well, so it
48 doesn't take it off the table as a potential tool.

49
50 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Amos.

1 MR. OXEREOK: Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank
2 you. I'm in total agreement with Tim, that we
3 definitely have a predator problem, and we have a lack
4 of predator control. Traditionally, you know, our
5 people have been here for thousands of years, and we
6 had predator control right up and until I would say
7 very -- until I was probably about at least, oh, in my
8 teenage years, that this ended to some degree. I
9 myself witnessed a lot of predator control just within
10 my village, and by our local people. And, of course,
11 this has become all illegal. And now we have
12 apparently a new way of trying to get predator control,
13 and I would love to see predator control back.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Joe.

18
19 MR. GARNIE: Yeah, I think that Joe
20 expresses the wishes of the vast majority of people in
21 Western Alaska and other parts of Alaska.

22
23 The data shows that recreational
24 hunting won't do the job. You know, whenever it's been
25 tried, we tried it here. We can't increase the bear
26 harvest with recreational hunting. The seasons are
27 pretty liberal now, and it hasn't changed any. There's
28 just only so much you can do. And what we're doing
29 doesn't seem to be doing the job.

30
31 So I don't think that this is very
32 satisfactory, that I think that if we continue -- if
33 these regulations pass, that we will continue to have
34 really depleted prey populations.

35
36 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do you want a motion
37 from us today? Do you want us to take a position on
38 this today.

39
40 MR. DAMBERG: Is that a question to me?

41
42 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yes, it is. Yes, that
43 was to you, Doug.

44
45 MR. DAMBERG: Okay. Thank you. I'm
46 sorry.

47
48 I appreciate everybody's comments.
49 Thanks for your thoughts. And again we're taking all
50 those comments (indiscernible). I'm sorry, I'm getting

1 a lot of feedback. It's up to you guys as a Council if
2 you want to act on it or not. From our end it's not
3 required. If you need time to think about it and put
4 comments forward during the public comment period,
5 that's fine. But if you wanted to put in comments on
6 specific components of it that work or don't work as a
7 whole motion, that's entirely your call as a Council.

8

9 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I would entertain a
10 motion then on this issue and I think we should try to
11 develop a basis for whatever way we vote on this in the
12 record. So somebody want to make a motion on this
13 proposal.

14

15 MR. GARNIE: Yeah, I'll -- excuse me,
16 Mr. Chair. Yes, I will definitely make a motion to re-
17 introduce predator control in our region here.

18

19 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Can we have a second.

20

21 MR. KATCHEAK: Second.

22

23 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Motion's made by Joe,
24 seconded by Ted.

25

26 Is there any discussion. I think we
27 should develop a record on why we're taking this stand.
28 We should have a complete record on why we're doing
29 this.

30

31 Well, I'll start out. I think that,
32 you know, predator control is not a politically correct
33 term. Intensive management is a better term to use.

34

35 But I think intensive management seems
36 to work very well in lots of areas where it's been
37 tried. And not doing anything hasn't worked well here.
38 We can say that for sure. Not doing any kind of
39 predator/prey management here hasn't produced the
40 results we want.

41

42 Things were a lot better. There was
43 Federal predator control programs on the Seward
44 Peninsula, pretty intensive up until statehood,
45 primarily to protect the reindeer industry. And
46 everybody that was around at that time, I've talked to
47 all the people that were living at the time, and they
48 said things were much, much better prior. Joe was
49 there personally.

50

1 MR. GARNIE: Yes, Mr. Chair.

2

3 Yes, while we were just listening to
4 Mr. Seetot who does a lot of travel has himself
5 witnessed approximately 30 moose kills, you know, last
6 year. And how many a year we don't see. This is
7 alarming. I mean, that's a lot of meat that could have
8 been on a lot of tables. And that's just one species
9 there. We witness a lot of kills on muskox. The
10 reindeer take a big beating. The moose. I mean just
11 predators on ptarmigan alone. I mean, just all prey
12 species are just -- it's basically -- hunting is
13 getting pretty grim. We're not seeing very much game
14 on the land. And I think that's a good enough reason
15 to have predator control.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah. One of the
20 areas that would be affected by this is the Yukon Delta
21 Refuge and the Innoko Refuge. The Yukon Delta Refuge
22 has got a good thing going now with moose. And will
23 predict that we'll see the same thing happen there that
24 we saw here on the Seward Peninsula. We had a rapidly
25 growing moose population, extremely productive moose
26 population, and then something happened. It was
27 certainly not a single factor, but it was a combination
28 of factors.

29

30 And now I think we're in what they call
31 a predator pit, where there's enough predators to keep
32 the prey populations low, and then the predator
33 population's declined, too. Tom thinks he's seeing
34 evidence of lower bear numbers now. And I'm not
35 surprised, because there's nothing out there to eat
36 right now. There's just nothing to eat. The berries
37 are gone. Vegetation is not good. There's no more
38 fish in the rivers. And so what are they going to eat.
39 They have to eat before going into the den. They're
40 going to get the last of the moose and reindeer and
41 caribou, just because they have to.

42

43 Elmer, do you want to add to this? Mr.
44 Seetot.

45

46 MR. SEETOT: No, nothing from me.

47

48 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Anybody else.

49 Amos.

50

1 (No comments)
2
3 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, I guess we'll
4 leave it at that. But I don't think this is the right
5 direction.
6
7 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. This is
8 Karen Deatherage. We do I think have a motion on the
9 floor. It has not been seconded.
10
11 SEVERAL: It has been seconded.
12
13 MS. DEATHERAGE: It was seconded?
14 Okay. All right.
15
16 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you very much
17 for reminding me. I forgot about that.
18
19 So the call for the question then. All
20 in favor say aye.
21
22 IN UNISON: Aye.
23
24 CHAIRMAN SMITH: All opposed same sign.
25
26 (No opposing votes)
27
28 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Motion passes
29 unanimously.
30
31 Thank you for the presentation. Is
32 there anything else on this issue.
33
34 MR. MCKEE: I don't believe so, Mr.
35 Chair.
36
37 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Thank you,
38 Doug.
39
40 MR. DAMBERG: Thank you very much for
41 your comments. If you have additional comments,
42 (indiscernible) be able provide those.
43
44 Thank you.
45
46 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you. Thanks,
47 Doug. Bye-bye.
48
49 That brings us to new business.
50 Wildlife proposals. And OSM will be giving the

1 presentation. And we're saving whichever ones for
2 tomorrow.

3

4 MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
5 members of the council. My name is Suzanne Worker.
6 I'm a wildlife biologist with the Office of Subsistence
7 Management, and I'll be presenting the wildlife
8 proposals today.

9

10 I would like to start with WP16-44,
11 which is regarding brown bears in Unit 22.

12

13 This proposal was submitted by this
14 Council. And the proposal was to liberalize bear
15 harvest regulations in Unit 22, specifically in Unit
16 22C, extend the season from the current August 1 to
17 October 31st, and May 10th to May 25th, to a single
18 season of August 1st to May 25th.

19

20 The second part of this is in Unit 22D,
21 to create a new hunt area in the southwest portion of
22 22D, and increase the harvest limit from one bear to
23 two bears with a year around season. Currently the
24 season in that area is August 1st to May 31st.

25

26 There haven't been too many regulatory
27 changes for bears in Unit 22 in the last 15 years, but
28 all of them have liberalized harvest.

29

30 As we discussed earlier, there's no
31 recent population estimate for brown bears, although
32 the latest reports from Fish and Game are that the
33 population is believed to be productive. It will be
34 interesting to see what the new report says in a few
35 months.

36

37 The State's management goal is to
38 sustain a three-year mean average of at least 50
39 percent males, and that has been exceeded.

40

41 Since 1997, harvest has increased in
42 both Unit 22C and 22D. For the past 15 years or so,
43 the average harvest has been 16 bears in 22C, 17 bears
44 in 22D, and about 40 percent of those were harvested by
45 locals. However, in Unit 22D southwest, which is the
46 new proposed hunt area, only one bear per year has been
47 reported harvested.

48

49 So the proposed regulation changes in
50 22C don't represent a real increase in subsistence

1 opportunities simply because there's so little Federal
2 land. It's like one square mile or something, and it's
3 barrier islands around Safety Sound.

4
5 And also the season extension coincides
6 largely with denning.

7
8 In Unit 22, the proposed changes do
9 represent some additional opportunity. Just given the
10 very low harvest rates in that area, an additional
11 harvest is probably not likely to have an appreciable
12 effect on the bear population.

13
14 And so as a result, the preliminary
15 conclusion from OSM is to support WP16-44 with
16 modification, to only support the regulation changes in
17 Unit 22D. The modification would also stipulate that a
18 Federal registration permit would be required for the
19 Unit 22D southwest hunt since currently brown bear
20 harvest is allowed by State registration permit, but
21 the State limit would be one bear.

22
23 That's all I have, but I'm happy to
24 answer questions if you have any.

25
26 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Suzanne, what does the
27 split season mean? In the OSM preliminary conclusion
28 it says, retain the split season in 22C.

29
30 MS. WORKER: So currently in 22C
31 there's two seasons. There's a fall season and a
32 spring season.

33
34 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do we have a motion.
35 And I think we're supposed to follow the protocol that
36 we make the motion in the positive, so the motion would
37 be to support this proposal, and then if we get a
38 second, we can discuss it, and then vote it down if we
39 want. But we're supposed to always make the motion in
40 the positive. So could we get a motion on supporting
41 this proposal so we can have some discussion for the
42 record. We can amend it, but we need a motion to get
43 started. In order to get started, and you can amend it
44 in the motion, too, if you want to.

45
46 MR. OXEREOK: I'd like to make a
47 motion to support Wildlife Proposal 16-44 with changes
48 to the Unit 22 brown bear regulations.

49
50 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do we have a second.

1 MR. GARNIE: I'll second.

2

3 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Motion by Amos.
4 Seconded by Joe. And now would you like to discuss
5 your motion, Amos.

6

7 MR. OXEREOK: I would be in favor of
8 making the modifications, but I know you are interested
9 in opening up that area more, but it looks like it's
10 just going to be like a one-square mile area.

11

12 CHAIRMAN SMITH: The entire unit would
13 be open, but it would only apply to the Federal lands
14 within the unit. But I don't think that's
15 insignificant either, because this summer especially,
16 and for the past few summers people that have cabins in
17 the Safety area are having a lot of problems with
18 bears, in the Cape Nome area. And so even though it's
19 a small area, it might really be helpful for some of
20 the people that are down there. So I don't think it's
21 insignificant.

22

23 The primary purpose of this is to get
24 the ball rolling. We need to -- most people here
25 probably believe we need to harvest more bears, and
26 maybe this won't do it. You know, it may not do it,
27 but it might. And so it does create more opportunity
28 for somebody who wants to take two bears in one year,
29 and there are some people that want to do that, so I
30 think it's a worthwhile proposal.

31

32 MR. KATCHEAK: Mr. Chair. A question.
33 Does this mean one bear per person or one bear per
34 household, or what is that?

35

36 MS. WORKER: The limit is one bear per
37 person.

38

39 MR. KATCHEAK: Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRMAN SMITH: That's the current
42 limit, correct?

43

44 MS. WORKER: That's the current limit.

45

46 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Under this proposal it
47 would go to two bears, wouldn't it?

48

49 MS. WORKER: In Unit 22D under this
50 proposal, it would go to two bears per person.

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Joe.

2

3 MR. GARNIE: Mr. Chair. I think it's a
4 good proposal to go to two bears per person. Presently
5 I think we're basically overrun by them.

6

7 Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRMAN SMITH: And also having the
10 season extended would make it a lot easier for people.
11 You know, I had a bear running towards me this fall
12 when we were berry picking, and I didn't know if the
13 season was open. I should, but I didn't, and so I
14 didn't do anything. And I found out it was open in
15 22C, but having the season open year around would make
16 it a lot easier. I mean, that's one of the biggest
17 issues in the Bush is people just don't know what the
18 rules are, including me. It's just really hard to keep
19 up.

20

21 MR. OXEREOK: Mr. Chair. One of the
22 people I talked to here in Nome wanted a longer season,
23 because he likes to get them as soon as they come out
24 of the den. And that's like the best time he says to
25 get them. So I'm in favor of a longer season.

26

27 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah. Yeah, the other
28 issue is access, you know, in the spring. That's been
29 a really big problem with changing weather. You know,
30 when the season opens in 22C, you can't get around any
31 more. You know, getting through the willows is just
32 hellaciously hard, and so that's the reason that the --
33 that's one of the reasons that the harvest is low in
34 22C. And, you know, the numbers that we've had, you
35 know, the numbers that you talked about, 22C and 22D
36 southwest, are so low that I don't see how they could
37 affect a reduction in bear numbers. The harvest is
38 just too low, and mostly males.

39

40 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. I'd like
41 to make a couple comments. The first one is that on
42 the back of your name plates you have the process for
43 presentation procedures for proposals. One thing
44 that's on there is to make sure that we ask if there's
45 any public testimony or any agencies that would like to
46 speak to it.

47

48 The second thing that I'd like to
49 remind the Council about this particular is that it was
50 amended by the OSM, and so if you are going to pass a

1 motion, you would pass the motion as modified by OSM.

2

3 Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, I would
6 entertain a motion to amend the proposal back to what
7 we had if anybody's interested in doing that.

8

9 MR. KATCHEAK: Move, Mr. Chair.

10

11 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Moved by Ted. Do we
12 have a second.

13

14 MR. GARNIE: Second.

15

16 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Seconded by Joe.

17 Discussion.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, I think -- as I
22 guess I was a little bit out of order in discussing
23 this before the motion was on the table, but again
24 having a season August 1 to July 31st takes a lot of
25 the burden off of the users. They don't have to be --
26 you know, have their regulatory book in their rear
27 pocket. They'll know that the season is open when they
28 get the opportunity. And so I don't think that --
29 there is a conservation concern, if it's a concern, is
30 conserving bears. And I think that it's probably --
31 it's substantially supported by biological and
32 traditional ecological -- it is fully supported by
33 traditional ecological knowledge. I mean, I think
34 that's universal here. I've never heard anybody way
35 that we don't have enough bears here. I've never heard
36 anybody say that. And so at least traditional
37 ecological knowledge supports it. Or the biological
38 evidence is that we have no recruitment, in general
39 that does suggest predation. You know, we don't have
40 solid evidence. We haven't done a successful mortality
41 study, although I've participated in a fawn mortality
42 study on the David herd with Cheryl Hitcavits, and that
43 study concluded that bear predation was the issue for
44 fawn mortality. For reindeer fawn mortality, that was
45 the primary issue.

46

47 So the proposal is supported by some
48 substantial biological evidence.

49

50 The recommendation that the Council's

1 making will be beneficial to subsistence needs and
2 users. Whether they're right or wrong, subsistence
3 users on the Seward Peninsula believe that reducing
4 bear numbers is a good thing.

5
6 And will the recommendation
7 unnecessarily restrict other uses. Not unnecessarily.
8 It may restrict trophy hunting, having a higher bear
9 harvest will probably reduce the opportunities for
10 hunters to kill large trophy males. But the trade-off
11 I think is fair, that it will benefit subsistence
12 users.

13
14 Is there any more discussion from the
15 Council.

16
17 (No comments)

18
19 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, thank you for
20 reminding me of that, Karen. That's one thing that
21 we've been negligent about I think is not creating a
22 substantial record whenever we do something. And I
23 watched the North Pacific Fishery Management Council
24 and also the Federal Subsistence Board taking great
25 pains to establish a record on why they are proposing
26 one thing or another, and we need to start being more
27 careful to do that, too.

28
29 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
30 And I'd like to say as a new coordinator, too, please
31 remind me if I need to do something as well to make
32 sure that the record is clear.

33
34 Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yes, we need -- are
37 there any agency comments.

38
39 (No comments)

40
41 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Any tribal or -- do
42 you want to make a comment, Brandon.

43
44 MR. AHMASUK: No.

45
46 MR. CRAWFORD: This is Drew Crawford
47 with Fish and Game in Anchorage.

48
49 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Go ahead, Drew.

50

1 REPORTER: Go ahead, Drew.
2
3 MR. CRAWFORD: I have State comments if
4 you can hear me. Over.
5
6 REPORTER: We can hear you.
7
8 MR. CRAWFORD: The Department's
9 preliminary recommendation for Proposal WP16-44 is to
10 support with modification to retain the split season in
11 Unit 22C, extend the spring season in Unit 22C from May
12 10th to May 25th.
13
14 We would like to revise (indiscernible)
15 for Unit 22D to clearly identify the new Federal hunt
16 prior to use of a Federal registration permit to Unit
17 22E, and give the in-season Federal manager the
18 delegation of authority to set quotas as needed.
19
20 Modified regulation would be the same
21 as OSM for the dates for the Unit 22C, so it would May
22 1st to May 31st instead of May 10th to May 25th. And
23 the reason we propose that is just relying
24 (indiscernible).
25
26 Over.
27
28 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Just to make sure I
29 understand, we're having a little trouble hearing, so
30 in 22C, May 1st instead of May 10th would be the
31 opening day.
32
33 MR. CRAWFORD: Yeah, those would be
34 (indiscernible) May 1st to May 31st. Over.
35
36 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. The issue in
37 22C is -- you know, a lot of times you can't get around
38 even on May 1st, you know, and it really needs to open
39 in April. And the bears -- there are bears out of the
40 dens in April. So that -- you know, extending it to
41 May 1st wouldn't make a big change in harvest I don't
42 think.
43
44 Is that all you have, Drew.
45
46 MR. CRAWFORD: I have one additional
47 comment. Since the area wildlife biologist left, and
48 -- is that skip the implementation for the season and
49 reference the year 2012, there has been much complaints
50 from Safety residents of problem bears.

1 Over.

2

3 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Thank you.
4 We're having a hard time -- we had a little hard time
5 understanding. You said that there were 50 complaints
6 about problem bears in 22C?

7

8 MR. CRAWFORD: Negative. The
9 regulatory year 2012, that's when the Board of Game
10 implemented for liberalized bear hunting regulations in
11 22C. Since there have been some (ph) complaints from
12 Safety residents about problem bears. Over.

13

14 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, that's sure not
15 what I'm hearing. He says -- I think, if I can restate
16 it, he says that there have been no complaints since
17 2012 from Safety residents on problem bears. Do I
18 understand you correctly that you're saying that since
19 2012 there have been no complaints from Safety
20 residents about problem bears?

21

22 MR. CRAWFORD: Negative. Since
23 regulatory year 2012 there have been four complaints
24 about -- from Safety residents about problem bears,
25 and that year was the year that the Board of Game
26 liberalized the bear hunting regulations for that area.
27 Over.

28

29 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'm afraid it's not
30 comprehensible. Let's take a 15-minute break. John
31 Hanlin's going to fix it for us. Not to put any
32 pressure on you or anything, John. You've got 15
33 minutes.

34

35 (Off record)

36

37 (On record)

38

39 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'd like to call.....

40

41 MS. DEATHERAGE: (Indiscernible - away
42 from microphones)

43

44 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Karen. Can
45 we call the meeting back to order. John has fixed our
46 communication issues.

47

48 MR. HANLIN: It's the telephone line we
49 believe. It's not working.

50

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Oh, okay. Well, we're
2 back on the record then. We have a motion on the
3 table. Karen's going to read what Drew said so we can
4 understand it.

5
6 MS. DEATHERAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
7 I will be reading the ADF&G preliminary draft comments
8 for Wildlife Proposal No. 16-44.

9
10 In response to increased human/bear
11 encounters and complaints about nuisance bears by Unit
12 22 residents, the Alaska Board of Game began
13 incrementally liberalizing brown bear hunting
14 regulations in 1997. The resultant 1998 brown bear
15 harvest in Unit 22 was 72 percent greater than the
16 annual harvest from between 1990 and 1997.

17
18 Since then, heavily hunted in
19 accessible areas, for example, Unit 22C and 22D,
20 generally have had fewer complaints and problem bears.
21 However, nuisance bears complaints were still being
22 received from Unit 22C residents near Safety. So the
23 Board of Game liberalized the regulations further to
24 allow for a spring season of May 1st through May 31st
25 effective in regulatory year 2012.

26
27 And the recommendation from the
28 Department, and this is a preliminary recommendation,
29 the Department's preliminary recommendation for
30 Proposal WP16-44 is to support with modification to
31 regain the split season in Unit 22C; extend the spring
32 season dates in Unit 22C from May 10th -- currently
33 from May 10th to May 25th, to May 1st to May 31st;
34 revise the hunt descriptor for Unit 22D to clearly
35 identify the new Federal hunt area; require the use of
36 a Federal registration permit in the new Unit 22D hunt
37 area; and give the in-season Federal manager the
38 delegated authority to set quotas as needed.

39
40 Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you. Do you
43 have any questions. Does anybody have any questions
44 for Karen.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Thanks, Karen.
49 I guess we understand it.

50

1 Let's have some discussion. During the
2 break, Amos and I talked about amending the motion, if
3 we haven't already done it. I don't think we've
4 amended it yet, have we?

5
6 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. The last
7 thing that I have on record was Tim Smith moved to
8 approve the proposal as proposed by the Seward
9 Peninsula Regional Advisory Council, not as modified by
10 the OSM.

11
12 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I think it was Amos
13 instead of me. Yeah, it was Amos.

14
15 MS. DEATHERAGE: I apologize.

16
17 CHAIRMAN SMITH: So we may want an
18 amendment, Amos, for this to your motion. I think if I
19 understand, if I remember Robert's Rules, you can amend
20 it as long as the person who seconded it agrees.

21
22 MR. OXEREOK: So currently the motion
23 is as we created it?

24
25 CHAIRMAN SMITH: No, the motion is as
26 OSM -- the OSM -- I think the motion is as the OSM
27 recommended it with the split season. Is that correct,
28 Karen.

29
30 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. The way
31 that it transpired was Amos made the motion to support
32 16-44 as amended by OSM. You in turn made a new motion
33 approve the original proposal as proposed by the Seward
34 Pen. So unfortunately we have two motions on the
35 floor. So what I would do is to get rid of your motion
36 and then have Mr. Oxereok go ahead and amend his motion
37 as needed.

38
39 Thank you.

40
41 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, I will withdraw
42 the motion if the second agrees. Who seconded? Do we
43 know who seconded it.

44 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. There was
45 not a second on that motion. Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well it dies then. So
48 we're back to the motion on the table then would be to
49 approve the motion as amended by OSM. And I guess we'd
50 probably want to amend the original motion now.

1 MR. OXEREOK: I would like to amend that
2 motion to add the split dates, but my split date would
3 differ than the State's recommendation. Other than May
4 1st as the starting date, I would suggest April 1st to
5 give the local hunters a better chance to get -- of
6 opportunity of taking them earlier in the season.

7
8 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Do we have a
9 second.

10
11 MR. OXEREOK: And that was for 22C.
12 Instead of May 10 to May 25, it would read April 1st to
13 their ending, which is May 31st.

14
15 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Do I have a
16 second.

17
18 (No comments)

19
20 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Motion dies then. Do
21 we have another amendment. One thing I would suggest
22 would be just to go back to the original as we
23 proposed.

24
25 MR. GARNIE: Mr. Chair. Yes, I like a
26 motion with going to 31st. I wonder if we could extend
27 that over to our Game Unit 22E.

28
29 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, the original
30 motion would be to have it year round, and so people
31 wouldn't have to worry about whether the season's open
32 or not. It would be open year around.

33
34 MR. GARNIE: Oh, year around. That
35 would be fine.

36
37 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah. Do you want to
38 make -- you might put that in a motion.

39
40 MR. GARNIE: Yes.

41
42 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Second.

43
44 MR. OXEREOK: I'd like to second that.

45
46 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Motion's made by Joe
47 and seconded by Amos. We need some discussion. Oh, do
48 you want to discuss it, Joe, first, or I will.

49
50 My reason, and I've already discussed

1 it, but for the record, my reason for supporting this
2 motion would be to make it easier for hunters, to
3 simplify. they wouldn't have to worry about what date
4 is -- the dates. It's confusing for me. I made that
5 mistake already this year. I just didn't know. And so
6 if it's open year around, if a bear's available,
7 they'll be able to take it without worrying about
8 violating.

9

10 I don't think there's a conservation
11 concern. I don't believe this is going to make the
12 harvest suddenly peak. And if the harvest becomes
13 excessive, we can change the regulation in the future,
14 but I don't think it's going to make a huge change in
15 harvest.

16

17 Is the recommendation supported by
18 substantial evidence such as biological traditional
19 ecological knowledge? Absolutely in both areas that
20 increasing harvest will not harm bears, and will
21 probably help ungulates.

22

23 Will the recommendation be beneficial
24 or detrimental to subsistence needs and users? The
25 answer is, yes, because it creates more opportunity and
26 less worry about violating.

27

28 And will the recommendation
29 unnecessarily restrict other uses? I don't think it
30 will unnecessarily. There may be some restriction on
31 trophy hunting, but I don't think it would be
32 unnecessary.

33

34 Is there any further discussion.

35 Chris.

36

37 MR. McKEE: Mr. Chair. I don't know if
38 I'm the only one that's confused here, but I'm just --
39 I just would like just for the sake of being clear on
40 the record what your amendment is again.

41

42 CHAIRMAN SMITH: The amendment would be
43 to -- the previous motion was to support the proposal
44 as modified by OSM.

45

46 MR. McKEE: Right.

47

48 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Our will be to amend
49 it back to the original amendment, which would be a
50 year around season in both units and two bears a year

1 in 22C. Am I right, Karen? Is that what we did.

2

3 MS. DEATHERAGE: The original proposal
4 stated that -- request that the brown bear season for
5 Unit 22C be extended from August 1st to August 31st,
6 and May 10th through May 25th to August 1st through May
7 25th. So that was the time frame. It was not year
8 around. It was August 1st through May 25th. So that
9 was the original proposal put forth by the Seward
10 Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. If
11 you'd like to be able to see that, it's on Page 45, and
12 it's at the general description, the first thing in
13 the first column. Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, in that case I
16 would suggest, if I can, that we might want to go with
17 a year around season in those subunits. I think it
18 would be simpler. And I don't see -- you know, it
19 doesn't -- I don't see any real need for the split
20 season. Anybody interested in making that as an
21 amendment.

22

23 MR. GARNIE: So moved.

24

25 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Moved by Joe. Any
26 second.

27

28 MR. KATCHEAK: Second.

29

30 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Moved by Joe, seconded
31 by Ted.

32

33 And I guess we've already done some
34 discussion. I just think it would be much simpler for
35 hunters to have a year around season, and I don't see
36 any conservation concerns. Sometimes bears are out all
37 crazy times of the year. I've seen bears come out in
38 early December. And I've seen some bears come out in
39 early -- way, way early in April. And so there's
40 opportunity for some people. There seems to be
41 abundant bear numbers, and it seems to me that that
42 would be an acceptable season, particularly considering
43 the limited areas that are open.

44

45 MR. MCKEE: I really don't wish to
46 confuse the matter at all, and I understand you wanted
47 to add less confusion by having a year around season in
48 22C, but you need to be clear that the Federal
49 Regulations would be a hunt under a State Registration
50 permit. So if you pass -- if you went along with this,

1 the dates that you would want to go to under the
2 Federal regulation will be different than what they
3 would be on the State permit. And so I really don't
4 see that as being a very workable solution.

5
6 CHAIRMAN SMITH: What would we have to
7 do to make it work?

8
9 MR. McKEE: Well, I mean, I don't think
10 the State is likely to give out to a Federal -- for
11 Federal users where the dates are out of alignment with
12 the State permit. And they've done it for other
13 things, like with caribou in other areas, but in this
14 case especially since there's very little Federal land,
15 almost no Federal land in 22C, I can't imagine it being
16 a workable solution.

17
18 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, my goal in this
19 would be to get the State to align their regs with
20 ours. You know, I see absolutely no conservation or
21 biological need for a split season, and nobody has come
22 up with any. Nobody has come up with a reason for the
23 split season.

24
25 MR. McKEE: I understand that, but
26 we're only talking about changes to Federal
27 regulations, so we can't - you know, under the Federal
28 proposal process you can't -- something would have to
29 happen on the State side of things. So you're more
30 than welcome to go ahead with this, but I'm just say
31 that I don't -- the way it stands now, the dates would
32 not be compatible with the State registration permit.

33
34 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, I guess the
35 goal, my goal, would be to have the State see the
36 light, you know. And until they could come up with a
37 reason for a split season, why, you know. why make it
38 hard for hunters.

39
40 MR. McKEE: I understand that. I just
41 wanted to make that clear for you guys on the record.

42
43 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah. It seems to be,
44 you know, we had a -- back in the day when we had lots
45 of caribou, you know, I wanted a year around caribou
46 season. There were over 700,000 caribou, but the
47 Wildlife Conservation Division director at the time,
48 Lou Paplin just thought it was unethical to hunt
49 caribou in July, and so we had a split season on
50 caribou. And I think we still have it. But I don't

1 think it's justified. It wasn't justified for caribou,
2 and I don't think it's justified for bears either.

3

4 Karen.

5

6 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. And I hate
7 to confuse everybody again, but we once again do have
8 two motions on the floor. We had a motion by Joe to
9 approve the proposal as approved by the Seward Pen,
10 which is the description that's currently in your
11 meeting book. That was seconded by Amos. Then Joe
12 Garnie moved to change the season to year around, which
13 was also seconded by Amos.

14

15 So I would recommend a vote on the
16 first motion, to kill it, if you would like to proceed
17 with the second.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Would you like to just
22 withdraw the motion, Joe.

23

24 MR. GARNIE: Yes.

25

26 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Can we do that. Okay.
27 Joe and Amos agree. We'll withdraw that motion. I
28 think Ted seconded the second motion.

29

30 MR. KATCHEAK: Yeah.

31

32 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah. Okay. Have we
33 had enough discussion on that.

34

35 (No comments)

36

37 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Let's call for the
38 question then. All in favor say aye.

39

40 IN UNISON: Aye.

41

42 CHAIRMAN SMITH: All opposed same sign.

43

44 (No opposing votes)

45

46 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Passes unanimously.

47

48 Then that would bring us to WP16-46,
49 rescind closure for moose, Unit 22E. It's Page 67.

50

1 MR. OXEREOK: What page is that again.

2

3 CHAIRMAN SMITH: 67.

4

5 MR. OXEREOK: 67.

6

7 MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 This is Suzanne Worker again from the Office of
9 Subsistence Management. And I'll summarize 16-46 for
10 you briefly.

11

12 This proposal was submitted by this
13 Council, and the request is to rescind the closure to
14 moose harvest by non-Federally-qualified users in Unit
15 22E.

16

17 The proponent believes that the closure
18 is no longer justified given the recovery of the moose
19 population in this area. This closure was established
20 in 2002 in response to the population decline of the
21 moose in the 1990s.

22

23 Beginning in 2008 both the State and
24 the Federal boards began liberalizing moose harvests as
25 the population began to recover.

26

27 The moose population in 22E is believed
28 to be stable, as we heard from Tony this morning. And
29 it's estimated to be around 700 animals right now.
30 This exceeds the State management goals.

31

32 The reported harvest in Unit 22E is
33 relatively low, averaging 14 moose per year. That's
34 between 2004 and 2013, although it is acknowledged that
35 the harvest is under-reported. And if we account for
36 what we know about that under-reported harvest, we can
37 attribute about 88 percent of the harvest in Unit 22E
38 to local residents.

39

40 If this proposal was adopted, Federal
41 lands in Unit 22E would be open to non-Federally-
42 qualified users for the harvest of moose. This action
43 is not expected to have a detrimental effect on
44 subsistence users, and does not currently pose a
45 conservation risk for the species.

46

47 As a result, the OSM preliminary
48 conclusion is to support WP16-46.

49

50 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'm sorry, I left my
2 mic on. Do we have a motion to support.
3
4 MR. OXEREOK: I'll wait for the
5 discussion.
6
7 CHAIRMAN SMITH: We need a motion on
8 the table really before we discuss it.
9
10 MR. OXEREOK: That's why I said I'll
11 wait.
12
13 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Anybody want to make a
14 motion to support this proposal. It's our proposal,
15 although strangely I don't remember it. I don't
16 remember it. But does anybody want to support it.
17
18 (No comments)
19
20 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I guess not. Okay. I
21 guess that one -- we don't take a position on that.
22
23 MR. GARNIE: Mr. Chair.
24
25 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yes.
26
27 MR. GARNIE: Yes. I have a question.
28 22E. I'm looking at the map here. Within 22E, am I
29 right or wrong, that's this guide operation in this
30 area? This one up the Kelly Creek. Is that Kelly
31 Creek in 22E?
32
33 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I don't think it is.
34 Does anybody know. I think it's 22D. although there is
35 bear guiding going on in 22D. I don't think they're
36 guiding for moose, but I don't know.
37
38 MR. OXEREOK: I think it was bear and
39 muskox.
40
41 MS. WORKER: Yeah, I don't have any
42 knowledge about that, I'm sorry.
43
44 MR. OXEREOK: Can I make a comment on
45 this.
46
47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Sure.
48
49 MR. OXEREOK: I know we're not going to
50 take any action, but is it okay to discuss it a little

1 bit.

2

3 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, if you'll -- the
4 right way to do it is to make a motion and then discuss
5 it. Make a motion to support it, and then we'll
6 discuss it. We can vote it down then.

7

8 MR. OXEREOK: Then I won't make that
9 motion, because I don't want to have that motion on
10 there.

11

12 I supported it in the past, but I do
13 not now.

14

15 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, it looks like
16 there's no support, so we'll just move on then.

17

18 That brings us to WP16-47, create
19 antlerless moose season in Unit 22E. Do we have a --
20 and that would be Page 74.

21

22 MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 This proposal was also submitted by this Council. And
24 the request is to establish an antlerless moose season
25 in Unit 22E from December 15th through July -- sorry,
26 through December 31st. Currently the regulation is one
27 bull between August 1st, and March 15th.

28

29 Like I said, in 2002 the State and
30 Federal regulations became more restrictive due to the
31 declining moose population, and then began to loosen up
32 a little bit beginning in 2008 as that population
33 recovered.

34

35 The population is currently believed to
36 be stable; however, as we heard at length from Tony
37 this morning, the population likely cannot support an
38 antlerless harvest. Antlerless harvests are generally
39 appropriate when the population is growing, and when
40 the nutritional status is low. And as Tony said, we
41 don't know that that is the case in this population.

42

43 Historically liberal antlerless
44 harvests have contributed to the decline of populations
45 both locally as well as in other places throughout the
46 State.

47

48 At this point there's no biological
49 basis for initiating an antlerless harvest which could
50 contribute to a population decline.

1 So as a result, OSM's preliminary
2 conclusion is to oppose 47.

3
4 Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do we have any
7 additional agency comments or tribal comments.
8 Brandon.

9
10 MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chair. This is Drew
11 Crawford with the Department of Fish and Game. Can you
12 hear me.

13
14 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Go ahead, Drew.

15
16 REPORTER: Okay. Let's try it again.
17 Okay. Go ahead, Drew.

18
19 MR. CRAWFORD: The Department's
20 preliminary recommendation to oppose Proposal WP16-47
21 and no population (indiscernible) which to
22 (indiscernible) this moose hunt in Unit 22E. The
23 surveys suggest that the moose have moved from Unit 20
24 (indiscernible) 22C. The population survey that
25 (indiscernible) for Unit 22D appears to suggest that
26 the moose population has stabilized. However, the
27 population survey estimates for Unit 22E have decreased
28 14 percent annually over the last three years.

29
30 Over.

31
32 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Drew.

33
34 Do you have any questions for Drew,
35 Council.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Any additional agency
40 comments.

41
42 (No comments)

43
44 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do you want to
45 comment, Tom, for the advisory committee. Are you a
46 member of the -- oh, okay.

47
48 Any public testimony. Anybody want to
49 make public testimony on this one.

50

1 (No comments)
2
3 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Hearing none, do we
4 have a motion to adopt.
5
6 (No comments)
7
8 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I guess this one dies,
9 too. You sure can.
10
11 MR. OXEREOK: I was originally also in
12 support of this motion, but I would like to give it a
13 couple of years to see if the population continues to
14 grow, and then maybe we can put a more restrictive
15 antlerless hunt motion down the road.
16
17 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Sounds like a good
18 plan.
19
20 That brings us to cross over Proposal
21 WP16-33, change customary and traditional use
22 determination for caribou and moose in Unit 18. That's
23 on Page 82.
24
25 MR. McKEE: Mr. Chair. I hate to
26 backtrack a little bit, but I don't think that on 16-
27 46, the rescinding of the closure, I don't think we
28 went through the full process in asking for -- we
29 didn't go through the full process in asking for
30 comments. That we kind of.....
31
32 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah, we did.
33
34 MR. McKEE: You did? So did that.....
35
36 CHAIRMAN SMITH: No, no.
37
38 MR. McKEE: Yeah, I don't think we got
39 any comment from the State on that one.
40
41 CHAIRMAN SMITH: On 44 or 46.
42
43 MR. McKEE: On 46.
44
45 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Didn't we just get
46 that from Drew?
47
48 MR. McKEE: That was on 47. You didn't
49 get any comments. I just want to make sure.....
50

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Oh, we didn't. You're
2 correct. You are correct.
3
4 MR. McKEE: Yeah, we didn't get through
5 that process. And I also want to make it clear about
6 what you did and whether you voted to take no action,
7 or whether it just failed for lack of a second.
8
9 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Just failed for lack
10 of a motion. We didn't get a motion.
11
12 MR. McKEE: Okay. All right. I
13 just.....
14
15 CHAIRMAN SMITH: So I didn't think we
16 really needed -- you're right. We missed that.
17
18 MR. McKEE: We still need to go through
19 the process though.
20
21 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do you think we should
22 do that now?
23
24 MR. McKEE: I think we should at least
25 get the State's comments on it.
26
27 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Is there any --
28 are here agency comments on WP16-46.
29
30 REPORTER: Drew, do you have comments
31 on 46.
32
33 MR. CRAWFORD: Stand by, let me grab
34 them.
35
36 REPORTER: I'm sorry, what did you say?
37
38 MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, the Department does
39 have a recommendation for Proposal WP16-46. The
40 Department's preliminary recommendation is to support
41 Proposal WP16-46. The moose population in Unit 22E
42 (indiscernible) projected effective of 200 to 250
43 moose, and the anticipated increase in harvest will
44 remain in the available harvest.
45
46 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Drew.
47
48 MR. CRAWFORD: You're welcome.
49
50 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Any questions,

1 Council.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Are there any advisory
6 group comments, advisory committees, Subsistence
7 Resource Commission, or public testimony on this
8 proposal.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Hearing one, then I
13 think we've exhausted the process, and there's still no
14 motion on the table, unless somebody wants to make one
15 now.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Well, that one
20 just dies for lack of a motion.

21

22 So back to customary and traditional
23 use determination for caribou and moose in Unit 18,
24 Page 82.

25

26 Is there a motion to support.

27

28 (No comments)

29

30 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah, we need to go
31 through the whole process.

32

33 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. Are we on
34 Proposal 33.

35

36 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'm sorry, I failed
37 there. We need the OSM report then, first.

38

39 MS. WORKER: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
40 Chair. This is Suzanne Worker again. I'm going to try
41 to present proposal 33 to you.

42

43 This proposal was submitted by the
44 Village of Lower Kalskag, and it requests that Lower
45 Kalskag be added to the current customary and
46 traditional use determination for caribou and moose in
47 Unit 18.

48

49 And just to give you a little bit of
50 background on this, the Unit 18 boundary was changed

1 recently. And when that happened, the customary and
2 traditional use was not updated for residents of Unit
3 18. And so this proposal simply requests that a
4 determination be made so that those residents can hunt
5 where they've always hunted given the boundary change.
6

7

8 There's a map I believe -- there isn't
9 a map. Lower Kalskag used to be in Unit 18. Is that
10 right? Hold on, let me look at my map. Okay. If you
11 hand your handy-dandy in front of you, your Federal
12 handy-dandy, on Page 80. Apologies for not being
13 better prepared on this.

14

15 My understanding is that this boundary
16 request came about because the old boundary was a
17 straight line and it was difficult to identify where
18 you were at when you were on the ground. The new
19 boundary uses landmarks, so it's more intuitive when
20 you're actually on the ground.

21

22 During the last regulatory cycle, the
23 boundary was updated in this handy-dandy. So what
24 you're seeing on Page 80 is the current boundary. And
25 you'll see that both Kalskag and Lower Kalskag are in
26 Unit 21. Previously Lower Kalskag was in Unit 18. And
27 so this proposal simply requests that they have
28 customary and traditional use in Unit 18, which they
29 had previously before the boundary change was made.

30

31 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Why did they leave
32 Kalskag in and take Lower Kalskag out?

33

34 MS. WORKER: I have no idea. I mean,
35 both Kalskag and Lower Kalskag are in the same unit
36 now.

37

38 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, do we have any
39 additional agency comments. Drew.

40

41 MR. CRAWFORD: This is Drew Crawford
42 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in
43 Anchorage. The Department's preliminary recommendation
44 is to support Proposal WP16-33. Also surveying and
45 documenting for Kalskag (indiscernible) currently use
46 portions of Unit 18 and 19A for hunting moose and
47 caribou. Therefore they deserve to be added to these
48 customary and traditional use determinations.

49

50 Over.

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I think I understood
2 that. The Department is supporting this proposal.
3 Okay. So the Department's on that.

4
5 Are there any additional comments by
6 the public or other agencies.

7
8 (No comments)

9
10 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Hearing none, do we
11 have a motion to support. Mr. Garnie.

12
13 MR. GARNIE: Yes. Motion to support.

14
15 MR. OXEREOK: I'll second.

16
17 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Moved by Joe, seconded
18 by Amos. Any discussion.

19
20 (No comments)

21
22 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, I'll start out.
23 I don't think there's a conservation concern. It just
24 seems like something that should be done. The
25 additional harvest won't affect the caribou numbers at
26 all I don't think.

27
28 Is recommendation is supported by
29 substantial evidence, biological, and traditional
30 ecological knowledge. Yes, it is. And it is a
31 traditional hunt by those people. It's not their fault
32 that the boundary was moved.

33
34 Would the recommendation be beneficial
35 or detrimental to subsistence needs or uses. It will
36 be generally beneficial, and I don't think it will
37 necessarily restrict any other users.

38
39 So I'll be voting in favor of this
40 motion.

41
42 Any additional discussion by RAC
43 members.

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'll call for the
48 question then. All in favor say aye.

49
50 IN UNISON: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: All opposed same sign.

2

3

4 (No opposing votes)

5

6 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Motion passes

7 unanimously.

8

9 That brings us to -- does anybody need

10 to take a break, or should we just plow on. Break?

11 No? Okay.

12

13 We'll plow on to WP16-34, hunting
14 closure for all big game to non-Federal users in Unit
15 18. Page 89.

16

17 MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18 This proposal was submitted by Leonard Landlord of

19 Mountain Village. And he requests the closure of

20 Federal lands west of Mountain Village to the harvest

21 of all big game by non-Federally-qualified users.

22

23 And the proponent cites the disruption

24 of fall subsistence hunts by sporthunters.

25

26 The analysis for this area is the area
27 that used to be called the Lower Yukon hunt area for
28 moose. There's a map of it on Page 96 of your books.
29 If you don't have a map in front of you, it's basically
30 the area north of the Kashunuk River, up to the old
31 village of Chakaktolik, and then north to Mountain
32 Village.

33

34 There are six big game species in Unit
35 18: caribou, muskox, black bear, brown bear, wolves
36 and moose. This analysis excludes caribou and muskox.
37 Caribou are excluded because neither the Mulchatna nor
38 the Western Arctic herds overlap the area proposed for
39 closure. And muskox are excluded, because there is no
40 harvest allowed under State or Federal regulation in
41 the area proposed for closure. The remaining four
42 species will be addressed in this analysis, and I'll
43 just go through what we know about each of them, and
44 about harvest in the area.

45

46 There are bears along the length of the
47 Yukon River, both black bears and brown bears. As in
48 Unit 22, there's not a lot of information about what
49 the bear populations are doing, but the local managers
50 haven't expressed any conservation concerns for bears.

1 We don't have any black bear data,
2 harvest data for black bears, but it's believed to be
3 quite low.

4
5 The reported harvest for brown bears
6 along the Yukon River has averaged only about two bears
7 per year, and nearly all of those bears are taken
8 during the spring.

9
10 So it's unlikely that the hunters that
11 the proponent is encountering during his fall hunts are
12 hunters that are actually targeting bears.

13
14 And it's a similar story with wolves.
15 While there's not a precise population estimate for
16 wolves, they are common on the Y-K Delta. And as the
17 moose population is growing, the number of resident
18 packs appears to be growing as well. However, nearly
19 all of the wolf harvest occurs during the winter.
20 Since 2000, about 80 percent of the wolves that have
21 been harvested in Unit 18 have been taken between
22 December and March. And harvest in September and
23 October is quite low. So again it's unlikely that the
24 proponent is encountering hunters who are targeting
25 wolves during the fall.

26
27 Rather almost certainly he's
28 encountering moose hunters. And as we talked about
29 earlier, the moose population along the Yukon has grown
30 quite dramatically in the last 15 years, and this has
31 created good opportunities not only for local hunters,
32 but for subsistence hunters as well. Overall the moose
33 harvest in Unit 18 has grown from about 200 animals a
34 year, that was in the early 2000s, to about 600 per
35 year in recent years. And a large proportion of that
36 increase is in fact due to non-local hunters.

37
38 Currently local take is less than half
39 of the reported harvest, so there are definitely sport
40 hunters out there that aren't locals. But having said
41 that, there is a lot of concern about the unchecked
42 growth of the population in this area. And although
43 there is still available habitat, there's a real
44 concern by managers that if harvest doesn't keep up
45 with population growth, then this herd could become
46 population -- or could become habitat limited, which
47 would precipitate a natural population crash.

48
49 So for this reason, OSM's preliminary
50 conclusion is to oppose WP16-34.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Suzanne.
4 Do we have comments from Drew Crawford.

5

6 MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Mr. Chair. This
7 Drew Crawford, ADF&G, in Anchorage.

8

9 The Department's preliminary
10 recommendation is to oppose Proposal WP16-34. Closing
11 Federal public lands on the Lower Yukon to non-
12 Federally-qualified users will probably not decrease
13 the number of hunters targeting bears in this area, nor
14 will they increase opportunity for Federally-qualified
15 subsistence users.

16

17 Regarding the moose population in the
18 Lower Yukon, it is growing rapidly, continuing to grow.
19 And there is concern that the population growth will
20 outreach harvest, exceeding the carrying capacity and
21 causing a population crash. Therefore there is no need
22 to restrict access to this resource and restrict
23 harvest of which the harvest may cause long-term good.
24 Over.

25

26 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Drew.

27

28 Are there any question for the
29 Department.

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do we have any public
34 comments.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Then does someone want
39 to make a motion to adopt.

40

41 MR. KATCHEAK: So move, Mr. Chair.

42

43 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Is there a second.

44

45 MR. KATCHEAK: I move, Mr. Chair.

46

47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do we have a second.

48

49 (No comments)

50

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Motion dies for lack
2 of a second.

3
4 That moves us to WP16-35. Change in
5 methods and means for black and brown bear in Unit 18.
6 Page 111. Go ahead, Suzanne.

7
8 MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9
10 Next up is Proposal 16-35. This
11 analysis was conducted by one of our anthropologists,
12 Pippa Kenner. I'll be presenting the analysis for you.

13
14 16-35 was submitted by Martin Nicolai
15 of Kwethluk, and he requests that the use of artificial
16 light be allowed to aid in the harvesting of a bear at
17 a den site in Unit 18. The proponent states that some
18 members of the Native Village of Kwethluk
19 traditionally, historically, and currently travel to
20 the Kilbuck Mountains to harvest bears, and sometimes
21 denning bears are targeted. The proponent states that
22 the people harvest bears from dens in the springtime to
23 meet subsistence needs. According to the proponent, it
24 is a customary activity practiced over many generations
25 of Yup'ik people.

26
27 The proponent states that only certain
28 hunters harvest bears from dens, and only when there is
29 a heavy covering of snow in springtime when hunters can
30 reach the mountains behind the village on snowmachines.

31
32
33 Since becoming available, people have
34 used flashlights to observe bears in dens. The
35 proponent states the practice is legal in other
36 management units in State regulation. The proponent
37 became aware that it was illegal when a local hunter
38 pointed it out to him.

39
40 If this proposal is adopted, hunting
41 with an artificial light will be allowed for Federally-
42 qualified subsistence users hunting a black bear at a
43 den site in Unit 18. Only a few specialized hunters
44 concentrated in certain villages and in certain
45 families harvest bears from den sites, and the use of
46 artificial light for this purpose is likely not to
47 increase.

48
49 If this proposal was not adopted,
50 Federally-qualified subsistence users using a method on

1 Federal public lands in Unit 18 could be cited for
2 using an illegal method.

3
4 The OSM preliminary conclusion is to
5 support WP16-35 with modification to include a head
6 lamp or a hand-held artificial light.

7
8 And I can do my best to answer
9 questions.

10
11 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Oh, here's one for
12 you. What is artificial light?

13
14 MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15
16 (Laughter)

17
18 MS. WORKER: This did come up during
19 this analysis I believe. I'm not sure that I'm
20 prepared to get into the details of that.

21
22 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Like artificial
23 sweetener?

24
25 MS. WORKER: It's not natural.

26
27 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'm joking, of course.
28 Yeah.

29
30 MR. MCKEE: Mr. Chair. I think that's
31 one of the reasons for the modified proposal, just to
32 clarify what they were meaning by artificial light. It
33 was a topic that did come up for discussion.

34
35 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Albert Einstein must
36 be rolling in his grave.

37
38 Do we have any other agency comments or
39 public comments on this proposal.

40
41 MR. KATCHEAK: Mr. Chair. A question.
42 This proposal that was made did not take into
43 consideration that these animals are very dangerous,
44 and going to a den, that's taking their life in their
45 hand. And it's somehow -- my mind doesn't agree with
46 that hunt by checking or hunting the bear in a den. It
47 was practiced many years ago I guess in Stebbins, but
48 this is considered a very dangerous way to harvest an
49 animal. So I would decline to support this proposal,
50 because I don't go to a bear and get that close,

1 because of its nature. So I just wanted to make that
2 comment.

3

4 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Ted. Does
5 anybody want to make a motion to adopt this proposal.

6

7 MR. GARNIE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
8 Just a question. Is this proposal to allow them to use
9 an artificial light, like a flashlight or a headlight
10 to go into the den, and they presently are hunting here
11 presently. It is legal for them to hunt den bear.
12 They just wanted to be able to use an artificial light.

13

14 MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Garnie.
15 Through the Chair. That's correct.

16

17 MR. GARNIE: Well, I think I'd be in
18 support of them being able to use an artificial light
19 to go into a bear den.

20

21 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Is there a second.

22

23 MR. OXEREOK: I'd like to second that.

24

25 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. We'll need some
26 discussion.

27

28 I agree with Joe. I mean, if somebody
29 wants to hunt bears in dens, I mean, people have been
30 doing it for thousands of years, it's okay with me.
31 The problem is you don't know how many are in that den,
32 and so, you know, I think it's like -- I agree with
33 Ted, too. It's a pretty hairy chested thing to do, but
34 if somebody wants to do it, we ought to at least let
35 them have a light.

36

37 MR. OXEREOK: If they're already doing
38 it, I think it would help the subsistence hunter to be
39 able to see what's in there.

40

41 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Yeah. I don't see a
42 conservation concern. I don't think very many people
43 are going to do it.

44

45 I met a guy last year one time that did
46 that with a shotgun, a double barreled shotgun. He's
47 just go up there and make a little hole, and he'd look,
48 without an artificial light I guess, and see where they
49 were, and touch off both barrels and run back. And it
50 worked for him.

1 So I don't see a conservation concern.
2 I think there's substantial evidence, biological and
3 traditional knowledge supporting it.

4
5 It will be beneficial to anybody who
6 wants to hunt bears in dens, and it won't restricted
7 other uses unnecessarily, so I'm going to vote in favor
8 of it.

9
10 Is there any other, more discussion.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 CHAIRMAN SMITH: If not, I'll call for
15 the question. All in favor say aye.

16
17 IN UNISON: Aye.

18
19 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Those opposed same
20 sign.

21
22 (No opposing votes)

23
24 MR. KATCHEAK: Mr. Chair. One abstain.

25
26 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. So we've got
27 one abstention.

28
29 That brings us to WP16-49/52, change
30 harvest limits, change the bull and cow seasons for
31 caribou in Unit 23.

32
33 How come this one didn't get put on
34 tomorrow's agenda.

35
36 MS. WORKER: I can speak to that, Mr.
37 Chair.

38
39 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

40
41 MS. WORKER: We moved the Unit 22
42 caribou proposals to tomorrow. This is a crossover
43 proposal, so it's in neighboring units. We can save it
44 for tomorrow if it seems like that will fit into our
45 time frame, or I'm happy to go over it today.

46
47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: I'd prefer to do all
48 the caribou proposals together, because they're
49 basically the same caribou.

50

1 MR. McKEE: I was just about to make --
2 I knew that this was a crossover proposal, one of the
3 reasons why we maybe didn't bring it up to leave it to
4 tomorrow, but since all these caribou proposals are
5 kind of intra-related, it might be a little bit more
6 helpful to wait until tomorrow and address them all at
7 one time.

8
9 CHAIRMAN SMITH: In that case, then
10 we're on 2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

11
12 MS. LaVINE: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
13 all members of the Council. My name is Robbin LaVine,
14 and I'm an anthropologist for the Office of Subsistence
15 Management. And I'm going to be presenting you today a
16 brief overview of our Fisheries Resource Monitoring
17 Program as it stands today.

18
19 The monitoring program was first
20 implemented in 2000 with an initial allocation of \$55
21 million. Since 2001 a total of \$103.6 million has been
22 allocated to the monitoring program to fund a total of
23 431 projects.

24
25 In this slide, you can also see the
26 number of projects funded by organization. 169 by the
27 State of Alaska, 73 by Alaska Native organizations, 30
28 by other, 132 by the Department of the Interior, and 26
29 by the Department of Agriculture.

30
31 And I did want to point out that this
32 program strongly supports partnerships, so regardless
33 of whether if principal investigator might be the State
34 of Alaska, they're often supporting and have
35 partnerships with other organizations, often local
36 regional organizations to which a lot of that funding
37 goes.

38
39 The budget guidelines are established
40 by geographic region and data type. The regional
41 guidelines were developed using six criteria that
42 included a level of risk to species, level of threat to
43 conservation units, amount of subsistence needs not
44 being met, amount of information available to support
45 subsistence management, importance of species to
46 subsistence harvest, and level of use concerns with
47 subsistence harvest. Budget guidelines provide an
48 initial target for planning; however, they are not
49 final allocations and can be adjusted annually as
50 needed.

1 So currently policy and finding
2 guidelines, most projects of up to four years duration
3 may be considered in any year's monitoring plan.
4 Studies should not duplicate existing projects. A
5 majority of monitoring program funding will be
6 dedicated to non-Federal agencies. Long-term projects
7 will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

8
9 And activities that are not eligible
10 for funding include habitat protection, mitigation,
11 restoration and enhancement; hatchery propagation,
12 restoration, enhancement, and supplementation;
13 contaminant assessment, evaluation, and monitoring; and
14 projects where the primary or only objective is
15 outreach and education. For example science camps,
16 technical training and intern programs, rather than
17 information collecting.

18
19 So in developing a proposal, the Office
20 of Subsistence Management will assist Regional Advisory
21 Councils with priority information needs. And this
22 often starts the year before. We'll be working with
23 you to determine what information is critical for your
24 communities within your region. Principal
25 investigators work with Regional Advisory Councils to
26 develop proposals. Again, best to work throughout a
27 year, not right before the submission due date. The
28 Office of Subsistence Management will provide technical
29 assistance, December update, postcard, letters.
30 Training sessions at the winter all-Councils meeting
31 will be held for further detail on how this process
32 works.

33
34 Step two, proposal submission. A
35 complete project package needs to be submitted on time.
36 So there will be -- we put out a notice of funding
37 availability and opportunity, and there is a certain
38 amount of time provided for all of the submission
39 materials to be submitted on time. The project must
40 address all five specific criteria, that it meet
41 strategic priority or priority information needs as we
42 discussed developed often within the region and
43 communities where these issues are pertinent. It as
44 strong technical and scientific merit. The
45 investigator ability and resources are also strong with
46 demonstrated ability to carry out these projects. That
47 there's partnership and capacity building within the
48 proposals, and that the cost of the project is
49 reasonable for the work proposed.

50

1 Then we go through the proposal
2 evaluations. Once these proposals are submitted, the
3 Technical Review Committee will then prioritize high
4 quality projects that address critical subsistence
5 questions, and those projects that enhance the
6 monitoring program. The process is meant to assure
7 program transparency. We identify and fund high
8 quality research projects that address priority
9 subsistence and information needs, again, and maximize
10 funding opportunities.

11
12 So recently we have come, or the
13 monitoring program has determined a more rigorous way
14 to assess projects. Modifications made include
15 specific guidelines for assessing how and whether a
16 proposed project has addressed each of the five
17 criteria; receiving a single consolidated review from
18 each participating agency; requiring agencies recuse
19 themselves from providing reviews for projects
20 involving their agencies. So if let's say people on
21 the Technical Review Committee are from the State, and
22 we need their expertise, but one of the proposals is a
23 State proposal, those folks will recuse themselves from
24 actually voting on that particular proposal, but they
25 still remain in the room to provide their expertise.

26
27 Step 4, proposal ranking. The
28 Technical Review Committee will develop a draft
29 monitoring plan for each region, evaluate and score
30 each proposal for again the five criteria: strategic
31 priority or priority information needs, whether or not
32 it meets those. The technical/scientific merit. The
33 investigator ability and resources. Partnersshipping,
34 capacity building, and cost benefit.

35
36 And each of these five criteria have a
37 particular score value. So it can be that maybe in
38 some cases some of the really strong proposals that are
39 forwarded actually don't have a strong strategic
40 priority, but they're strong in all four other
41 criteria, they can rate quite high, depending on what
42 else was submitted that year.

43
44 The final score determines the ranking
45 of each proposal within the region.

46
47 Finally, and this is step 5, and this
48 is your part in this process, Regional Advisory
49 Committees will provide input and comments.

50

1 So first you will see in your Regional
2 Advisory Council book, your RAC book meeting materials,
3 we have a more detailed discussion of the Fisheries
4 Resource Monitoring Program and the proposals forwarded
5 for this year. And it begins on Page 217 of your
6 Council books. Actually I think it begins -- no, it
7 begins a little earlier than that. It begins on 208 in
8 your RAC materials.

9
10 In your RAC materials also you'll have
11 a more detailed overview of the projects for the
12 northern region, that's your region. I'm going to show
13 you a list shortly of the TRC rankings, and we'll
14 discuss the projects if you wish. You will then
15 provide comments to accompany the proposals to the
16 Federal Subsistence Board. Do proposals align with
17 priority needs? You can provide comments on proposal
18 rankings, proposal summaries, and the process.

19
20 Our final step is the Federal
21 Subsistence Board review and final monitoring plan.
22 The ISC reviews the process and comments, and provides
23 recommendations to the Board. The Board reviews the
24 process and products. Comments are synthesized and
25 recommendations are provided for the monitoring plan.
26 OSM finally reviews all comments and finalizes the
27 plan.

28
29 So this is the northern region proposal
30 as, and again here's a map really quick to show the
31 northern regions which
32 encompasses your area and stretches out across the
33 North Slope.

34
35 But these are the proposals for 2016 as
36 ranked by the Technical Review Committee. And they're
37 ranked in relevance of strength. We have 10 proposals
38 for the northern region: the Kobuk River sheefish
39 abundance project; the North slope over-wintering
40 aerial monitoring Dolly Varden project; Chandler Lake
41 spawning aggregations of lake trout; Mead River changes
42 in subsistence fisheries; Northwest TEK whitefish,
43 cisco, and beavers project; Kobuk River Dolly Varden
44 genetics; the Arctic Dolly Varden telemetry; Selawik
45 inconnu age abundance; changing conditions in the
46 Colville River leading to increased mold on whitefish;
47 and No. 10, Colville grayling habitat and migrations.

48
49 The total amount of these projects is
50 over \$2.1 million. I believe this year we have a

1 little over \$4 million for the entire State, so the
2 selection of -- the funding is stretched across the
3 State, so not all of these proposals will be forwarded.

4
5 What we're asking of you today as an
6 integral part of the review process is that you provide
7 comments on the proposals to inform the Federal
8 Subsistence Board as final projects are selected for
9 the monitoring program. You can make a motion to move
10 the comments forward to the Federal Subsistence Board,
11 or the coordinator will compile your comments and then
12 forward to the Board.

13
14 I am ready to take your questions.

15
16 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Any questions from the
17 Council.

18
19 (No comments)

20
21 CHAIRMAN SMITH: We could sure use some
22 projects here. Have we ever had a project on the
23 Seward Peninsula?

24
25 MS. LaVINE: Mr. Chair. There should
26 be a regional overview on Page 217 in your RAC Council
27 book. But it does really only speak to the projects or
28 the funding in general that have been ongoing in the
29 northern region.

30
31 CHAIRMAN SMITH: There are some
32 projects on the Seward Peninsula.

33
34 MR. GRAY: there was projects in
35 Unalakleet I think and Stebbins and St. Michaels area.
36 And I have been ranting for years we need projects on
37 the Seward Peninsula and the comment keeps coming back
38 to us, show me some land, and we will do projects.
39 And, you know, that's -- I just heard in this process
40 that partnering and working together and blah, blah,
41 blah. You know, there's lots of Native entities in
42 this region. There's the State of Alaska. You have
43 land in the Bendeleben Mountains. You have land up in
44 the parks. And yet we struggle to get programs here,
45 and money spent on projects. I can't fathom it.

46
47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Well, said. Well
48 said, Tom. I mean, that is the situation. And, you
49 know, we need to take an ecosystem approach to
50 management. And, you know, the fish don't stay on

1 Federal land or Federal waters. The birds don't
2 either. We need an ecosystem approach to management,
3 and the State is not in a position to pay for research
4 any more. And so this is a perfect time and example,
5 the need for dual management.

6

7

Elmer.

8

9

10 MR. SEETOT: During this past summer
11 season, or during this past year, we seen a big
12 increase of red salmon into Salmon Lake, maybe Glacier
13 Lake. In the past average was about 8 to 10,000. And
14 then during this past year or August/ September of this
15 year, after listening to the radio, there was 35,000
16 plus red salmon. I myself harvested only -- it
17 couldn't even register on the scale. Maybe .00025 of
18 one percent I harvested, you know, from the total. I
19 went to Salmon Lake and other places.

19

20

21 And NSEDC in the past has fertilized
22 Salmon Lake for the benefit of the developing fish that
23 stay there, winter there, you know, before they go out
24 into the open waters of the Kuzitrin River.

24

25

26 In the past 10 or 15 years beaver
27 populations have really increased and this is something
28 that has happened in our lifetime. We heard about
29 beavers in the past. In grade school we heard about
30 them, they were in the east coast, valuable for their
31 furs and then gradually, you know, they came onto the
32 Seward Peninsula. They even was in the communities of
33 Teller and Brevig, places you wouldn't expect beavers
34 to be around.

34

35

36 We know that they have -- they
37 contaminate the water. They dam the rivers, and
38 Kuzitrin River is a major river system for all fish,
39 all the way to Kuzitrin Lake. All the way where
40 Kuzitrin River goes to, they have tributaries that
41 other fish use.

41

42

43 Like I said, NSEDC fertilized the lake.
44 What effects does that residue have on the remaining
45 river system. I know that algae is produced by
46 sunlight, and that pretty much -- you could see that in
47 Imuruk Basin. One is that I think Imuruk Basin is
48 shallow. It produces algae right on top of the surface.
49 I see it only about maybe two years where that algae
50 went all the way out to Grantley Harbor. Was that from
the effects of the fertilize, or was that just too much

1 sunlight that produced the algae for these waters,
2 because they're just -- Imuruk basin watershed is a
3 very important place for all the fish.

4
5 I seen hundreds of spotted seals
6 feasting on herring down towards Windy Cove up toward
7 Ptarmigan Point, so it's pretty much in all use around
8 the area.

9
10 Many of these natural resources we
11 really don't know about that go into the Agiapuk or the
12 American River systems and then beyond.

13
14 But my main question was what affect
15 does beaver dams have on the fish population,
16 especially ones, you know, that need to strike in other
17 places. I know that there's graylings, there's trout,
18 I'm not too sure about chum, that feed on smaller fish,
19 but there's predominately a lot of fish eating fish
20 that are in the river systems. And that's something
21 that we need to look at. Was that just a coincidence
22 that we had 35,000 plus red salmon within the Salmon
23 Lake area.

24
25 Teller and Brevig and also possibly
26 White Mountain and Golovin have traded comments, barbs,
27 something, you know, with the people of Nome, because
28 they were going down to Council River to do their
29 subsistence fishing. Not all. Some Nome people are
30 going up towards Port Clarence Bay and Grantley Harbor
31 to do their commercial fishing, but over the past years
32 the majority have gone on to Pilgrim River. And that
33 helps the communities of Teller and Brevig in the way
34 that no one from outside is coming in to try to, you
35 know, take the resources away.

36
37 The resource are there for everyone to
38 use, but some people had different views, I live in
39 this community, nobody but our people should fish.
40 That's the response of some of the people. Others, you
41 know, go like an ocean that our resources are to be
42 share like the State of Alaska constitution. And our
43 people have, or even our area have declined, turned
44 away commercial fishing in the past by our parents, by
45 people before us. And I'd suggest that's pretty good,
46 other than that's a natural resource where you can make
47 money. But when you're arguing about resources, one
48 thing about TEK is that don't argue about the animals
49 or don't argue about the resources. That's constantly
50 what is being passed on.

1 I'm not really too sure what's happened
2 to this year's surplus. Maybe we quit arguing about
3 the red salmon four or five years ago, and then all of
4 a sudden they came in. I don't know. You know, that's
5 for us to think about, why all of a sudden we had a big
6 abundance. Was the fertilization successful from
7 Salmon Lake or -- I'm not too sure if this is possible,
8 it other fish came from other areas, you know, to
9 spawn, even that's, you know, it's inside the creek,
10 things I always share about that. They have to smell
11 the water to know where to put into, go to the place of
12 spawning. Pretty much like reindeer, or like any
13 natural resource.

14
15 We know very little about, you know,
16 the way they grow up. We just know the kind of the end
17 product without really knowing in between, what happens
18 from the time they spawn or the time they're born to
19 the time we harvest them. We know maybe 50 percent of
20 the time we know at their adult level what they're
21 going to do. The other 50 percent is from birth to
22 maybe the time of harvest. And that's something that
23 we kind of struggle about, because we really don't
24 know.

25
26 We know certain things that are on the
27 calendar. PFD, AFN, Christmas, Thanksgiving. What we
28 don't know is the timing of the seasons. Like right
29 now we do have very unusual weather. 50 years ago in
30 Brevig Mission everything was already frozen by the
31 first week of September. In my lifetime I have seen
32 Port Clarence freeze three times in December.
33 December 11, December 15, and December 24. You know,
34 certain dates I remember, because very unusual things
35 happen, you know, in our area.

36
37 But my main concern was the impact of
38 beaver dams within the Kuzitrin River system and other
39 areas, how does it affect, you know, the fish cycle,
40 not only of certain species, but pretty much of all
41 species.

42
43 And this year for the first time,
44 contrary to Joe Garnie's observation, the first time
45 2015 in the community of Brevig Mission they were
46 talking about catching king salmon. I seen king salmon
47 up Agiapuk River on two different occasions when they
48 went to spawn, but there were just a couple. Maybe,
49 you know, a pair of king salmon, Chinook salmon. We
50 had king salmon.

1 Then very unusual was the arrival of
2 red salmon or sockeye. Because over the past years,
3 I'd just been harvesting chum salmon, dog salmon, and
4 then very few red salmon. I know they were going past
5 Brevig Mission, but we're not like those Bristol Bay
6 fishermen, you know, where everything goes and you want
7 to get all the fish you need, but we're being impacted,
8 not only by availability of fish, but we're restricted
9 by weather and other things. We don't just go right
10 into fishing when it breaks up. We kind of go after
11 subsistence, seal hunts to get our blubber and meat for
12 the winter, then we go to fishing, and then you go
13 through the cycle.

14
15 But other than that, a lot of beaver, I
16 would think impact the abundance of salmon within the
17 Kuzitrin River. I know that. Agiapuk River has
18 abundance of chum salmon, because I have been there,
19 and I have -- it gets so thick that you could smell.
20 You could smell the water, you can smell the foam, you
21 know, after the fish die off. That's not only chum,
22 but pink salmon, chum salmon, and others that do make
23 it up Agiapuk.

24
25 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Any other comments.
26

27 MR. GRAY: Let me throw a thought out.
28 You know, this year is probably the first year in 20
29 years that we had an amazing fish run, maybe 30 years.
30 And I guess in the back of my mind is what happened and
31 where did it happen. And, you know, for example, the
32 State of Alaska's ready to throw out the king salmon
33 escapement goal in my river system. And this year --
34 in past years there's been handfuls of fish. This year
35 Fish and Game counted over 1,000 king salmon come into
36 my river system. Something different happened this
37 year. It would be awesome to see, take some of your
38 money and go figure that out. What happened. Where
39 did it happen. Is it in the ocean, is it in, you know,
40 your river system. Something happened somewhere and we
41 got some really good runs. If we could figure that
42 out, you know, to me it's worth taking all your money,
43 and the heck with up north, and the heck with anywhere
44 else. Let's figure out and solve our issues down here.

45
46 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Very well said, Tom.
47 I couldn't agree more. You know, we are seriously
48 lacking in scientific data for the Seward Peninsula on
49 anything. And you can't manage without science. It's
50 not really management, it's just -- you know, you're

1 just taking a shot at it. So I couldn't agree more.
2 And particularly fish.

3

4 MR. KATCHEAK: Mr. Chair. One comment.
5 Over the years we've had beaver in all of our rivers.
6 And we don't know what kind of effects that these
7 village have on salmon, but it seem like in the years
8 that other villages that have problem with fish coming
9 to their streams, I'm not sure if the population of the
10 salmon are causing the effects we're experiencing.

11

12 We seem to have just as many or more
13 fish each year, maybe because our village is closed to
14 commercial salmon fishing. That could be one of the
15 reasons why our fish are constantly coming.

16

17 As far as beavers are concerned, I
18 think we need to look at the beaver population and make
19 some proposed changes on our harvest for the beaver.

20

21 Just one remark I would like to make is
22 that some years ago I went to a watershed meeting in
23 Kotlik, and a fellow from Canada, because the Yukon
24 River goes up to Yukon Territory, that they were
25 hurting for beaver. And I said, well, we have so many
26 beavers over here, we could give you some of our
27 beavers. Maybe that will help you raise your beaver
28 population up, because they said there's hardly any
29 beaver up on the eastern part of Alaska. So I made an
30 offer, that if you want beaver, I'll get beaver for
31 you, and you can take it back to Canada. So I think
32 that would be sort of closing.

33

34 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Nice. Go ahead, Amos.

35

36 MR. OXEREOK: I'm looking at all your
37 projects in the different regions, and I think it would
38 be really interesting up here in this area to see the
39 different species migration patterns. And, let's see.
40 And what species are in all the different areas on the
41 Seward Peninsula. I know the further south you go,
42 there's more interest because there's more fish, but I
43 don't see any data -- it would be nice to see data on
44 the whole -- all the river systems in the Seward
45 Peninsula region.

46

47 CHAIRMAN SMITH: That's a very good
48 comment, Amos.

49

50 Something that came out of the Norton

1 Sound Salmon Research and Restoration Program was a
2 study plan. And it's a very comprehensive study plan.
3 It identified research needs for salmon. So it's for
4 salmon. So that's a good document to use. There's no
5 sense recreating the wheel. Almost all those needs are
6 still needs. The problem with doing what Amos says,
7 and I couldn't agree more with what you say, is it just
8 costs so much money, and a lot of times the technology
9 is not available. You know, there's no way to track
10 fish throughout their migratory range. We have no idea
11 where a salmon that leaves the Seward Peninsula goes.
12 No idea at all. We know some of them end up in the
13 North Pacific, but we don't know how they get there.
14 So there's just a lot of need, and we need just a lot
15 more than you've got.

16

17 MR. SEETOT: In my summary I forgot to
18 mention the pike that are on Kuzitrin. They're
19 voracious fish that pretty much line the banks of
20 Kuzitrin River. So that was one of the ones that I was
21 going to look at is the Pike and the beaver explosion.
22 I even received a couple pike from my next door
23 neighbor, and he supplied me with pike pretty much from
24 January to February, whenever they went up the Kuzitrin
25 River to go pike fishing. In the past the elders
26 pretty much, like from Teller and Mary's Igloo, I think
27 kept the pike population in check, because they were up
28 there all the time fishing, pretty much year around.
29 You don't see that with the younger generation
30 nowadays. And the real big pike, they do have big egg
31 sacks that I noticed. And they can multiply very fast.

32

33 So that was one of the -- that
34 constantly remains back in my head, are we going after
35 the wrong fish, because, you know, they're eating the
36 small frys, like the salmon that we so cherish, or is
37 there something else in between that we really don't
38 know about that keeps the salmon in check in certain
39 places, especially Nome and Norton Sound. You know,
40 you hear all kinds of comments about chum salmon. They
41 can have all the chum salmon they want by going to
42 Agiapuk River, because that's where the majority of
43 salmon goes through in Port Clarence. And then the
44 other use Imuruk Basin to go up toward Salmon River and
45 Glacier Lake and other places, so that's the important
46 watersheds for Port Clarence to fish.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Elmer.

1 MS. LaVINE: Mr. Chair. Yeah. Thank
2 you all so much for your comments. And you may want to
3 provide more.

4
5 The most important, I think the most
6 important thing you can do is to provide your comments
7 as part of the priority information needs call to be
8 able to say that some of these questions you really
9 specifically want to be answered.

10
11 Again, part of the challenge is going
12 to be the immediate Federal nexus. And perhaps working
13 with some of the local and, you know, Federal fisheries
14 biologists, we can assist in that process if you have
15 any ideas.

16
17 But these comments that you're
18 providing now and more as they -- as these meetings go
19 forward that have to do with fisheries on the Seward
20 Pen can be rolled into the priority information needs.

21
22 CHAIRMAN SMITH: And that may be
23 something we want to put in our annual report which is
24 the next agenda item, too.

25
26 I don't know about you guys. I'm
27 getting pretty tired. Maybe we can save that for
28 tomorrow.

29
30 You know, our 2014 annual report was
31 very good. Very, very good. The best one ever. And
32 so I think this one should be similar, but we might
33 want to add a few things like what we just talked
34 about. So let's think about it tonight, and come back
35 tomorrow and see if we can put together an even better
36 annual report than we had last year.

37
38 MS. LaVINE: Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRMAN SMITH: So a motion to
41 adjourn. Or to recess. Do we need a motion to -- we
42 don't even need a motion to recess, do we? Okay.
43 We'll recess until tomorrow. What time. 9:00 o'clock.

44
45 MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. Members of
46 the Council. First I do want to apologize and to the
47 public members for the phone system today. It's been
48 back and forth, and we're still not quite sure whether
49 it is an equipment failure, or it's the telephone lines
50 that come to this building. As a result of that, it's

1 probably best that we stay in this venue for tomorrow,
2 because I'd hate to move everything over to the hotel
3 and find out that it is indeed an equipment issue
4 versus a line issue. So anybody who was in the room
5 earlier that you happen to see, you might to let them
6 know. I'll go ahead and let the folks over at the
7 Aurora know in case they get asked that somebody wants
8 to come to this meeting tomorrow. So in conclusion,
9 the meeting will be held here tomorrow.

10

Thank you very much.

11

12

13

MR. GRAY: I don't know how well
14 announced this meeting was, but I would suggest
15 somebody put on Nome Announce that this meeting is
16 going to continue through tomorrow. There's something
17 called Nome Announce that Nome lives by. And if they
18 could get it on the Nome Announce and maybe the radio,
19 maybe we'll get some players other than the
20 administration in here.

21

Thank you.

22

23

24

MS. DEATHERAGE: Mr. Chair. Members of
25 the Council. I understand there's also a pretty active
26 Facebook page. So if anybody has -- it's a private
27 page so you have to be a member of it. If somebody
28 would like to post it on the Facebook page, that would
29 be super.

30

31

32

33

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35

36

37

38

So we begin at 9:00 o'clock tomorrow

morning.

Thank you.

(Off record)

(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
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STATE OF ALASKA)

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 02 through 108 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SEWARD PENINSULA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I taken electronically on the 14th day of October 2015 at Nome, Alaska;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 25th day of October 2015.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/18