MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Christianson, Chairman
Charles Brower
Rhonda Pitka
Chad Padgett, Bureau of Land Management
Greg Siekaniec, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Don Striker, National Park Service
Gene Peltola, Bureau of Indian Affairs
David Schmid, U.S. Forest Service

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

Recorded and transcribed by:
Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC
135 Christensen Drive, Second Floor
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-243-0668; sahile@gci.net
MR. DOOLITTLE: Good morning everybody.
It's the top of the hour. And this is our power
through day on the agenda. So getting through this is
really important and staying on task for this day as I
talked this morning with the Chair.

I'll first do a quick roll call to see
who we have on line.

I'll start with the National Park
Service with Don Striker, are you on?

MR. STRIKER: Good morning, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Good morning, Don.

Bureau of Land Management, Chad
Padgett, are you on?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: I'll come back around
to you.....

MR. C. BROWER: Good morning.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Oh, Charlie, good
morning Charlie.

MR. C. BROWER: Yeah, you got to speak
closer to the mic, I can barely hear you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, I'll speak
closer, how about that.

MR. C. BROWER: A little better, okay.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Bureau of Land
Management, Chad Padgett.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. I'll come back
to Chad, I know Greg's on line.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, good morning, Tom,

I'm here.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, Dave.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Roger, Roger, 10-4.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Alrighty, Gene, good to

hear you.

Rhonda Pitka, are you on line yet.

MS. PITKA: Yes, I am.

MR. DOOLITTLE: All right. You sound

clear now, that's great.

Tony Christianson, are you on line?

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Chairman

Christianson.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, we're still

waiting for Chad and Tony.

MR. PADGETT: I'm here, this is Chad.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hey, Chad, good

morning. We're just waiting for the Chair.

Ken Lord, are you on line?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Don't hear Ken

yet.

(Teleconference interference -

participants not muted)
MR. DOOLITTLE: And the State of Alaska, is Ben Mulligan on line?

MR. MULLIGAN: Good morning, the State is here.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Alrighty, Ben, good to hear your voice.

Suzanne Worker, are you on line?

MS. WORKER: I'm here, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Katya Wessels, are you on line?

MS. WORKER: It sounds like Katya might not have a speaking roll, she said she can't hear anything.

MR. DOOLITTLE: So the speaking roles would be for her and it would be coming up after public testimony.

MS. WORKER: Yeah, it sounds like she can't hear the conference though. I might just advise her to try to.....

MR. DOOLITTLE: Right. And Operator, if we could make sure that people can hear the conference and they're not listening to muzak while they're in too, that would be wonderful.

OPERATOR: Absolutely, Sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And I'm on, Tom, this is Anthony.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hey, Tony, good to have you. And I'll go to see what RAC Chairs are on this morning.

Is Don Hernandez on this morning.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Southcentral RAC, is Greg Encelewski on this morning.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Kodiak/Aleutians, Della Trumble on this morning.

MS. TRUMBLE: I'm here, good morning.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Good morning, Della. Bristol Bay, is Nanci Lyon on this morning.

MS. MORRIS LYON: I am.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hi, Nanci, good morning.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Good morning.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yukon Kuskokwim Delta, Alissa Rogers.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: I don't hear Alissa.

Western Interior, Jack Reakoff.

MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff's here, thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Good morning, Jack.

Seward Penn, Louis Green.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Northwest Arctic, Mike Kramer.

(No comments)


(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: And last but not least North Slope, Gordon Brower.
(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. We have a few of our RAC Chairs on. And we have a full quorum of the Federal Subsistence Board at this particular time. I do want to check to see if Lisa Maas or Chris McKee are on line.

MR. MCKEE: I'm here Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: All right.

MS. MAAS: Yeah, this is Lisa, I'm here.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, great, you guys. Alrighty, I think, Mr. Chair, at your direction to go into our morning of public comment period on non-agenda items.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, thank you for that Tom. And we'll start this morning off on that and welcome everyone back to the fourth day of our Federal Subsistence Board meeting and hopefully we can jam through this session today and get work we have on the table ahead of us, so we'll go ahead and open up the line to any public comments on non-agenda items this morning. And, again, you know, we are on our last day of teleconference and I would remind and ask people that we be mindful of trying to keep it around 10 minutes. So, thank you. And, with that, we'll open up the floor to non-agenda items to the public.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Then Operator if we could remind the public it's star one to get into the call and if you could announce who's in the cue before they speak.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Jordan?

OPERATOR: My apologies, Tom, I was just speaking with Karen on behalf of Louis, she has now joined the call.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. That's good to hear. Is there anybody in the cue that is available to speak and press star one, we're at the public comment
period.

OPERATOR: Yes, Sir. Our first comment comes from Lincoln Bean, your line is now open.

MR. BEAN: Good morning, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Lincoln, we can hear you fine, thank you you have the floor.

MR. BEAN: All right. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Board members.

Mr. Chairman, I've been involved in health care, it'll be 40 years this year, and I've never seen an epidemic like this in all my years of health care on top of 80 percent unemployment in my community, on top of not having ferry services in Southeast. It's not like -- something you've never seen or witnessed. I'm sure we're all in the same boat. But there's no reason why we can't live off the land, the air, and the sea. The sea is our garden. The air we have fowl, birds. The land we have the deer, the moose, grouse, you name it, whatever walks on God's Earth that can provide healthy food for our people. And, you know, I'm not getting any younger, so my nephews bring food to my door.

And there's something all of our people are known for, is helping each other.

And in this time it's never been more important for all of us across the nation, across the world, there is going to be food famine coming because of the shortages that are taking place in meat factories, there's no reason why we can't go out. I'm a firm believer in self-governance and self-determination. And the trust responsibility of the Federal government and the State has to our people. And I need to remind them that we all need to -- that this is a time, we're not looking for handouts, we can stand our own ground, we can provide for our own people, the back door is our store when we go out. We don't want to abuse them, we know when to hunt and not to hunt when they're carrying their little fawns, their little babies, we know to leave them alone. We know what to hunt for.
Mr. Chairman, I don't have to plead to you as Native people or the government, but I can tell you this, that our people will survive and this is a learning lesson and this is where we all have to stand united, not only to keep this disease away from our people, but also to keep them -- our people shouldn't have to go to jail and become criminals for getting the food that they live off of. I appreciate all the work that you do. If I've insulted or hurt anybody, please forgive me, that was not my intention.

Thank you, very much.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr. Bean, appreciate you calling in this morning with a top concern expressed by the public all week in our public testimony and appreciate you calling on behalf of your community and giving us the insight that you have.

So thank you for calling. Any questions for Lincoln.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, Mr. Bean, you have a good day and the best to you in your community.

OPERATOR: Our next comment comes from DeAnna Perry, your line is open.

MS. PERRY: Good morning, Board. Actually I was chiming in earlier just to let you know that I was standing in stead of the Southeast and Southcentral Regional Advisory Council Chairs.

Thank you.

OPERATOR: Our next public comment comes from Deborah Lind, your line is open.

MS. LIND: Good morning, Chairman, and members of the Board. My name is Deborah Lind. I work for Tanana Chiefs Conference as a Natural Cultural Resource specialist. I'm currently working with hunting, fishing task force serving 42 villages in the Interior assisting with food security issues.

The hunting and fishing task force has
established a network system tracking and notifying rural villages who do not have direct and convenient access to grocery stores and other packaged foods. We are in direct contact with tribal councils assisting them completing and submitting the complex special action request form and answering questions for them. We currently have eight SARs submitted for your review.

As you, the Members of this Board, discuss solutions to create a quick response to solving food security issues in rural Alaska, I believe we can help each other.

Tanana Chiefs Conference has partnerships with all agencies here on this Board. I believe leveraging our partnership can reduce time, resources and Staff hours and notification and processing of SARs from a very vast large landscape of rural Alaska. The hunting and fishing task force is prepared to expedite SARs bringing a quick response to food security which is an integral source for physical, mental and spiritual help and well-being to rural Alaska villages.

Thank you for this opportunity.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Thank you for taking the time to call in this morning, any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Again, I appreciate you speaking to the food security issue this morning.

OPERATOR: Our next public comment comes from Mr. Gambell, your line is open.

MR. GAMBELL: Good morning, could you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good morning, Shewan, I can hear you loud and clear, you have the floor.

MR. GAMBELL: (In Tlingit) Chairman Christianson and members of the Federal Subsistence Board. I'm (In Tlingit).

Good morning again, my name is Shewan
Jackson Gambell. My Tlingit name is (In Tlingit) which translates to watchman of Hamilton Bay. I belong to the (In Tlingit) Clan and I'm in the Kixadi Clan, and I come from the people of Kake. I am an emerging leader for the Central Council of Indian -- or Central Council of Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and AFN, Southeast Regional Village alternate, and I'm speaking on behalf of the citizens I represent in Southeast Alaska and also as a concerned tribal citizen of Kake.

I'm reaching out today to speak in support of Organized Village of Kake's, along with other tribal requests for emergency tribal action, or sorry about that -- special action request to consider special hunts and fishing an option during this uncertain pandemic time to secure wild game if the shipments from down South don't come in in a timely manner. The majority of Kake's and many rural communities meat supply come in via barge, and with no ferrys it makes it difficult and expensive for us to get the essential things to survive. We make the best of what we have here and we help out the community when needed. Huge industrial meat factories of pork, chicken and beef across the U.S. are being shut down because of Covid-19 outbreaks in the meat plants and that puts our tribal citizens at great risk and even worse food shortages.

Going back to some of the -- I did a lot of research of how ANILCA could, you know, be applicable to my people, in some of my earlier under-graduate work. And I'm a University of Oregon PhD graduate, John Starkey, stated that numerous Native leaders have spoken at AFN Conventions, rejecting subsistence as a term that minimizes a complex and holistic way of interacting with their traditional land, waters, plants and animals that share this territory. I think that that statement is referring to that there is more than just fishing and hunting to survive. It's a way of life because a lot of our traditional values being tied into hunting and fishing like patience, integrity, giving out traditional foods to elders and members of the community and not expect anything in return for them.

Maintaining our traditional lands for future generations and to always respect what you catch and eat.
I grew up watching my pappas and my uncles hand out food, even if it was just a taste, or enough to last for a long time, the feeling of seeing my elders and community filled with joy and happiness in receiving those traditional foods is priceless to me.

Protection of our foods and food security is why I chose to go into Native environmental science because of the importance of the traditional foods to my community.

During the territorial days of Alaska, one of the first subsistence laws that was created from U.S. Government's trust responsibility, the Native people, the Government thought that "any Indian or Eskimo, prospector, traveler can take birds, fish or game, fresh game, in the closed season when he is in need of food. Under Title VIII it gives rural Alaska subsistence users a priority on Federal land and waters and we need to act now, because this won't just help us right now, as tribes, we need to be more incorporated with the role of management and incorporate Alaska Native traditional knowledge, management practices and customs to implementation and regulations of subsistence hunting. If Title VIII were interpreted as Indian Legislation, tribes would be eligible to enter contracts, compacts and annual funding agreements where implementing Title VIII in Native villages under Self-Determination Act and Education Assistance Act, and that also comes from Starkey.

I remember when I was going my final research paper in my sophomore year on ANILCA and focusing on Title VIII and relating why herring should be a forage fish and push for more tribal management for our traditional foods and resources. I remember interviewing Chairman Christianson on that topic and was (indiscernible - muffled) a secondary source on my final paper at that time. I didn't know that I'd be giving public comment to the Federal Subsistence Board two years later so I tried to do my research topics on ideas that one day to help my people and the generations to come.

This is an issue that doesn't only have to do with food security. It lets our young men and women practice our traditions. We have been doing it for thousands of years. We can set the standard of
food security in Alaska if we form unity and work
together to do what's best for our citizens and our
shareholders. There's a lot of people that will
benefit from these fishing and special hunts, not only
now, but in the uncertain times to come in the future.

That's all I have for you today.

I hope that hearing a youth voice will
help influence the Federal Subsistence Board to add the
Special Action Requests to the agenda and have an
answer by the end of the meeting today.

Gunalcheesh for taking the time to
listen to my public comment. It means a lot to be
speaking in front of you today.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Shewan. Appreciate you taking the time to call in
today and speak on the issue of food security. It's an
important topic that we've placed before us at this
Board meeting so definitely good luck to you and your
community.

Any questions for Shewan.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, Mr. Chair, BIA.

(No comments)

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
Gene, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you. I would like
to ask the speaker, what is the current availability of
the food in his community at this moment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. GAMBLE: Right now we're making by
with what we have. We've recently done some fishing
for halibut to just hand out during Easter time. But
right now, you know, we have enough right now but, you
know, it's not that we're starving, you know, it's that
we're preparing for what's to come, you know, it's food
security.
That's all I have.

Thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other questions for Shewan.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: Our last public comment comes from Liz Cravalho, your line is now open.

MS. CRAVALHO: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I just wanted to provide some brief comments to you this morning.

As you know NANA Regional Corporation manages 2.2 million acres of land on behalf of our shareholders and this land falls within Game Unit 23 area. We manage this land to ensure access and use of these lands for subsistence purposes and to seek economic development that benefits our shareholders.

Today the people of the NANA region, like the rest of the country and the world are facing a serious pandemic. Covid-19 is a respiratory disease that threatens all individuals and especially those with preexisting conditions and the elderly.

As you know, currently there are no known effective vaccines or treatments to ease this spread of this deadly virus and with this in mind, NANA supports the temporary action request for Game Unit 23, specifically to protect communities and make sure that the rural health care system is not over extended. So I'm calling today to express that support for discussion on the agenda and Covid-19 is not the first pandemic that our communities have faced and that is persistent and communicable. Communities in the NANA region have seen significant losses due to the 1918 flu epidemic and Tuberculosis, both are respiratory diseases that are highly communicable and responsible for the death of many Alaskans and Alaska Natives. The advancement of the 1918 flu and Tuberculosis led to the effort to improve home ventilation, decrease crowding...
and improve health care, get water to villages. Though living conditions have improved today in our communities, many families in our own region still do not have running water and have multiple generations living under one roof. This means that many families and individuals in the NANA region continue to be more susceptible to respiratory illnesses. Individuals carrying Covid-19 may be asymptomatic and can cause the spread of this deadly disease unknowingly. This increase the likelihood of individuals contracting this illness and spreading it throughout the community.

Prior to the development of a vaccine or other effective treatments for the flu and Tuberculosis, there are two important steps that could be taken to prevent the spread of the diseases, maintain social distancing from each other and ensure proper sanitation of individuals, homes, and communal spaces.

Right now rural communities have a rare opportunity to maintain social distancing until medical technology can catch up and they can do this, both in their communities and by limiting travel to their communities.

The TSA request for Game Unit 23 to close hunting to non-Federally-qualified users is an opportunity for the Federal Subsistence Board to be a partner in addressing this public health crises and assuring that the loss of life in these rural communities to Covid-19 is limited and not as severe as the 1918 flu or the decades of losses from the Tuberculosis.

We encourage the Federal Subsistence Board to consider what it can do to implement this as an emergency order as quickly as possible.

I want to thank you for your service and I appreciate your time.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to call in today, appreciate it. Any questions from the Board.

MS. PITKA: I didn't catch the last
speaker's name.

MS. CRAVALHO: Sorry. My name is Elizabeth Cravalho and I am the vice president of lands for NANA Regional Corporation.

(In Inupiaq)

MS. PITKA: Thank you very much for your testimony, that was really good. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Our next public comment comes from Joel Jackson, your line is open.

MR. JACKSON: Good morning and thank you, Mr. Chair, and the Board for allowing me to speak again. I know I've been here for the last two days. I think it's an important enough issue for me to call in every day.

You've heard from a number of our community members today, like my grandson, Shewan mentioned, we're not in that place where we're in a panic mode to provide for our community because we've been doing our share providing fresh fish, fresh king salmon when it was open, fresh halibut we gave away to the community. We also got clams because we knew that with the warming weather that would be probably the last time we'd be able to do that for that thing there. And then after that we did another halibut, my nephews and grandson went out and got more halibut and we gave it away. We've been providing because we know how important our Native traditional foods are to our people. Right now it's more important than ever that we keep providing these things because those are the things that sustained us for thousands of years. Our bodies crave it. So, you know, we will continue to do that for our community.

I'm blessed that I have a boat that I can use and let my nephews and grandsons use to provide for the community.

And we've been taught that for thousands of years, to provide for others that are less fortunate than we are, and we never ask for anything in return, that was the way we were taught. That's what I'm teaching my nephews and my grandsons, that we do it out of the goodness of our heart because we care for
our people.

So I just wanted to give you a little history on that.

And also encourage you to put the special request thing on your agenda and hopefully act on it today. Being a community leader, it weighs heavy on me to provide for my community. But like I mentioned before, I will do what I need to do to make sure our people are safe and they have what they need.

I'm not asking your permission, I want to make that clear. Whether you approve it or not, if the time comes we will act because we have to. So right now, you know, it's a lot of unknown things out there, our people are getting scared, they have been scared, you know, it's almost a 24 hour a day thing, leadership in these small communities, because we deal with not only our tribal problems that we have but social and criminals, you know, it's -- for our community we don't have law enforcement, we have a VPSO. And for those of you that don't know what a VPSO is, it's a Village Public Safety Officer, and unfortunately he has limited powers. So a lot of times people don't even call him, they call us, and we go and take care of things. But that's just the way it is in a lot of the small communities across Alaska, they're in the same situation we are. Tribal leadership has to step up and do what the State should be doing.

But I encourage you, right now, to consider this special action request that you've received from all across Alaska because people are concerned about their communities and concerned that they're not going to be getting the meat and whatever else that they're falling short on. I know I can't even get any eggs or butter or anything, which I don't mind, but, you know, being in the Western world for so many years we get accustomed to eating that stuff.

But thanks again, and I appreciate all your hard work and, you know, I'm honored to be able to speak with you all.

Like my cousin, Lincoln Bean said, you know, if I said anything to offend anybody, please forgive us, because right now is a very trying time for us. And I sometimes forget to mention that last part
when I'm done talking.

Anyway, I appreciate your time and your
efforts of what you're doing and I hope that this
special action request is put on your agenda so you can
act on it.

All right, thank you, have a good day.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Joel, appreciate you taking the time to call in and
painting a realistic picture of what community leaders
face in rural Alaska. Me, being a Mayor, I can
definitely reflect on and appreciate the role that you
play in your community, being from a rural community
here, Hydaburg, as well, with almost a similar
situation, except we have a little bit better access to
some facilities which I appreciate. But thank you for
taking the time to call in and playing the role you do
in the community.

Operator, is there anybody else in
line.

OPERATOR: Yes, we have several people
left. Our next public comment comes from Ben Stevens,
your line is open.

MR. STEVENS: Well, thank you very
much, Operator, and thanks for keeping us all
connected.

Mr. Chairman, good morning to you, and
the Board. Can you hear me clearly?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Ben, I can
hear you clearly, you have the floor.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you very much.
I'll be really brief. I just realized that I had not
really explained my perspective in some of the comments
I made yesterday and some folks in a roundabout way
kind of was wondering how was I qualified to make the
statements that I did and I think what I did is I
scared them and they caused me a little bit of guff.
So let me extend that courtesy also to members of the
Board that don't know me and that may not necessarily
be too familiar with Alaska Native people and rural
villages.
I grew up as Deneski's (ph). When I got older my grandmother changed my name to (In Native) essentially it means makes me think ahead, which I guess I did to her. Anyway, I grew up in Stevens Village and went away to school, I did the boarding school thing and went on to college, and when I came back to the village is when I realized that we had absolutely no place in the management of the foods that we rely upon. There was one case where an ADF&G biologist told me that I probably should turn around and go back to the village because they had our concerns addressed. And so I mean that was the way that we were told to go through the day. Unfortunately that didn't really work because he didn't -- in good times we were having food security issues. And so this is nothing new to us. This whole pandemic environment that we're in right now has just exacerbated and, I think, elevated, the need of the people. Now, it's becoming a lot more dire. When I first got back to the village from the city, the elders came up to me and they said, you need to go down to the place here, where we call the (In Native) and -- because there's a problem down there, and (In Native) for those that don't know is called the Dall River, and it's right there between Stevens Village and the Haul Road, where the TransAlaska Pipeline goes across the Yukon River. As soon as the road went through that became quickly known as a world class pike fishery, the Dall River, and so without regulations it was flooded and nobody did anything about it. Needless to say the resources of that area were depleted. And it was no longer (In Native), and so the elders came to me and said, go -- you need to talk to somebody about helping that place down there and so I did. I went and I talked to Fish and Wildlife Service and Fish and Game, and it was at that time one of the Fish and Game biologists turned to me and said, go home, we got this, and I said, but there's a problem down there, and he said -- they said we've got no data to indicate that there's a problem down there. No data to tell us that there is a problem down there and so they disregarded it but with a lot of public screaming and hollering they finally said, okay, let's take a look at it. So needless to say we took a look at it and they brought us right back around the same circle and said, see, the data does not indicate a problem.

And so that was a huge, huge wake up call for me that we knew there was a problem, yet, the
managing agency said that there was no problem.

So I am extremely, extremely worried
that this is going to be another situation like that.

When our folks are in dire need and
screaming for food security, we need to pay attention
to that. I mentioned yesterday that a lot of our folks
submitted requests for relief from the State, extend
the hunting season here or there, or allow people to go
out and get some meat to feed the village, and that was
just flatly denied. And as I mentioned, one of the
reasons was conservation concerns. They were worried
about depleting resources which would inhibit future
hunts for their many constituents. And so in light of
that blatant disregard, we're worried that this may be
another one of those situations and I'm begging that we
pay a little bit of attention to this because what's
happening out there on the ground is real to our folks.

I mentioned earlier that they don't
have paychecks. They don't have Fred Meyers down the
street that they can easily go to, they have to go out
and hunt their food down. And right now we're trying
desperately to abide by the regulations, we're trying
hard. What do you do when the regulation says, ah,
well, according to these words, you can't go eat. What
do you do. What do we do. And like Mr. Jackson said
earlier, we're very likely going to have to go and feed
our families.

And so I believe this is a great
opportunity for us to come together and work this thing
out. If we do not, we're going to have a tremendous
amount of criminalization of our people doing what they
do, living their lives, being who they are. That is
not necessarily the way that I think anyone wants to
go, especially when we all know that the Alaska Native
people have a direct connection to the land and the
animals that surround us.

We all know that when you tell that
Native man there that he can't do his job, his job is
to feed the people, protect the weak, we have told him,
don't do that, go sit on the couch, there's some
commodity cheese; that disconnection right there breeds
incredible amount of turmoil and that breeds, I
believe, a lot of the social ills that plague us these
days. I know of a man right now that is probably early
to mid-60s. He spent his entire life serving the people. Every time there was a need he was there. Every
time we had to dig a grave he was there. Every
time that there was something to do in the community he
was there, he was being a positive force in the world.
He was cutting wood for grandparents. He was bringing
soup to the elder that couldn't get out of their house.
He was bringing wood to the single parent that had a
hard time getting out. And then we disconnected him
from that job. He ended up on the sidewalk. Now, he's
less of a powerful service to the community. Now he's
involved in the judicial system. Now he's taking up a
lot of the resources that shouldn't be used in this
regard.

We need to reconnect our people with
the land and the animals.

We need to establish again the ability
for our folks to go out there without fear of
criminalization and do what they do. The benefits to
this is going to be immense. It's going to be immense.
And I'm begging you that you go through the hard
discussions, you feel the fear and you try to help
those that OSM is supposed to help at the very core.

Mr. Chairman, I'm anxious to see how
much we can do to help those folks out there in our
villages.

With that I'll thank you for your time
and your attention. I didn't mean to be that long.

So, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
Appreciate you calling in today to speak to the issue.
Again, I applaud everybody who is taking that time to
clearly express the concerns out there in rural Alaska
and what our immediate needs are.

Any questions for Ben.

(NO comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I appreciate
that Ben, and the best to you and your community.

Operator, we'll move on to the next.
OPERATOR: The next comment comes from Tisha Kuhns, your line is open.

MS. KUHNS: Good morning, I am Tisha Kuhns. I am the vice president of land and natural resources for Calista Corporation. And we thank you today, Operator, Board and Chairman for the opportunity to comment.

Calista is one of 12 Alaska Native Corporations created under the ANCSA law of 1971 encompassing a land entitlement of 6.5 million acres which include communities served by multiple Game Units. The Calista region has 56 villages and 46 tribes, with a shareholder base of over 31,000 shareholders. These communities continually struggle with housing shortages, limited water, sanitary and sewer infrastructure, village erosion and limited healthcare facilities and personnel. Covid-19 further complicates these village issues and would create an unfathomable strain on limited resources if it reaches these villages. Access to traditional food offsets the limited access to commercial groceries in many of these communities.

Calista urges expedited action for emergency special requests for hunt, and in particular game units that are managed in the region. With Ravn filing for bankruptcy, the sudden loss of essential air service to regional communities places additional strain on weather dependent delivery of mail and food.

Approving a special request would not impact these short opening opportunities, we believe, as our region's moose population has remained strong since the moratorium was lifted around 2015. We encourage your consideration and approval for emergency request that will be coming in the near future and we believe this will also lessen the activity of illegal hunt.

Again, thank you to the Board and Chairman for the opportunity to make comment.

And I do have one question, Calista provided a letter of support for Game Management Unit 19A for an emergency opening request and I haven't heard back or have gotten feedback on that status for that request.
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Thank you for calling in. And I'm not sure, Tom, is there Staff that has an answer to the question.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Tony, this is Tom.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, anything that was part of a special action request and are part of that package are being reviewed right now along with any special action and so that would be part of it. We'll make sure that Staff doublechecks to make sure that Calista Corporation's comments were part of that package.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. Thank you for that. And, again, thank you for calling in, I appreciate that.

Operator, next caller.

OPERATOR: Our next comment is from Courtenay Carty, your line is open.

MS. CARTY: Good morning, thank you, Operator, Mr. Chair, members of the Board, and our passionate and engaged subsistence harvesters and participants in this very important process.

I do have two questions of the Board this morning before I get into my testimony.

I know we've heard already that this is our rush through day and I know we've also heard a lot of testimony about food security and the SARs so I just want to maybe ask if that is on the agenda, and I'm tracking the agenda on line and it is not listed as an amended agenda item. So that's one question.

The second question is just maybe so we could understand, those of us who are on the line, we're hearing every region of our state calling about their SARs except for maybe us and it was interesting, our caribou hunt ended March 31st, right when we were
really, really rapidly responding to Covid, as we still are, I'm going to include one agenda item comment in my testimony this morning because I'm going to be wrapped up in Covid calls from 11:00 to probably 3:00 today and I'm not sure I'm going to be able to pop back on, but I really hope the SAR issue does get on the agenda and food security might be the better word.

But maybe how many SARs have been submitted or are in process right now?

Maybe I could start with the questions and then get into my testimony after they're answered.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair, this is Tom, again.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair, this is Tom. Maybe, through the Chair, I could answer those questions.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: This is the Operator.....

MR. DOOLITTLE: Operator, is Mr. Christianson still on line.

OPERATOR: Unfortunately it seems he is disconnected, one moment as we wait for him to dial back in.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Board Member Pitka, through you, can I answer those questions?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Operator, at this time, can I make a poll to see who is still on line from the Federal Subsistence Board?

OPERATOR: Yes, sir, all participants that have open lines on our list are currently on.

We currently do not have Rhonda on or Jack. We also do not have the Chair, Anthony.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I just came back in.

MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda, I'm back on.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: So, Mr. Chair, you are back on?

MS. PITKA: No, Rhonda is back on.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hi, Rhonda.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom. Tom, could you hear me?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yes, I can.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, I'm back on now, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. I was just going to answer a question relative to Board agenda from the public relative to SARs.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Tom, thank you, I appreciate that. I heard her asking questions and I got cut off, so sorry about that.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, no problem.

MS. PITKA: The last thing I heard her say was I want to ask two questions and then I got cut off.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. The questions are whether it was on the agenda, yes, at the other business section at the end of the agenda. The Board will be discussing food security issues. We do have, at least, eight special action proposals from throughout the state that we're analyzing and working through process with.
MS. CARTY: Through the Chair. Thank you so much, Tom. I appreciate those answers.

For the record, I guess we said my name, but Courtenay Carty, tribal administrator for Curyung Tribal Council. We are the Federally-recognized tribe of Dillingham, Alaska.

(In Native) is my name.

I'm going to try to stay on track. It's a little much hearing everybody this whole week. I will be off the call later today dealing with Covid calls.

I'll reiterate our tribes continued request for a Section .810 analysis on the BLM 17(b) land easements that are traversing the mine imprint project, imprint for the proposed Pebble project.

I appreciate you guys answering my questions today, that helps me clear up some of what I was going to say.

I do want to get some of my comments that I made in tribal consultation, boy, I think it was on Monday, into the record regarding delegated authority from the Refuge Manager for management of subsistence resources in their land units, and then also tribal council permit distribution.

It's kind of directly in regards to -- or at consultation I spoke to it in regards to deferred Proposal WP18-19, which I'm not sure if I'll be able to be on for later. But I think it's a very important task that our council provides for our community and I think it's an honor that I would love that we'd be able to share with the Ahtna people. There are many other tribes in Alaska who are able to process Federal permits for their community members, Native and non-Native alike, and I think it's very important to our community connectedness and that social fabric that is brought to our villages and towns tied to our connection to the land as people who live here irregardless of whether or not we're indigenous. A lot of times the only Native facility people in Dillingham travel to or visit is the hospital, BBAHC but every summer when the season's getting ready to start in August and our permits come in and then as soon as we
get snow-pack and then of course right before the end
of season we get a rush of our non-Native neighbors and
our Native people coming in to our building to get
their caribou permits and it's a very important time
because aside from seeing some masks and beautiful
carving and art out at the hospital on display, it's
really their only time that they're interacting with us
as an organization as a people and so they're able to
see some of our displays that provide education on our
history, the tribal people and community, and a lot of
times they leave there, you know, connecting with a
person that maybe they didn't know in town that they
can now say hi to at the grocery store or maybe go
hunting with. But also learning more about the
community in which they live in and some of the strong
roots and history that we have in our places.

So I think that's a very important
component and should be something that the Federal
Subsistence Board and the system, the amazing Staff and
workers that we have look into expanding and making
available in more communities.

I guess in ending I just want to really
encourage our Federal partners at the Board and your
Staff levels within the agencies, to please work with
the communities, which -- I guess the communities of
your land units, or wherever your nexus may be to,
irregardless of what the State is doing, ensure the
public safety in those communities in regards to Covid
and if the tribal council has a non-essential travel
ban, please try to understand your community's needs
and ability or lack thereof to respond to this public
health crises. And if we are going into communities for
field work this summer and research, that we're
practicing safe social distancing measures and
quarantining, et cetera, in accordance to local village
law.

That's all I have today.

I really appreciate everyone on the
line, the participants, you know, it used to be that it
was just us who have careers working to advocate for
the subsistence rights of our people who are calling in
on the line all the time or going to the meetings and
every meeting we hear more and more harvesters calling
in and families calling in and agencies and tribe's
providing testimony and so every meeting I feel like
we're doing a better and better job and this is what
we're supposed to do. So I'm really looking forward to
getting through my other calls and getting back on the
line at the end of the day to hear the conversation
about food security and if any tribes are available and
not calling in, and don't have the information, please
connect with the BIA every Tuesday and Thursday at
1:30, there's an all tribes call in response to Covid
and food security is talked about at those meetings.

Thank you, so much.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Courtenay, for taking the time to call in today. Any
questions for Courtenay.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The best to you
and your community, Courtenay. Appreciate, again, you
taking the time to call in.

Operator.....

(Teleconference interference -
participants not muted)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello.

(Teleconference interference -
participants not muted)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello,
somebody's.....

MS. CARTY: Hi, I can hear you on line.

(Teleconference interference -
participants not muted)

OPERATOR: This is the Operator, it's
coming from Greg's line.

MS. PITKA: Siekaniec, we can hear you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

Operator, if you could let us know the next public
testifier, please.
OPERATOR: This is the Operator, I have muted Greg's line for now. Our next public comment comes from Bruce Irvin, your line is now open.

MR. IRVIN: Good morning, Chairman and members of the Board, can you guys hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good morning, Bruce, I could hear you loud and clear.

MR. IRVIN: Thank you, Chairman, members of the Board and Staff. I'm glad to be back on here again today.

You know, I want to echo my boss, Ben Stevens, and for the record my name is Bruce Irvin, I work for Tanana Chief Conference, I'm the natural and cultural resources research coordinator.

And I just want to get back on here again and, you know, recap, refocus on the special action request for the Tanana Chiefs Conference region.

I guess I'd like to start out just, you know, maybe starting off with maybe like an analogy, and I don't know if it'll even come close to what tribes all over Alaska experience.

You know think about your garden, you know, you start it out, you plant that seed, you watch it grow, you take care of it, you water it, you make sure that it's taken care of. You know, you have to do certain things to make sure your garden flourishes. You can't just, you know, overharvest, you can't take more than what's needed. And when you're ready to go out there and you see that tomato that's just ripe, ready to go, you know, you see your pumpkin growing over there and it makes you feel really good, you know, you have a source of food that you can rely on. And the more better that you take care of it, the more you end up with. And a part of that is sharing with your family and your community.

So when you think about it, and you go out there and you look at that tomato, oh, man, that tomato is ready to go, I want to -- I should take some of that today so I can feed my family. And then you look at the regulations, am I able to take that today, does the law say that what I've been taking care of
(indiscernible-muffled), am I able to take that and feed my family today.

That's what we're dealing with.

We have -- sorry -- we have every right to provide for our families.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello?

MR. IRVIN: And we do not waste anything. We use every part of that animal. You know we do not take more than what is needed and we share it with the community and all tribes all over Alaska, we're all saying the same thing.

(Pause)

MR. IRVIN: Sorry. I don't know how else to say it and we've all been talking about it and we try to come up with ways to convey that from an Alaska Native perspective to all kinds of different perspectives, we're all one people.

So I just want to speak up today and our ancestors and creators stand behind us. We're not alone. We've done this for thousands of generations. So if you think about it in another analogy, tribes our elders, when our elders ask for something we have to honor it so I just want to say thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board.

Thank you for letting me talk today and I hope that we come to some agreement, and we really need to.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for taking the time to call in today and giving your testimony. It's important that we hear how this affects everybody so thank you and appreciate your words.

OPERATOR: Our next public comment comes from Brooke Wood, your line is open.
MR. WOOD: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board. My name is Brooke Wood and I grew up in Rampart Alaska. I had to move from my village to get an education and shortly after I returned.

And, again, I wanted to testify on the importance of the decisions made by the Board and agencies on ensuring that our rural communities have food security. And I just wanted to recognize the testimony of Bruce Irvin, my colleague, we are committed to having a long-term relationship with agencies as tribal members and we go to the extent of getting a Western education to be validated in these management meetings but also have the responsibility of learning from our elders, our matriarchs and ensuring that our ways of life survive because they were intentionally taken away from us through assimilation and you heard from my other colleague, Ben Stevens, on the social impacts to our communities and we come to you very humbly and ask that you meet the needs for our communities. Although there are avenues in which the State would like to provide food to our communities, the real need is the food that is from the land. And not every community is requesting emergency hunts, but they are necessary for the survival of our people.

So I just want to reiterate the importance of these SAR requests that you are receiving, and the ones that you will receive in the future.

Thank you so much for your time.

I was just inspired by my colleague to, once, again, testify.

If you have any questions, please ask me now.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Appreciate you taking the time to call in and testify. Any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, the best to you and your community.
Operator, is there another public member.

OPERATOR: Yes, there is one more public comment. Our next public comment comes from Karen Linnell, your line is open.

MS. LINNELL: Good morning, it's for Hanalee Sanford.

MS. SANFORD: Good morning, Mr. Chair and Operator and the members of the Board. My name is Hanalee Sanford from Mentasta.

First of all I'd like to encourage that the SAR to allow the hunt for -- during the Covid-19, especially with all the travel bans in the rural communities that rely on the planes and ferries to deliver groceries, and also that don't have the abundance that we have in our area, the -- but -- to get groceries. But where I live you have to travel 50 miles to go to the grocery store or 100 miles or more just to get, you know, milk and eggs. And that, too, is low in our area, a lot of the shelves are empty, no flour, no rice, and I recently went to the store last week and the price of hamburger went up and we get a lot of hamburger because that's kind of like the cheapest on the rack besides to get beef and other things, but, even the price of hamburger went up. In my community 90 percent of the community is poverty and they rely on food stamps and other options.

But I would really like to encourage the Board to really take this seriously for our rural communities that do not have a road system and they have to rely on their food off the land. And this is really important to provide for their families for food.

And also I'd like to support other areas on this issues, and approving this request will help the communities all around in rural Alaska.

And I would just like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for listening and the Board.

OPERATOR: And would you like to go to the next question?
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that. Yes, Operator, we would. Thank you for calling in today, appreciate you taking the time.

OPERATOR: Thank you. The next comment comes from Shirley Sinclair, you may go ahead.

MS. SINCLAIR: Good morning, can you hear me okay?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good morning, Shirley, hear you fine.

MS. SINCLAIR: Hi, how you doing Mr. Christianson and Board. I regret not having you guys up here in Ahtna Country for the meeting because of the Covid, but I'm here on the special action request.

It is, it's getting kind of scary that we have no store you could get a decent price of food, and you have to go all the way to Anchorage or you got to go to Fairbanks, then you can have like a Carrs or a Fred Meyers. We have an IGA here in Glennallen, and it's ridiculously high priced meat there. And I mean if we're really hungry we'll buy it but, you know, I'd really like to have moose we cook, but, yeah, we really enjoy to have food -- more Native food in my refrigerator and freezer. It's kind of -- I'm kind of a little nervous, I'm not really good at speaking but I'm looking at my phone and it's telling me it's okay.

So, okay, another thing was like I was listening to Bruce Irvin and it came to my mind, before he came, and I said, wow, he's saying the same thing as I am, but, you know, when your garden comes along and you want your -- you're really hungry for it, and when you have no other food around and the next thing that comes to your mind is your Native foods, that's your soul food, that's what you want to have, that makes you feel good inside, you know, when you're hungry, nothing can fill you up more than your Native foods. Also not seeing your family, it's pretty (indiscernible-muffled)

It would be so awesome if you guys could do the special action request for them and us too, we put one out too, and I think we were rejected from the State, too. So we're relying on you guys, you're our subsistence people and we need you to help
us. And really keep -- I mean -- and I've listened to all these -- I've been listening to you guys all week, I've been in here all week and it's so good to hear all the familiar voices and touching base, and I felt like I was there.

We just need these special requests for our people. And like everybody keeps saying we don't overtake or waste anything and we -- we -- you know, I have a moose hide outside right now just thawing out, I'm going to scrape it up this spring, and hopefully I can get some moose skin and get some projects going with that. I haven't done it before but I'm going to try.

And I had so many things I was going to talk about but anyways I hope you guys really, really, really think about what it is like to really be out here and not have a store that has decent prices. There's a little store here that's a little off the beaten road there, the prices are -- it's a little tiny store, I go to it to get my Coffeemate and my eggs all the time but it's not a big store, it doesn't have fresh meat, it doesn't have meat, it doesn't have anything like that. But prices up here, it's really high and it's -- if you don't have enough funds in your -- all your electric, I have a house payment, I have insurance for my car and I have everything else and then you realize, oh, I didn't buy any groceries and then you look in your pocket, oh, you got, maybe $50 for the month, that's not going to get me very far, I guess I'm going to go on a diet, but, you know, it's really hard to live up in -- and I can't imagine what it's like to live out there where you don't have all these things, like a local store, that could provide for you. Summertime is a good time for us, we can garden.

But, anyway, it would be really good to have that special action request for us, it would really help us out.

I wasn't prepared today but I decided I better put my two cents in and thank you for listening to me and I hope everybody has convinced you guys how important this is to us because it is very important.

Thank you.
Any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Thank you for taking the time to call in today, really appreciate it.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, Operator, is there any other public on line.

OPERATOR: Thank you. Carrie Stevens, you may go ahead.

MS. STEVENS: Good morning, thank you. Can everyone hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Carrie, could hear you fine.

MS. STEVENS: Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Christianson. Thank you for your service. Thank you to the Board.

And I really also want to especially thank Tribal Liaison, Orville Lind, for his work, as a single individual responsible for tribal consultation of over 200 tribes in Alaska. And that is no easy task, and also represent the inadequacies of this system as intended by law.

My name is Carrie Stevens and I am faculty at UAF. I'm used to seeing all of your faces during the Federal Subsistence Board meeting. As you know I teach introduction to the Federal Subsistence Board, we currently have over a dozen students in the course and I very much want to thank you all for your time and your service. I know that it's not an easy task.

As you also know in all of my work, I very rarely speak directly to you at this time, and a few things have been weighing on me that are very clearly outlined both in Federal law and regulation and in numerous published and unpublished academic reports, and I just wanted to share that with all of you today and for everyone on the line. I felt compelled to speak to all of you today.
I want to share that we are here today because in 1971 in the Congressional record, in the Conference Committee reports during the passage of ANCSA it was documented there was the expectation that the Secretary of the Interior and the State of Alaska would take action necessary to protect the Alaska Native way of life and subsistence needs.

So I just want to ensure that we have no question as to why you exist and as to why Title VIII of ANILCA was drafted and passed.

Also I just want to read a little bit of .801 and I hope that everybody is listening. I can't see the Board members faces, and I hope that you're all listening now, especially I don't know all of you that are new agency heads and previous agency heads, your education and training on the history of Alaska Native subsistence and ANILCA, Title VIII, and the regulation. And you exist today for the continuation of the opportunity for subsistence use by Alaska Natives on public lands and on Alaska Native held lands. And 40 years ago, we are at the 40 year anniversary of ANILCA, it was written into Federal law that this way of life is essential to Native physical, economical, traditional and cultural existence. We do not need to further question that. And in additionally in Section .801, it clearly demonstrates that this is under threat. IT says this is threatened by increasing population of Alaska which will result in pressure on subsistence resources by sudden decline in the population of some resources and increase accessibility of remote areas and by taking of fish and wildlife in manner inconsistent with recognized principles. And so Congress enacted ANILCA to fulfill the policies and purposes of ANCSA as a matter of equity and to evoke its Constitutional authority over Native affairs and Constitutional authority under the property clause and the commerce cause to protect and provide opportunity for subsistence by Alaska Natives.

So I just want to remind us of that today and every day that you sit there, that ANILCA Title VIII was written because of the promise and because of the trust responsibility as clearly outlined there. And to provide, to protect and to serve tribal governments and Native peoples in this country.

I just think that's very clear for us
to outline repetitively because I often have students questioning why was Title VIII of ANILCA written and what is the purpose and it shouldn't be called into question 40 years later. We know under the 2010 Secretarial Review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program that there are deep concerns within the Federal Government itself that it's not meeting the intent and purposes of ANILCA, Title VIII. And I appreciate that work and the fact that we now have Rhonda Pitka and Charles Brower sitting on the Board.

Other things that were called for at that time that have yet to be fulfilled, such as increase .809 agreements, ASA and self-governance agreements with tribal governments and Alaska Native organizations. If these were entered into you wouldn't see a slough of public testimony that tribal government needs are not being met. And I encourage you to continue to seek out .809 agreements, to seek out Title 4 Indian Self-Determination Education and Assistance Act, annual funding agreements, these can be used to address the request of special action requests. You have so many tools in your tool box already in existence if you have the courage and the respect and the trust to use them to empower tribal governments.

In 2012 the Alliance for Just Society published Survival Denied, highlighting the criminalization of Alaska Natives for feeding their people.

In March of 2013 there was a Congressional briefing held on Capital Hill and at that time, former Senator Mark Begich declared he knew no one better than Alaska Natives to manage resources to provide for their own people.

This is not a question. We all know this answer. It has been documented repetitively, but we also know it has been repetitively documented as in a report by Larry Merculief that was produced for the College of Rural and Community Development and funded by the Oak Foundation, published July 30th of 2012, that there is a severe lack of trust between Federal agency managers and Alaska Natives. In that report both Federal managers and Alaska Natives were surveyed and they both said they do not trust one another. This also should not be a question, we know this to be true.
In 2015 to start to address this issue, the University of Alaska-Fairbanks posted the first co-management symposium, there were over 200 individuals in attendance at the symposium, tribal, State, Federal representatives, to build trust, to build relationships to work together. And I want to read a quote from the words of Deputy Assistant Regional Director for the Alaska Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at that time: I'm very touched by elders openness, and sharing experiences that were painful for them personally and collectively. It was that honest and authentic sharing that helped me to understand the desire for more control over subsistence resources in a more visceral way. As someone who has lived in Alaska for the majority of my life, I am well versed in ANCSA and ANILCA. I understand the rights and history associated with those laws. Hearing Mr. Justin and others helps my heart to better understand.

I just encourage you to, as Board members, as you consider both proposals, the continuing requests put before you from Ahtna Incorporated, and others, that you consider these facts, these truths that have been proven time and again in academic reports. And also to remind yourself that you know that you have the tools and the authority to not only answer in a timely manner this emergency special action request before you at this time, but to create a Federal Subsistence Management Program that would not cause a crises, that would meet the intent of the law passed 40 years ago.

I just have one more point I wanted to share, I apologize if I am taking too long.

And that is from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, July 2018 report published by James A. Fall and Marilyn L. Cotzik (ph) Food Security and Wild Resource Harvest in Alaska. Again, this is not a question. The USDA defines food security as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life.

In this report it's everything we've been discussing is clearly identified and we continue to repeat ourselves. Quote: Compared to other states, Alaska faces unique food security challenge because of its remoteness, high cost of transportation, limited agricultural production and high reliance on imported
food. Also unique to Alaska is the major role that harvesting wild foods through fishing, hunting and gathering plays in support of food security. Indeed, as noted in the report Building Food Security in Alaska, the main source of local food in the state of Alaska today is subsistence and personal use gathering.

I encourage you to review this report. The conclusion of the report says what can be done to enhance Alaska food security as it relates to fish and wildlife. Again, these are truths that are self-evident that we all know to be true. Quote: Promote regulatory flexibility in response to changes in the timing, distribution and abundance of fish and wildlife populations. Promote the use of subsistence foods. Support and enhance involvement of resource users in the fish and wildlife management system including the documentation and application of local and traditional knowledge and observations. Support and enhance sustainable fish and wildlife management. It says current initiatives that are being carried out while food policy through access to local wild foods, the State of Alaska itself has published this document repetitively in technical documents, technical papers as they're called by ADF&G, has also acknowledged these things, yet, we see ADF&G issuing the importance of personal and sport use fisheries at this time and the need for Alaskans to participate in those but yet not allowing tribal government and villages to feed themselves. They're only asking to feed themselves in a respectful and culturally and historically and healthy appropriate manner that makes them whole.

I encourage you to consider that as you push forward your decision today on the proper way to address the special action request before you and I also ask you while you consider that, to address the documented mistrust between land managers and tribal governments.

Again, I thank you for listening. I hope that you are. I thank you for your time. I thank you for your service.

And I want to say (In Native) to everyone who has spoken over this last week.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Brooke [sic]. Any questions for Brooke [sic].

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate you giving us a lesson on .801.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, Professor Stevens. Your resource list, can you please email it out to me. Thank you.

OPERATOR: And the next caller is Jim Simon, you may go ahead, Sir.

MR. SIMON: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Operator, and other members of the Board, and Federal Staff. For this opportunity to speak.

My name is Jim Simon. I am a former Federally-qualified user, I'm from the Ahtna region. In the early 70s about the time that ANCSA was being passed, some of my first memories were of my father explaining the remains of an old reindeer -- pardon me -- caribou corral around Old Man Lake as well as I learned about the old fish weir there and traps to use to get fish. And those childhood experiences resulted in me dedicating my career to working with subsistence issues in Alaska and more than 30 years of working with tribes and corporations to address tribal rights and subsistence resources.

I just want to share an observation of those 30 years, I have seen the Federal Subsistence Program increasing align with the Department of Fish and Game approach to providing for customary and traditional uses, and as we have witnessed throughout this week, there are so many cases where there is a lack of biological information and that just want to point out that if the Federal Subsistence Board was truly providing for customary and traditional uses, we would have a lot more biological information. When you -- when the customary and traditional ways of gathering caribou with corral complexes and fences as well as fish weirs and traps, that provided local people with a good characterization of the status of the various populations that they depend on for a means of making a living during an annual round of subsistence activities. Increasingly today we see a two week
hunting period here and there in order to provide for a whole years worth of nutritional and food security need. And I think it's important to recognize, especially since so many Federal subsistence Board members from the agencies are not particularly familiar with Alaska or life in rural Alaska, to recognize that turning tribal citizens who have a multi-generational relationship to the land and the resources to ensure food security, that those continue to be forcing local rural people to act like sporthunters, and worry about how many brow tines are here and there, this is a continued erosion of this relationship between tribal citizens and the resources that they have stewarded for many generations.

I'm reminded -- you know, I ended up getting two graduate degrees from UAF in anthropology. I worked for what used to be called the Division of Subsistence at the Department of Fish and Game for 14 years, as a regional supervisor for the northern two-thirds of the State, well that Division no longer exists, there are at least some Staff still left within the Commissioner's office, I believe, but they are not really part of the leadership anymore, but as the previous speaker spoke to, there's a lot of information available at the Department of Fish and Game, and I hope that in this close relationship that exists between the Federal agency Board members and the Department of Fish and Game, that you are accessing all of the specific community food security data that compares both statewide food security, USDA protocols with national protocols, that really demonstrates the importance of wild foods to rural community food security as Carrie mentioned previously.

I also am reminded in this conversation of an experience I had about 14 years ago at the confluence of the Porcupine River and the Yukon River, at the Gwichyaa, the Native Tribe of Fort Yukon culture camp, where we had elders from throughout the Yukon Flats and particularly Arctic Village, teaching young people these old ways, how to build a fish trap, how to understand how to deploy that technology because the elders kept telling the students in that class, all of this that we see now with regulation books, et cetera, some day those may not be there anymore, and we'll have to go back to our customary and traditional ways of ensuring our communities survive, just as we always did. And I think -- having a hard time not continuing
to hear the words of those elders in light of the pandemic that's going on now.

It is 1918 for a non-Native such as myself, you know, that was a long time ago, but for rural Native people in these villages who still talk and are dealing with the tragedy of those experiences and the orphanages and the loss of life, is still very much alive, and I think it's incumbent upon the Federal Subsistence Board members from the agencies to recognize this greater responsibility, this Federal Indian Trust responsibility, the tribal citizens, utilize all the various avenues and ways that you already have available to work and expand your relationship with tribes, and to do the hard work to get over the mistrust that the academic articles have characterized and as truths, and to really step up and respond to this as an essential need for these communities. And we're not talking about sporthunting here, we're talking about the needs for better data by working with local people on the ground and stop relying so much on taking a little data point from way over there and applying it to here because we don't have anything else to use. Work with local people in order to do it, to get this information and to truly involve rural users in your management decisionmaking.

I am concerned about the tragedy of the common here with these very respectful and reasonable requests for out of season food security hunt requests given the pandemic and the dramatic effect it's having on, even those of us on the rural road system, are experiencing, and that, yeah, there is food coming in to Fairbanks and Delta Junction, but you can't guarantee that that shelf is going to have anything on it even here. And my experiences in rural Alaska demonstrate that if I'm experiencing problems, I know how dramatically severe it is off the road system in these communities. And I implore you to take affirmative action on these special action requests in order to ensure a regulated, a respectful partnership in ensuring that the tragedy of commons does not occur and you can do that by working with the tribal governments in order to have responsible community leadership and guidance on providing these opportunities.

Thank you, very much.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Jim.

Any questions for Jim.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for calling in today.

OPERATOR: Thank you. Our next question comes from Dawn Jackson, you may go ahead.

MS. JACKSON: Good morning, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good morning, Dawn, I can hear you well.

MS. JACKSON: Gunalcheesh, Mr. Chairman and the Board for allowing me to have the floor this morning. Before I go into my testimony I'd like to introduce myself.

(In Tlingit)

My English name is Dawn Jackson. I am the Executive Director of the Organized Village of Kake, the Federally-recognized tribe of Kake, Alaska. We're located in the heart of Southeast Alaska right smack in the middle of the Tongass National Forest.

I'm calling in today to urge you, the Federal Subsistence Board, to support the various special action requests -- or emergency special action requests submitted to the Board and to do it expeditiously. Nowhere in our history have we ever taken more than we need. It's just not something that is physically capable -- we just can't do that as humans. The consequence of were and are too heavy to bear. Today, during this pandemic, food security is even more important. I need not remind you of the Federal trust responsibility you have to the tribes of this state and why you meet every year to review proposals that impact every single one of us.

OVK went through all of the hoops with the State of Alaska to request an emergency hunt out of season. Our season was from August 1st through end of November, and this emergency pandemic happened in the new year so it was way out of our hunting season.
And what we've requested hasn't been much, and we don't need it right now but we want to make sure that everything is in place due to the supply chain that the government and the State has -- we've been so trained over the past 50 or 60 years to rely on food chains down in the Lower 48 with our 85 to 90 percent of our diet relies on imported and barged food coming from the Lower 48, which is crazy.

I'm looking back at my notes.

The State denied this request.

And throughout the whole year, it troubles me that the rural subsistence users are more regulated and are the first to be pinched, all the while sportsfishermen are allowed so much. We see the boxes leaving the state, those are our traditional foods leaving the state, hundreds, thousands of boxes leaving on jets.

What has happened to the subsistence users being the last to be impacted during this. Over the years it's very concerning to me that the Federal agencies are not according subsistence the highest priority when considering management alternatives, yet, this was drafted in ANILCA, Title VIII, it needs to be followed and we need to go back to that.

I implore you to move forward on the SARs, we need it more than ever for our physical, mental and spiritual health during this uncertain time of isolation and lockdown. As rural and as Natives, we have been experiencing so much inter-generational trauma and it comes out, you know, in the forms of addiction and dysfunction and we need to heal, not only do we need to heal that but I'm really scared of what kind of mental issues are going to be coming out of this social isolation and us not being able to come together, the impacts are going to be -- I'm just really worried for our people in the future after this is over.

All the food chains, as I stated before, they're being compromised and we need these emergency access to our traditional foods, it is our wellness and we need it now more than ever.

In closing, I would like the Board to
consider the management of resources to be delegated to tribes. Through the Federal Self-Determination Act, OVK was one of many tribes who negotiated a compact to administer BIA funds and we have done it successfully for over 25 years. Please explore this option as tribes and ANCSA are trying to work together to protect our tribal citizens in rural Alaska during this pandemic.

I appreciate your time.

Gunalcheesh for all of your service of sitting on the Board and making these hard decisions on behalf of all of us.

Gunalcheesh. Howaa.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Howaa. Thank you, Dawn, for taking the time to call in today and share your community concerns.

Any questions for Dawn.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, Operator, can we go to the next public.

MS. JACKSON: Thank you.

OPERATOR: Our next comment comes from Barbara Blake, your line is open.

MS. BLAKE: Chairman and members of the Board, I thank you for allowing me to participate and to provide testimony this morning.

My name is Barbara Blake, I currently serve as Director of the Alaska Native Policy Center with First Alaskan Institute. First Alaskans Institute is a statewide Native non-profit that operates throughout the state.

Calling in this morning to support the tribal and tribal organizations special action requests that have been made and to recognize the urgent need for government to government compacting discussions to be meaningful right now, and, further, hope, that you will discuss and consider delegation of Federal
authority to tribes to manage hunting and fishing especially right now through these Covid-19 concerns. Alaska Native peoples, the first and forever stewards of these lands are healthiest when they are on their lands and in their waters doing the hard work of harvesting and processing the nutrient rich spiritual foods that have sustained us for thousands of years. Alaska Natives know best how to utilize their thousands of years of expertise on their homelands to hunt, fish and gather in a proven sustainable way, taking only what is needed. With even more restricted access to grocery foods and the higher cost of foods, Alaska Natives need to provide food for their communities, elders, and those most vulnerable. Alaska Native peoples are on the ground in their ancestral homelands and as they always have, are prepared to do what is necessary to protect and provide for their communities.

Again, I am calling on all of you to support the tribal and tribal organization SARs that have been submitted and hope you will seriously consider what a government to government compacting discussion might look like now and into the future.

Howaa.

Gunalcheesh.

(In Tlingit)

Thank you, all.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Barb. Thank you for taking the time to call in today. Any questions for Barb.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And the best to you. Operator, do we have another public member on line.

OPERATOR: Our next public comment comes from Marina Anderson, your line is open.

MS. ANDERSON: (In Tlingit) Marina Anderson.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Board for listening to my words today. My name is Marina Anderson and I am calling in from Kasaan. I am the Vice President for the Organized Village of Kasaan Tribal Council.

In Kasaan, we have no open medical facility, we don't have enough money in our budget to even bring two citizens to the nearest clinic that is over two hours away. We have no store here. And we have a very highly vulnerable population. We have irregular mail. Our mail comes once a week, weather depending, and because of the pandemic our mail is shut down actually for a few months.

We've been experiencing high unemployment due to the virus and our families are impacted heavily. Our villages in Alaska are small generally and we're not asking for a lot. We're asking to feed our people with clean protein and clean fat. Our menstruating women need red meat. We need the minerals and vitamins for our growing children and our precious elders. The store's on the other side of the island, they've got social distancing in place, but there's not (indiscernible-muffled) really followed, which makes shopping a game of Russian Roulette, not only for the shopper but for our entire village.

Prevention of the coronavirus is essential as there is currently no vaccine, we are doing our part. We are practicing strong social distancing. We have one man going in and out of the community to pick up groceries and medication weekly, but as I said even going to the store to pick up one box is playing a game of Russian Roulette for our entire community.

We need you to let us keep our immune systems high. We need to stay strong and healthy with our quality food. Our community has already been facing a food shortage before the impacts of the coronavirus started. We had a plan to go out and get a sea lion soon but because of the coronavirus and social distancing rules that we are following very strictly, we're not able to get a sea lion because it takes more than two people to be able to get a sea lion and process it for the community.

I spent days and I went over to the
other side of the island to get herring eggs for our community and we were able to bring about 300 pounds of herring eggs back for the community but that's not enough food to sustain our community for the whole year and we need balance. We need other vitamins and other minerals that are in the fresh game that walks among us.

Recently Congressman Don Young gave me some advice when I was in his office in Washington, D.C., and he stated this in regards to my question about law enforcement, and the lack of law enforcement in our villages, and what we could do as villages to increase law enforcement. The advice that was given to me from the Congressman was to take matters into our own hands. If we don't want alcoholism in our village, he told me to build a jail cell out of two by fours and put the drunks in the jail cell. He said if there is a shooting in the village, to have my financee, a Native man, take his gun, take our deer hunting rifle and defend the village with that gun. I'm assuming the Congressman would suggest the same when it comes to providing food for our people. Because the threat of somebody who is experiencing alcoholism or the threat of a shooter in our village is just as threatening as the lack of food shortage for our people.

So today I'm urging you to please approve the special action requests that are in front of you, and approve them quickly.

Howaa.

Gunalcheesh.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Marina. Thank you for that perspective from Kasaan. Any questions for Marina.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, Operator, is there any other participants on line?

OPERATOR: We have no additional public commenters at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Operator, I appreciate that. And I appreciate
everybody that called in this morning to really give us
a grasp on the brevity of the situation and truly
commend all of your leadership across the state and
continue to hope the best for you and your communities
and success in these trying and troubling times. And
again we will do our best within the parameters of the
job that we have before us and, again, we're getting
tight now to actually get to that job so appreciate
everybody this morning.

So, with that, Tom, I think we'll take
five minutes and jump into the WP proposals where we
left off yesterday.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Agreed, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So come back in
five minutes.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hey, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: We should make sure
everybody's here after the break.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep. We'll
make sure we have a quorum established.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, thank you, Sir.

(Pause)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Don Striker, are you
on.

OPERATOR: This is the Operator.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yep, Operator, can we
make sure the lines are open for the speakers.

OPERATOR: Yes. All remaining speakers
that are on have open lines. I was also just speaking
with a Patricia McDonald who was trying to make a
public comment earlier but was having difficulties, and
she was wondering if you would be able to take her
public comment once you returned.

MR. DOOLITTLE: That would be at the
discretion of the Chair, Operator.

OPERATOR: Understood. And let me know
when you're ready for me to open the lines.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yes, the lines should
be open.

OPERATOR: Understood. One moment as I
open up the lines to the conference, stand by.
(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I will
entertain knowing that there's been trouble with the
lines across the board, we'd hate to miss that
opportunity. I would just ask to keep it as brief as
possible as we are running up against the wall today
and if we are going to get to some of the agenda items
we've got to start clicking, so I would appreciate
that. But I would like her to have the opportunity.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay.

OPERATOR: This is the Operator, the
lines are now open. If you would like to make a public
comment or did not get the chance to make a public
comment earlier, please star one from your phone.
(Pause)

OPERATOR: One moment, we have a few
people cuing in.
(Pause)

OPERATOR: Our next public comment
comes from Patricia McDonald, your line is open.

MS. MCDONALD: Thank you. Good
morning, my name is Patricia McDonald, I'm with the
Healy Lake Traditional Council.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good morning.

MS. MCDONALD: Thank you, Chairman
Christianson and thank you to the Board, the Operator for your time, and for putting this opportunity together for us to speak.

I would like to start by special thank you to Carrie Stevens for her testimony, it was informative and it was definitely -- it spoke exactly what I would like to say on behalf of Healy Lake.

I want to tell you about Healy Lake. We are a tiny little village. We are a village that is -- we don't have access to a road. We live in a community that is on the northwest side of Healy Lake, which is in the Yukon Tanana Highlands. You can only reach Healy Lake via boat in the summer or airplane in the summer and the winter. In the winter if the lake is frozen and we have the ability to plow the lake we can drive in and out. It's pretty remote. Right now it's break up, we can't reach the village at all, the landing strip is -- you cannot land, there is no way to take a boat in because the ice hasn't gone out. So the only access to our village is by air drop. It's very remote.

Our community does not have a store. We have no ability to feed ourselves except for to store what we have to try to shop early but with the covid epidemic you can imagine that this impact has greatly impacted the people of Healy Lake.

The ability to hunt and to provide for ourselves by taking game is significant to the people of Healy Lake. I would like you, Chairman, for a moment, to imagine living somewhere where you cannot physically leave your community or home for food or medical or any other purposes for a period of time until the ice goes out. Without the ability to feed ourselves during this time of covid we are struggling, our people are struggling, that leads to depression and we are afraid for our people in our community. The ability to hunt is big, inherent, in Alaska Native people.

We absolutely and humbly request that you look at the significant challenges of the rural people in rural Alaska. There's nothing like living in a community where you cannot access any services, none, for weeks, sometimes a month, if not longer. You have the ability to impact our lives significantly by the
decisions that you make and we would request that you
would remember us when making those decisions.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Thank you for taking the time to call in today,
appreciate that. Any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, I
appreciate that. Okay, I think that concludes our
public testimony for the day.

And Tom I think we were going to start
off with the order of business was to get to the two
tabled motions yesterday, we were going to bring up as
the first order of business today.

MR. DOOLITTLE: That's correct, Mr.
Chair. We were going to start with WP20-36/37 Fish and
Wildlife Service, and may I ask that due to the time
constraints that the Board may want to have an agenda
change to concentrate primarily on the wildlife
proposals and that we get to the wildlife closure
reviews as time permits, and if time does not permit,
that we move those closure reviews to a later meeting
date, just for the critical aspects of the amendments
of the actual regulations, the proposals are first and
foremost for action items.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tom, I
think I agree with that perspective. If there is
concurrence by the Board, I see that as I look down the
agenda, where we would just have to jump over the
wildlife reviews and then pick those up as the day
progresses. Any.....

MR. PELTOLA: And BIA would concur with
that approach.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Any
other thought from any other Board members.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Fish and Wildlife
concurs.
MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service concurs.

MR. C. BROWER: Public Member Charlie concurs.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank you guys for that, so, Tom, we'll follow the order of business on the wildlife proposals and then we'll put the reviews at the end as time allows.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that observation and we'll get started on the two that we left off on yesterday.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: We are at the stage with providing, from Fish and Wildlife Service, a motion.....

(Teleconference interference)

MR. DOOLITTLE: .....on Wildlife.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We're getting a lot of bad feedback, excuse me.

MR. C. BROWER: I think we have something going on with the phone.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Something's happening with the phones now so if we could -- there it is, thank you, appreciate that Operator. Thank you. Go ahead, Tom, I couldn't hear you the phone was going crazy. You have the floor again, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Just that this is at the stage for Wildlife Proposal 36/37, we left off with a tabling at the stage of the motion, that was going to be presented by Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. Fish and Wildlife Service.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is Greg
with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Greg, you have the floor.

MR. SIEKANIEC: All right, thank you. Thanks Tom for that reminder, yes, we were at the stage where I had not made a motion so at this point I would like to move to adopt 20-36 with modification to maintain the to be announced season in the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area and in Unit 21D remainder to clarify regulatory language and to delegate authority to Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko National Wildlife Refuge Manager to allow to dates, harvest quotas and sex restrictions via delegation of authority letter only and take no action on WP20-35 [sic]. If I get a second I will provide my justification.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. Adoption of this modified regulatory language will support the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council’s desire to maintain to be announced seasons in Unit 21D. It also supports the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council and Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko National Wildlife Refuge request to establish a may be announced March moose season in a portion of Unit 21D resulting in a creation of a new hunt area. Developing a may be announced March 1 to 31 season provides more harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users and aligns with State regulation reducing regulatory complexity. Delegating authority to the Refuge in-season manager allows for management flexibility and better coordination with the Bureau of Land Management and the State of Alaska. Requiring a State registration permit will likely improve harvest reporting and simplify administration of permits for users. The Western Interior Council identified in testify their desire to forego its Federal December hunt if the Alaska Board of Game failed to adopt Proposal 59. Given the Board of Game did not adopt Proposal 59, the regulation, as modified, supports the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council request to forego establishing the December hunt and subsequently avoid creating disparate State and Federal seasons in Unit 21D.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
And I want to thank the Board for allowing us to revise that motion to make sure that we got it correct, and I would like to thank the Office of Subsistence Management folks for assisting us in that.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Greg, appreciate that. Any Board discussion or deliberation on the motion as presented.

(No comments)

MR. C. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called, thank you, Charlie. Roll call, Tom, please.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yes, Mr. Chair. On Wildlife -- Scott, if you could scroll up to the top and move we down that would be helpful -- thank you very much.

This is Federal Subsistence Board action Wildlife Proposal 20-36 with modification to maintain the to be announced season in the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area and Unit 21B remainder to clarify regulatory language and to delegate authority to the Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko National Wildlife Refuge Manager to announce season dates, harvest quotas and sex restriction via delegation of authority letter only and to take no action on Wildlife Proposal WP20-37 -- would you scroll down, Scott -- thank you -- so the regulation would read:

Unit 21B Koyukuk Controlled Use Area, one bull by State registration permit, one moose by Federal permit if authorized by announcement by the Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko National Wildlife Refuge Manager, harvests of a cow moose accompanied by a calf is prohibited, season dates September 1 through 25, and season March 1 through 5, to be announced.

Thank you, very much.

I will do the roll call.

We'll start with U.S. Forest Service,

David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Yes, thank you. I support
Proposal WP36 as modified with the justification provided by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Dave.

BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports WP20-36/37 as modified as previously stated reasons by our colleagues.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Gene.

Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support the proposal as stated by Fish and Wildlife Service, thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Rhonda.

Charlie Brower.

MR. C. BROWER: I support Proposal 36/37 as mentioned by the Wildlife Service. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much, Charlie.

National Park Service, Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: National Park Service supports the modified proposal for reasons articulated by Fish and Wildlife. Thank you, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Don.

Bureau of Land Management, Chad Padgett.

MR. PADGETT: Thanks, Tom. I support as modified by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Sir.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I support WP20-36/37 as modified and in deference to the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council and per justification provided. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Greg.

And last but not least, I have Chairman Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support in deference. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Tony. And the motion passes with the modification. And then that moves us on to WP20-41, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, and we'll go ahead and open the floor for that motion at this time.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett with BLM.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor, Chad.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. I move to adopt WP20-41 as submitted by Lance Kronberger. This proposal is shown on Page 1070 of the Board book. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support this motion.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. My justification is the following: Adoption of this proposal is not expected to pose a biological concern to the local moose population in Unit 22A north. Considering the low combined reported harvest and estimated harvest in the area the potential increase to harvest in Unit 22A north resulting from the approval of this proposal is unlikely to exceed the harvestable surplus of moose in the area. While the analysis shows that there may be a low density in the area, the latest numbers also show that the numbers have increased from 545 to 840 moose between 2012 and 2017 on a positive trend. Hunting under State authority in Unit 22A north will require hunter effort and success reporting, which
can be used to better understand moose abundance in the area. Finally, in order to address concerns over aerial survey of moose in the area, BLM will work with the State in order to fund a survey in 2020.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Chad. Any discussion, Board discussion.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair, this is Louis. ahead.

MR. GREEN: Through the Chair. You're doing this without real data so I'm troubled with that, and without the real data you're making a decision that may not be a good decision. The best information is best decisions.

This has been on the back burner since the last cycle and I'm wondering why the State hasn't done a survey, this has been -- the doorknocker has been sounding off by the guide, you're creating a contest between user groups, so I just fail to see the scientific data here.

Thank you.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. I appreciate the comment. And I'm looking at the geospatial surveys and like I said I'm happy to fund an aerial survey by the State and appreciate the comment.

Thank you.

MR. GREEN: Through the Chair, thank you for that. I'd like to see that survey.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg, go ahead, you have the floor.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah, Chad, your mention there of helping support on a survey, I believe that we have, you know, some facilities and personnel,
you know, in that area as well that we would be more
than happy to join you on, you know, on trying to
gather the important information to help clarify this.

Thank you.

MR. PADGETT: Through the Chair,
thanks, Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any further
Board discussion or deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: A call for the
question.

MR. PELTOLA: Question.

MR. C. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been
called. Tom, roll call, please.

MR. DOOLITTLE: All right, we're
looking at Proposal WP20-41 requests that the Federal
public lands closure for moose in the portion of Unit
22 north of and including the Tagoomenik and Shaktoolik
River drainages, Unit 22A north be rescinded September
1st to September 20th to coincide with the State's non-
resident moose season.

The regulation would be:

Unit 22A, that portion north and
including Tagoomenik and Shaktoolik River drainages,
one bull, Federal public lands are closed to hunting
September 21 through August 31 except by Federally-
qualified users.

I'll start with Public Member Rhonda
Pitka.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Bureau of Indian Affairs
opposes as recommended by the Seward Penn Regional
Advisory Council.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Gene.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, the Forest Service is also going to oppose this in deference to the RAC and what -- I know we'd like to get data, we should get data, but without that we're going to oppose this.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Dave.

BLM, Chad Padgett.

MR. PADGETT: I support as stated.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Chad.

National Park Service, Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: The Park Service is opposed in deference to the RAC and until we get confirmed and scientific data, and I'd like to note that Mr. Kronberger made a very compelling case and I really appreciate his passion.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Don.


MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I am going to support this proposal, you know, we don't always have the luxury of having all of the information that we need when we are presented with this but I do believe that this does not present a loss of subsistence opportunity if we were to move forward with this.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Greg.

Rhonda Pitka, are you on?

MS. PITKA: Yes. I oppose this
proposals in deference to the Regional Advisory Council.
Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Rhonda.

Charlie Brower.

MR. C. BROWER: I oppose this with the recommendation from the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Advisory Council. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Charlie.

And last but not least, Chairman Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I oppose in deference to the RAC.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The motion fails. That moves us along, Mr. Chair, let me see where we're at.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I believe we ended on 41 yesterday.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yep, we'll be on 42. So this would be Wildlife Proposal 20-42 and Mr. Chair, Ms. Hannah Voorhees will be on deck for us.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, Staff, you have the floor to present the analysis. Thank you.

MS. VOORHEES: Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. This is Hannah Voorhees, anthropologist with OSM.

Wildlife Proposal 20-42 begins on Page 1087 of your Board book. This proposal was also submitted by Lance Kronberger of Eagle River and requests that the Federal public lands closure in Unit 22A remainder moose hunt area be rescinded September 1st to September 30th to coincide with the State's non-resident moose season. The proponent notes that the Federal public lands in Unit 22A remainder are adjacent to Unit 18, which has very high moose densities.

The recent regulatory history for this
proposal parallels that outlined for Wildlife Proposal 20-41. During the last regulatory cycle the Board adopted an earlier version of this current proposal with modification expanding opportunity to hunt moose in 22A remainder to all residents of Unit 22 who have C&T for moose in the unit. The Board stopped short of opening 22A remainder to non-Federally-qualified users.

As I mentioned earlier information from 22A central has historically been used to make inferences about moose abundance throughout Unit 22A. Please recall the population metrics for 22A central, which I previously presented for Wildlife Proposal 20-41 and do let me know if you need me to refer this point further on.

In the case of 22A remainder, there are other adjacent moose populations that may also influence local abundance. In Unit 21E, to the southeast moose densities are around two moose per square mile. To the south in Unit 18, moose densities are nearly five moose per square mile and it's possible that moose are moving along riparian corridors into Unit 22.

There's one new piece of biological information specific to 22A remainder since the Board previously considered this proposal. In 2018 the recruitment rate for moose in 22A remainder was found to be somewhat low at 10 percent in the Pikmiktalik and Golsovia drainages. Overall, there's evidence the population in Unit 22A remainder may be growing but we don't know for sure and we can't quantify it. We also can't quantify harvest, which is likely underreported. Reported harvest among local users has declined in recent years in 22A remainder. During the most recent subsistence surveys for Stebbins in 2013, 26 percent of residents of that village reported not being able to harvest enough moose. Most of Stebbins and St. Michaels moose harvest takes place in August and September. Stebbins also harvests moose in winter. However, late freeze up, lower snowfall and thin ice have curtailed local ability to harvest moose in the winter resulting in special action requests to extend seasons in recent years. Difficulty accessing moose in winter may increase pressure on residents to find moose in the fall. Caribou are not widely enough available to make up for low moose harvest.
In addition to the five guides currently eligible on BLM lands, on the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge a single guide is permitted to operate for a period of 10 years and the proponent currently holds this concession.

If this proposal is adopted, Federal public lands in Unit 22A remainder will be open to all users September 1st to September 30th, which may increase moose harvest by non-local users. A certain amount of this will likely come from guided hunters. The influx of guided hunters would be limited on Fish and Wildlife Service lands by the exclusive guide use concession operated by the Refuge and possibly on BLM lands by the relatively small land area in 22A remainder. Transporters are subject to fewer restrictions so that might be where we would see increased traffic. Overall, it's likely that at least some additional harvest is sustainable, however, given that we don't really understand the population dynamics in the area there is uncertainty about what effect additional harvest will have on the population. Adoption of this proposal will primarily benefit non-local hunters and commercial operators and may come at the expense of Federally-qualified users.

Overall, our understanding of the situation has not changed since the Board last considered this request. Maintaining the status quo until additional information is available is the most conservative approach and provides an assurance that subsistence use continues to be prioritized.

The OSM conclusion is to oppose Wildlife Proposal WP20-42.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll standby for any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for Staff on that presentation.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair, this is Louis. have the floor.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Louis, you

MR. GREEN: Yeah, I just wanted to ask
the lady there, excuse me for the name, has there been
any aerial survey there?

MS. VOORHEES: Hi, Louis, this is
Hannah. Let me just defer that question to Suzanne
Worker, if she's on the line possibly. Otherwise I am
looking for that information for the bordering areas,
which do seem to be better studied.

Thank you.

MS. WORKER: Hi, Louis, it's Suzanne.
So there haven't been any surveys in the Unit 22A
remainder, no abundance surveys. And, you know, like
Hannah mentioned there are surveys in the adjacent
areas, it looks like in the Unalakleet, the last survey
was conducted in 2017; in Unit 22E there was an
abundance survey in 2019; and then I think the one in
Unit 18 is a little older than that. But, no, in Unit
22A remainder we don't have an abundance estimate.

MS. GREEN: Okay, thank you Suzanne.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
questions for Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
we'll go to summary of Council comments, Coordinator.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Members of the Board. For the record my name is Katya
Wessels with the Office of Subsistence Management. And
we did not receive any written public comments for
WP20-42.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Katya. I'd ask at this time was there anybody on line
who would like to speak to this proposal. Operator,
could you check please.

OPERATOR: As a reminder, if you would
like to make a public comment, please press star one.

(Pause)
OPERATOR: We do have three public commenters in cue.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you.

OPERATOR: Our first public comment comes from Jessica Giard, your line is open.

MS. GIARD: Hello, I'd like to postpone my testimony for any tribal members or leadership that are on the call.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We'll go to the next person, Operator.

OPERATOR: Our next public comment comes from Gloria Strickland [sic], your line is open.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: Gloria, your line is open, please check your mute button.

MS. STICKWAN: Hello.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, Gloria, you.....

MS. STICKWAN: I just want to say.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: .....have the floor. Go ahead, Gloria.

MS. STICKWAN: I just wanted to say that I support providing wild game for the residents of Alaska. In our area we have a lot of pressure during the moose season and caribou season and many of the Ahtna people don't get any -- hardly get any moose. I believe it was like 18 moose for any bull, and probably 12 were legal, I think 12 were legal and 18 for -- 12 legal and 18 were -- it was 18 for legal and 12 for any bull, I believe. We have a lot of hunting pressure around here and last year some people said they didn't get much fish, there was a big run during the first part of the fishing season but later on it slowed down even though people said that they got fished, I've heard from reports that some people that run their fishwheels, they didn't get very much fish, like one or
two. We fortunately had a good run because we had our
fishwheel in, and during the early part of the season
we were able to catch a good amount of fish for our
family but some people did not get their fishwheel in
on time and the run slowed down after that.

So there are people that are hurting in
this area, mostly because the pressure in this area
during the hunting and fishing season, we have a lot of
personal use fishermen in our area that take a lot of
fish and we don't have any areas hardly to hunt in
because the people that do, they have ATVs and local
people, Ahtna people don't have ATVs, many of them
don't to hunt off the road system, and to get a moose
and caribou you have to be able to hunt off the road
system and you need an ATV to do that.

And I just want to say Tazlina Village
Council had to buy food because I heard people were --
needed food so our village council decided to buy
groceries, bulk supply through Anchorage to provide
food so I think people in rural areas during this time
of crises we do need wild game if you can provide it.
How you do that, I'm not sure, but different areas have
different usage of meat, or fish they use, but for us
it's basically caribou, moose and salmon.

If you could do the special action
request for wild game and fish that would be good.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Gloria, for calling in today, I appreciate your
testimony. Any questions for Gloria.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
the floor, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Good morning, Gloria. So if I understand correctly,
you wanted to provide comment on the special action
requests which have been forwarded on to the Federal
Subsistence Board with regard to food security; is that
correct?

MS. STICKWAN: Yes, that's exactly what
I'm testifying on.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay. Thank you, Gloria, appreciate it. And, Mr. Chair, with that being said, could we ensure that Gloria's testimony is bundled together with the comments we had this morning on non-agenda items.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, thank you for that as well. I was going to make mention to that that it was dealing on -- or touching on food security, so thank you for that observation.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gloria. Any other discussion or questions.

OPERATOR: Our last public comment comes from Lance Kronberger, your line is open.

MR. KRONBERGER: Good morning, Board, and Board members, can you guys can hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Lance, I hear you loud and clear, welcome back.

MR. KRONBERGER: All right, regarding Unit 22A remainder, WP20-42. I'll give you guys a little history.

I started personally hunting in 22A in 2009 and guiding in there in 2010 for brown bear. From 2014 to 2018 there have been 64 brown bears harvested in 22A remainder. Over the last 10 years I've personally observed a dramatic increase in the moose population within 22A remainder. In 2017 I submitted a special action request to rescind the Federal land closure in Unit 22A remainder. My proposal was rejected by the Seward Peninsula RAC, and they rejected that on the grounds that there was no current data. In 2018 I submitted a proposal, WP18-37, again, I requested that the Federal public land closure for non-qualified moose hunting in Unit 22A remainder be rescinded. Although the Board adopted the proposal with modifications it was not adopted as I had fully intended. Again, the RAC opposed it on the information that there was no current data. I requested Fish and Game to do surveys, I know that they had tried to do a
survey down there, weather and conditions impaired that. These areas that I'm talking about open to moose hunting are very small areas and are not high priority for these surveys and might I say that we use this extrapolated to close areas down, it is very concerning that we can not use that extrapolated information to open areas up.

In 2010 our guide service started guiding brown bear hunters in 22A remainder. We have put a lot of energy and resource into harvesting large male brown bears, many of which are moose calf killers.

Since 2014 64 brown bears have been harvested in 22A remainder. We have seen a constant increase in the moose population within 22A remainder over our years or guiding activity. I believe that at least some of this increase can be contributed to the number of brown bears that have been removed from the 22A remainder. But the largest factor to contributing to the increase moose population is the expansion and explosion of the moose population within Unit 18. The very mild terrain distinction from Unit 18 to Unit 22A remainder allows for an easy and natural movement of moose between these boundaries. Almost 90 percent of the Federal lands closed to non-qualified users in 22A remainder has a common border with Unit 18.

We hunt these Federal lands both in the spring and in the fall for brown bear. We have never seen a subsistence hunter while we were hunting on these Federal lands. I believe that it's because of the difficulty in accessing these very remote areas. As you can see in Figure 1, there is only one major river system within 22A remainder, the Golsovia River is a very rocky river with high banks and a steep vertical drop. These factors make navigation of the Golsovia River very difficult and dangerous. All the other rivers within 22A remainder have very limited accessibility thus restricting the remote areas of 22A to only being accessible by Bush aircraft. This is especially evident since almost 90 percent of the Federal lands within 22A remainder are managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, which does not allow all terrain vehicles.

OSM states that if non-qualified Federal land closures within 22A remainder is rescinded that there would be an increase in guided hunters.
This is highly unlikely since 86 percent of the Federal land would be available to guided hunters can only be accessed by myself. I am already limited to the number of moose hunters I can guide on Federal lands within Unit 18 and 22 remainder. In the last five years of guiding hunters on our Yukon Delta Federal guide concession we have over 90 percent success with a 62 inch antler spread average. But because of the non-qualified closures in 22A all of our guided moose hunt activity has to be concentrated in Unit 18, if the closure in 22A remainder were to be rescinded, the same number of moose would be harvested, we could just spread this harvest out over Units 18 and 22A remainder, instead of concentrating all of our guide activity in Unit 18. Because of this regulation, it is highly unlikely that there would be any additional harvest of moose population that inhabits the northern parts of Unit 18 and 22A remainder. It is also very unlikely that there would be other guide activity on the small portions of BLM land that would be open to guided hunters as the access to that small area is very difficult and there is already guide activity on adjacent lands.

Each spring we conduct spring brown bear hunts in Unit 22A remainder. Most of our camps are on the southern end of 22 along the Unit 18, 22 remainder border. The number of moose we observe during the spring bear hunt is extraordinary. Over the last five years we have seen an already healthy moose population bloom into a very dense moose population. During the last week of May from just one observation point, we counted over 30 cow moose where 90 percent had newborn calves and over half of them had twins. We observed bull moose traveling from Unit 18 to 22A and vice versa, the rolling hills and low passes that separate Unit 18 from 22A remainder make for easy travel for moose between these units.

During the fall we are conducting hunts within 22A remainder and the very northern parts of Unit 18 along the border of 22A remainder. During this timeframe we are also experiencing a high volume of moose sightings. Most days consist of 15 to 20 moose sightings with very good days having 30 to 40 moose sightings. We have consistently seen over 50 percent of the cows with calves, and over half of those having twins during our fall sightings. We are also consistently observing a one to one bull to cow ratio.
This bull high ratio explains why we observe traveling bulls into Unit 22A as the rut gets into full swing. This high density of bull moose has allowed us to have a very high success with our guided hunters and provides us an opportunity to target the older age class bulls that may be past their prime breeding age.

Because of the remote areas via Bush aircraft and our remote camps we spend a lot of time flying over 22A remainder going to and from Unalakleet. Although when possible we keep a high altitude, the number of moose sightings we survey from the air has increased every year.

In the fall of 2018 we spent 20 plus hours flying over Unit 22A remainder, with a total moose sighting of 180 and then during the same timeframe during 2019 we had a total sightings of just over 200. Now, may I mention that these are just sightings as we are going to or from, we are not flying a grid, and we are not doing a survey. While we are guiding, our on ground observations also indicate a steady moose population increase year after year in Unit 22A remainder.

Each year I spend two months working out of Unalakleet, Alaska. Unalakleet is a wonderful community and I have many life long friends. Our operation works very hard being conscious of the local traditions, along with making sure we are an asset to the community. Our operation rents a house from a local resident, buys most of our supplies at a local store, and eats many meals at the local restaurants along with hiring the local air taxi. Along with being part of the local community, we work very hard to donate meat to the local residents. Our hunt contract only allows guided moose hunters to take home the backstraps and tenderloins from the moose they harvest, the rest of the meat gets donated to local residents. In a lot of cases we personally transport the donated moose meat to the local households. And in other cases there are people within the community who know the families and elders that could use the moose meat and they make sure they are all taken care of. I have letters from Unalakleet residents stating to our contributions to the community.

Board members, there is no biological reason that Federal lands within 22A remainder should
be closed to non-qualified users. There are no legitimate conservation concerns. The moose population's documented in the surrounding areas show a very high density. The moose population within 22A remainder is on the high end and in neighboring areas, have a huge influx to that population. The Board of Game has even extended and given additional opportunity to the neighboring Unit 18. There is actually greater evidence to open Federal lands as the accessibility to access these lands is so difficult for the local users, thus reducing the chance of in the field conflict and spreading out the harvest of this moose population. Opening Federal lands to non-qualified users needs to be a win, win for everyone, and it can be. The non-qualified hunters that we are guiding are looking for a great experience in wild and remote places like 22A remainder. They are looking to pursue an old age-class moose, which 22A remainder has a surplus of and have the opportunity to take home a set of antlers, cape and 50 pounds of moose meat. They do not want to take all the meat that comes with harvesting a large bull moose, nor would I allow them to take that meat. Donating the meat to locals is enjoyed, not only by the one who receives, but also by the hunter as they get to see the gratitude the local community expresses.

The guided non-resident hunter just wants an experience and an opportunity. They have no problem spending money in many of the small communities. We have many hunters that buy scrimshaw walrus tusks, fur hats, seal gloves, tanned hide, and many other items that locals sell. These items have come from Shishmaref, Shaktoolik, Unalakleet and other local communities.

By continuing to close Federal lands within Unit 22A remainder, many user groups and communities will suffer. This closure doesn't just prevent non-qualified users the opportunity to harvest an old age class moose, but also concentrates hunters, concentrates moose harvest to certain locations, keeps moose meat from being donated to locals and money from being spent in a local community.

These are all good reasons to remove the non-qualified closure, but the main reason to allow non-qualified hunters is because there is no biological concern. Alaska Department of Fish and Game has stated...
it, their surveys even state it. Our observations have confirmed it and the recent age of our harvest shows it.

I urge you to remove the non-qualified regulations to hunt moose in Unit 22A remainder.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Lance. Any questions or Lance from the Board.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, Mr. Kronberger. So I was looking at the map and you mentioned that you possess concession permits or special use permits from the Bureau of Land Management and Fish and Wildlife Service. Now, Federal lands -- the majority of the Federal lands with regard to the Fish and Wildlife Service with a small little sliver of BLM lands. OSM stated that, you know, there was others permitted, not on State Federal lands, but within the GMU 22A remainder subunit there's the one main tributary, the Golsovia, but also you have two communities are kind of equal distance on the north edge of the subunit, Stebbins and St. Michaels. I also notice on the map that those Federal lands where you're permitted at least by the Fish and Wildlife Service do not necessarily go all the way down the coast in reaching those two villages, so exercising potential abilities or authorities under a State authorization, have you ever conducted any guided hunts in the coastal low lands adjacent or close to those two communities?

MR. KRONBERGER: No. All of our activity is concentrated at the headwaters of the Golsovia and up against the Unit 18 border.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Kronberger, appreciate that.

MR. KRONBERGER: And to go along with that, when we have our permit with BLM, you know, we have camp site permits and they are issued to us by BLM, and BLM has those maps and it's very obvious where we're concentrating our moose hunting activities and
they are nowhere near those coastal communities.

MR. PELTOLA: At one time I recall using, what locally at home, we call the Kelly rim strip on the upper Golsovia, is that the region you're referring to?

MR. KRONBERGER: That is correct.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other questions or discussion with Lance.

MR. GREEN: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is Louis.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, you have the floor.

MR. GREEN: Through the Chair. Lance. The question about Unit 18, I couldn't remember if you said you hunted there or you had permits to hunt there, guided hunts.

MR. KRONBERGER: Yes, through the Chair. Louis, my Fish and Wildlife guide concession permit is for the upper -- the headwaters of the Andreafsky Rivers within Unit 18 and 22A, that Federal permit goes into both Game Management Units, and what I -- my allowed hunters that I'm allowed to take incorporate that unit, it is not broken down between Unit 18 and Unit 22A, it is one big chunk that incorporates both of them.

MR. GREEN: Through the Chair. So, Lance, that gives you quite a bit of opportunity from what you said about the moose densities and what I know about Unit 18 moose populations. It seems to me that they have so many moose down there that one harvest ticket covers two animals, as far as subsistence.

MR. KRONBERGER: I am not privy to being an expert on that. Basically, you know, I have one harvest ticket per hunter, that's all they're allowed to harvest. My hunters are only allowed to harvest one moose and I am only allowed to take X number of moose hunters within my guide concession.
MR. GREEN: Through the Chair, thank you, Lance. I see there's plenty of opportunity in Unit 18 and you obviously have access. I still have this issue with lack of data to make a good decision and I think that the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game needs to do a survey before they make their decision on how they do their future management of that moose population. My feeling is breeding bulls up in that area are helping to increase the number coming around the corner to Unit 22A. And I seen how the Seward Peninsula became a flourishing place back in the '70s, I grew up here, hunted out there and flew over much of it, and watched how that population increased. So having that background and that knowledge of back in those days, I still feel that this is what's happening here with the moose herd in 22A, that it is getting the breeding bulls that are in the area to help increase the population in the 22A Unalakleet area.

So, thank you, Mr. Chairman, I don't want to go on.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Louis. Any Board discussion, questions for Lance.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate you calling today, Lance.

MR. KRONBERGER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep. Is there any other public testimony on line.

OPERATOR: Yes. Our next public comment comes from Faye Ewan, your line is open.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: Faye, your line is open.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: It appears Faye withdrew her question. There are no more public comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Operator for that, appreciate it. We'll move on to
recommendation from Council Chair.

MR. GREEN: You just about lost me there, I'm plugging my phone in, hang in, Mr. Chair, thank you.

(Pause)

MR. GREEN: Sorry for the delay there. So the SPRAC, Seward Peninsula opposed. Moose density in this area is unclear and it is not currently known how additional harvest could impact moose population. The Council also agreed with OSM, including that this proposal would only benefit non-local hunters and could negatively affect subsistence users.

We're here -- our mandate is to protect subsistence and that's what our Council wishes for.

The State of Alaska receives money from sporthunts, they should be able to turn some of that money into an aerial survey to give us a better idea of what's going on in there.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Louis. Any questions for Louis.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll move on to Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation comments, Native Liaison.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator, did we lose Orville.

OPERATOR: Yes, Sir, it seems he disconnected. One moment as we wait for him to dial back in.

(Pause)

MS. WORKER: Mr. Chair, I can provide those comments if we don't get Orville back.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We'll give him one minute.

OPERATOR: Orville is dialing back in right now, one moment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

OPERATOR: His line is.....

MR. LIND: Can you hear me now?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Got you loud and clear, Orville, you have the floor.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board members. RAC Chairs. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management. During the consultation held on September 23rd on WP20-42 there were no comments made.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. We'll call on the State, Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments, State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Department supports this proposal, and I will readily admit we do not have direct survey data for this area and, you know, from the conversation we had yesterday afternoon for 22A north, but since that time -- short amount of time.....

(Teleconference interference)

MR. MULLIGAN: .....Staff who are out there, but I've also had a conversation with the Director of Wildlife Conservation talking about the need for surveys for that area. And I just want to put on the record, also, publicly, to thank Chad and Greg for their offer of resources, but this is far from over, to get that direct data that we're hearing that is a concern for folks out there.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions for the State.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll move to InterAgency Staff Committee comment, ISC Chair.

MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The ISC offered the standard comment for WP20-42.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

That opens up the floor for Board discussion with Council Chair and State Liaison.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, the floor is open for Board action on this proposal.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Greg Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to move to adopt Proposal WP20-42. The proposal language is shown on Page 1071 of the Board book. Following a second, I will provide justification for why I intend to support my motion.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Charlie.

Specific biolog.....

MS. PITKA: I'm sorry, did you say Page 1071?

MR. SIEKANIEC: 1071 according to my book.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Rhonda, I think if you look at -- this is Tom, sorry for interjecting 1087.

MS. PITKA: Thank you.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. Again, for the
justification, specific biological data may be lacking
regarding the status and trend of the moose population
specific to 22A remainder, however, as we have heard
several adjacent units have certainly medium to high
density moose populations with strong bull/cow ratios
that suggest that Unit 22 remainder, the moose
population is likely stable or probably growing. The
concern for increased harvest from non-locals is
somewhat unknown but this area as described is
extremely remote and the number of non-locals hiring a
transporter to get to this region is likely low.
Guiding on Refuge lands would be limited to one guide,
as, again, we have heard, it is limited to a take of
eight bulls per year, and all non-Federally-qualified
users would be limited to take of bulls only, further
reducing harvest by non-locals. Increased guide use on
the seven percent of Bureau of Land Management land is
possible, but likely minimal given the small land base.
A priority would still exist for Federally-qualified
users as their season is split and longer by several
months. The potential for conflict between users would
be moderated by the fact that non-Federally-qualified
users could only harvest for 30 days in September,
Federally-qualified users would have first opportunity
for moose starting in August and the benefit of a
winter season. So far the harvest data does not
indicate that overharvest is occurring by any user
group. Opening to all users, having opened it last
regulatory cycle to all Federally-qualified subsistence
users, would allow us to determine non-local use and
harvest. If moose surveys indicate a conservation
concern, there's always an option for a special action
to close the area.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Greg. Any Board discussion, deliberation on the
motion.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, Bureau of
Indian Affairs.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
the floor, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, I have a couple
quest — I'm thinking crackers, sorry.....
MR. PELTOLA: I have a couple questions for the Fish and Wildlife Service, if I may.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead.

MR. PELTOLA: So, Greg, with regard to commercial harvest, and I mean commercial by say guides and transporters, you did mention that you have one guide permitted for Fish and Wildlife Service lands in GMU 22A remainder. Do you have any type of limitations, qualifiers or such that a transporter who is permitted to operate in this system, they have to abide by, because one thing I was aware of, is also the Andreafsky Wilderness area overlaps the upper portions of GMU 18, the southwestern portion of 22A remainder; am I correct?

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Gene. Mr. Chair, I think that that question could probably be best answered by the Refuge Manager, who, I believe, we have on line, which normally in a face to face meeting, would be in our audience, can I see if Ray Born, acting Refuge Manager of Yukon Delta is on line?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, let's do that. Operator, is Ray on?

OPERATOR: Was that Ray Born?

MR. SIEKANIEC: Correct.

OPERATOR: His line is now open.

MR. BORN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, members of the Board. Yeah, transporters are not limited by the number of people, however, again, as has been pointed out, this area is extremely remote, and access is very difficult, and so we've not had any transporters interested in that particular area, other than the one that works with Lance Kronberger up there out of Unalakleet, so, again, transporters are not limited in the non-wilderness areas so the part of the 22A we're talking about would be accessible to transporters to transport people into that area.

Thank you.
MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Greg, you have the floor.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Gene, did that answer the question, I believe that what I heard from Ray, was that in the wilderness area, yes, transporters are limited but outside they would not be.

MR. PELTOLA: Yep, I got that, thank you, appreciate that. That was my primary question, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any further Board discussion, deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Tom, roll call, please.

MR. DOOLITTLE: This is a motion to adopt Proposal WP20-42 requests that the Federal public land closure in Unit 22A remainder moose hunt area be rescinded September 1 through September to coincide with the State non-resident moose hunt.

We'll start with National Park Service, Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: The National Park Service opposes in deference to the RAC. I feel strongly that we need to have a precautionary principle for ensuring subsistence uses, and that means the burden of science should be on verifying the abundance. With that said, the lack of science shouldn't be a hold up. And I think the Park Service would be interested in joining the BLM and the Fish and Wildlife to get more data. And I also wonder if we couldn't explore ways to integrate Mr. Kronberger and other local users as citizen scientists that could help advise the RAC.
Thank you, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Don.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: I'm going to state our position here in a second but I want to clarify it first. In order for a Federal Subsistence Board member to counter a Regional Advisory Council recommendation we have to address those concerns, and with this vote that'd be, is the action detrimental to the Federally-qualified user, in the absence of any unit specific information, that we must rely on other means if we're going to go in a different direction than the RAC.

I feel concern for Mr. Kronberger's efforts, he did submit a special action request, the Board denied it, and said it was more appropriately for a regulatory proposal, he went through the proposal process and here we are again, and if you look at the composition of the unit, 40 to 45 percent are Federal lands, a majority of that being the Fish and Wildlife Service with a sliver of BLM lands, so, therefore, they have regulatory control over the guides and/or transporters of which they have one guide and could be one transporter authorized on Refuge lands. Mr. Kronberger stipulated that he does not hunt in the coastal low lands or in close proximity to Stebbins and St. Michael, so any potential conflict which may occur from non-resident use and a local Federally-qualified user would be aircraft usage in the up lands, and in the Andreafsky section of GMU 19, a survey has been conducted where there's 3,210 plus or minus 24 percent and that represents over two moose per square mile. Adjacent to that is Unit 21E which has 8,607 moose plus or minus 27 percent, and 2.1 moose per square mile. The remainder of the lands within 22A remainder are all under the State purview.

And so with that being said, the Bureau of Indian Affairs feels we support WP20-42 and feel that as the geography, the topography and the harvest practices have been expressed in this area, there would most likely not be a detrimental impact on Federally-qualified users.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Gene, for that.

Bureau of Land Management, Chad Padgett.

MR. PADGETT: Thanks, Tom. I support adopting WP20-42 as stated by both BIA and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you.


MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I support per my justification and concurrence with Gene's added information on the units. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Greg.

Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Hello.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: Yes. Hello, did you hear me?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yep, I hear you.

MS. PITKA: Okay, great. I oppose in deference to the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. And I would strongly suggest that we find more data on this area, it sounds like the data is scant, and there could be negative effects to subsistence users.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Rhonda.

Charlie Brower.

MR. C. BROWER: I'll support as stated above.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Did you say you support, Charlie?

MR. C. BROWER: Yes.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Charlie.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Yes, I'm going to go ahead and support this proposal with the Fish and Wildlife Service justification, but especially in light of BIA's additional information, that Gene was able to share here.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much Dave.

Anthony Christianson, Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: My vote is in deference to the RAC.

MR. DOOLITTLE: The motion passes. Mr. Chair, it's 12:17 and I'm not sure what you want to do going into the next one.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think for the order of business let's do one more and we'll break at 12:30 for 45 minutes. So I think we could do one more.


MS. MAAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead, Staff, you have the floor.

MS. MAAS: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the Board. For the record, my name is Lisa Maas and I'm a wildlife biologist in the Office of Subsistence Management. I'll be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP20-43/44/45/ and 46, which begin on Page 1188 of your meeting book.
Wildlife Proposal 20-43 was submitted by the Kotzebue Sound AC, and Proposal 20-45 was submitted by the Northwest Arctic Council, and they both request a year-round bull season for caribou in Unit 23.

Wildlife Proposal 20-44 was also submitted by the Kotzebue Sound AC and requests that harvest of caribou calves be permitted in Unit 23.

Wildlife Proposal 20-46 was submitted by the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, or WACH Working Group, and requests a year-round bull season and that harvest of caribou calves be permitted in Unit 23.

The Kotzebue Sound AC note that the migration of the Western Arctic Herd has occurred later in recent years resulting in the bull season already being closed when caribou pass through accessible areas. Therefore, harvest has shifted to cows which could be a conservation concern. Opening the bull closure would allow harvest of younger bulls that do not stink during the rut, conserving cows and alleviating compliance issues associated with distinguishing between bulls and cows. The Kotzebue Sound AC also states that while no one targets calves, legalizing calf harvest would allow take of orphaned calves that may otherwise be killed by predators. The WACH Working Group provided the same rationale as the Kotzebue AC. The Northwest Arctic Council states that eliminating the bull closure would allow harvest of younger bulls, reducing harvest pressure on cows. The Council echoed concerns of the Kotzebue AC that due to caribou migration occurring later in the year, only the cow season is open when caribou migrate through accessible areas and eliminating the bull closure would take pressure off Federally-qualified subsistence users to harvest caribou during a certain timeframe.

In 2013 an areal photo census indicated significant declines in the Western Arctic Herd, in response the Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board implemented a suite of regulatory restrictions across the range of the Western Arctic Herd in 2015, including closing the bull season during the rut and prohibiting calf harvest, therefore, these restrictions have only been in regulations for a short time and were intended as conservation measures during a time of
steep decline. The Kotzebue Sound AC and the WACH Working Group also submitted identical proposals to the State, Proposals 19, 20, 24 and 25. In January of this year the Board of Game adopted Proposal 20 to open a year-round bull caribou season in Unit 23 and adopted Proposal 24 as amended to remove the restriction on caribou calf harvest in Unit 23 as well as in Units 22 and 26A.

The Western Arctic Herd declined from a peak population of 490,000 caribou in 2003 to a low of 201,000 in 2016. In 2017 the herd increased to an estimated 259,000 caribou. The 2019 population estimate was 244,000 caribou. Bull/cow ratios have been adequate and generally above 40 bulls per 100 cows. Caribou calving generally occurs in June while weaning occurs in late fall before the breeding season. Calves stay with their mothers through their first winter which improves access to food and body conditions. Calves orphaned after weaning have a greater chance of survival than calves orphaned before weaning. Since about 2000 the timing of fall migration has become less predictable often occurring later than in previous decades.

Caribou have been and are a primary subsistence resource in the Northwest Arctic region. Traditionally cows and calves were highly valued for their hides and were harvested in late summer when their hides were prime for making clothes. Calves also provided food for elders as their meat was more tender and easier to chew. However, hunters no longer target calves in the Northwest Arctic region and Northwest Arctic Council members indicated harvest of calves to be wrong and unethical. The harvestable surplus of the Western Arctic Herd is calculated at six to seven percent of the estimated population. In 2016 harvest likely exceeded the harvestable surplus when harvest was estimated at 15,000 caribou while the harvestable surplus was only 12,000 caribou. However, the population increase in 2019 increased the harvestable surplus estimate to 14,700 likely bringing harvest to approximate the harvestable surplus. Local community harvest reflects caribou availability rather than population trends, and Federally-qualified subsistence users account for approximately 95 percent of total Western Arctic caribou harvest. As caribou migration has been occurring later in recent years, subsistence harvest has also been occurring later in November, for
example, rather than September.

One alternative considered was to maintain the prohibition on calf harvest as some members of the Northwest Arctic Council voiced strong opposition to calf harvest. Since no conservation are concerns are associated with allowing calf harvest and it increases harvest opportunity, OSM supports calf harvest but recognizes Northwest Arctic Council members may consider calf harvest to be in conflict with their subsistence lifestyle and beliefs.

If these proposals are adopted, the bull caribou season would be open year-round and the harvest of caribou calves would be permitted in Unit 23. Eliminating the bull closure provides more harvest opportunity and poses no conservation concern. Young bulls could still be harvested during the rut taking harvest pressure off of cows and providing more harvest flexibility to Federally-qualified subsistence users. Permitting calf harvest would allow the harvest of orphaned calves, however, identifying orphaned calves can be difficult as cows and calves are sometimes separated by substantial distances. Allowing calf harvest may also reduce wanton waste as calves mistakenly shot are left in the field because they cannot be legally harvested to salvage. Northwest Arctic Council members and a local biologist have reported seeing wounded or orphaned calves out in the field that are not legally available for harvest. The Western Arctic and Teshekpuk Caribou Herds are the only herds in Alaska where calf harvest is prohibited and it's only been prohibited since 2015. Prior to the prohibition calves comprised an estimated two percent of the harvest, which is not biologically meaningful. Indeed prohibiting cow harvest would have much more of a conservation impact on herd trajectory than prohibiting calf harvest.

The Board of Game adopted a year-round bull season and calf harvest at its meeting in January 2020 so these changes will become effective under State regulations in July of this year. If only the Board of Game passes these proposals and not the Federal Subsistence Board Federal regulations would be more restrictive than State regulations, which is contrary to law. Differing State and Federal regulations would also create user confusion and cause users to distinguish between Federal and non-Federal lands,
including the mean high water mark, which can be very difficult to define.

In sum, these proposals increases harvest opportunity and there are no conservation concerns although there are social and cultural concerns.

The OSM conclusion is to support WP20-46 and to take no action on Proposal WP20-43, 44 and 45.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, appreciate that. Any questions for the Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll call on the presentation of summary of public comments, Council Coordinator.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the Board. For the record, Katya Wessels, OSM. And we did not receive any written public comments on Wildlife Proposals WP20-43, 44 and 45 and 46.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Katya. And we'll go ahead and ask the Operator, anybody on line who would like to publicly testify to this proposal, specifically, please.

OPERATOR: As a reminder, if you would like to make a public comment about this proposal specifically, please press star one from your phone. One moment to wait for any public comment.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Our first public comment comes from Zachary Stevenson, your line is open.

MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here to provide the Regional Advisory Council recommendation, I know we're not there yet, I'm just
standing by.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you
for that. Appreciate it. Is there any other public on
line that would like to speak to this proposal.

(Teleconference interference -
participant not muted)

OPERATOR: There are currently no
public comments in cue at this moment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We
will now call on Regional Advisory Council
recommendation, Chair or designee, you have the floor.

MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff, Western
Interior.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Jack, you
have the floor.

MR. REAKOFF: The Western Interior
Regional Advisory Council voted unanimously to support
WP20-46 and took no action on the other proposals.

The Council felt that this addressed
allowing hunters to take younger bulls during the
breeding season and with the adequate bull/cow ratio we
were satisfied that there's no need for further
protection of bulls at this time whereas previously
there was.

So those are the wishes of the Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Jack.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair, this is Louis.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead,
Louis, you have the floor.

MR. GREEN: I'm not sure if I connected
there, Mr. Chair.
(No comments)

MR. GREEN: Hello.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hey, Louis, you're coming in clear.

MR. GREEN: Okay, thank you. I can hear something on the background but I can't tell -- so the Seward Peninsula RAC voted unanimously to support WP20-46 and take no action on WP43, 44, and 45. These actions are consistent with the Office of Subsistence Management's conclusion. And the Council agreed with OSM that adopting WP20-46 increased harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users and felt that eliminating the bull closure may help to grow the herd and take the pressure off the cows as others have stated. And there's a feeling that people do not target calves.

Thank you, and that's all I have, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Louis. And we'll call on the next Regional Council Chair, North Slope, or Western Interior -- no, we heard from Western Interior -- North Slope.

MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MS. PATTON: Hello, Mr. Chair, this is Eva Patton for the record, Council Coordinator for the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. Our Chair, Gordon Brower, is in other urgent meetings at this time for the North Slope region so I will read the Council's recommendation into the record on their behalf.

The North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council supports WP20-45. They support WP20-45 specifically as it was submitted by their Federal Regional Advisory Council in the Northwest Arctic region. They took no action on Proposals 20-43, WP20-44, AND WP20-46.

The Council supported residents of Unit 23, including the North Slope community of Point Hope.
would be able to harvest bull caribou at any time and make the decision locally whether the bulls are in rut or not good to eat. Council members discussed their observations that the migration and movement of caribou are changing and that the caribou have been coming by Point Hope later in the season. The Council expressed that an open bull season would allow flexibility to hunt bull caribou when the timing is right if the caribou are nearby the community and not in rut. The Council felt that while the closure was intended as a conservation measure initially that perhaps it would be more beneficial to reduce pressure on cow harvest by lifting the bull closure and traditional knowledge will inform when the bulls are in rut or are good to eat.

The Council specifically supports WP20-45 in deference to the neighboring Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and the communities in Unit 23 to be able to increase subsistence opportunity for the harvest of bull caribou. However, the Council has concerns about proposals requesting the harvest of calves since the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is still in conservation management. The Council recognizes traditional subsistence uses of calves but suggests ongoing protection of calves at this time for the future of the herd as the population is still recovering.

And that concludes the comments from the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you, Chair and members of the Board.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva. Any questions for Eva.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we'll move on -- did we get all the Council Chairs for this one?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair, this is Tom. Mike Kramer or Zach Stevenson needs to comment on behalf of the Northwest Arctic.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. I just want to make sure we got everybody. Thank you. You're
on the floor.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Northwest Arctic.

MR. STEVENSON: Hello, this is Zach Stevenson, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We got you loud and clear, Zach, you have the floor.

MR. STEVENSON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. This is Zach Stevenson for the record, the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Northwest Arctic and Eastern Interior Alaska regions. I am presenting the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council recommendation on the proposals as the Chair, Michael Kramer is unavailable.

Addressing Wildlife Proposal 20-43, the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council voted to support WP20-43 requesting the year-round bull season for caribou in Unit 23 justifying their position that this proposal would increase subsistence opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users and support the harvesting of young bull caribou when larger bulls are in rut as justification for its decision.

May I proceed with the Council's recommendation regarding WP20-44 through 46, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, please do.

MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Additionally, the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council voted to oppose Wildlife Proposal 20-44 requesting that the calf harvest be permitted for caribou in Unit 23 justifying its opposition stating that cultural values are the basis for wanting to avoid establishing an open season for any calf, while supporting, however, the incidental harvest of mortally wounded or orphaned calves. The Council discussed the possibility of modifying the proposal to specify allowing the incidental harvest of wounded or orphaned calves. Additionally, an Alaska Wildlife Trooper noted
the enforcement of such a modification is presently
impossible given the region's vast geography and
limited number of law enforcement personnel in the
region. Additionally, the Council clarified that the
harvest of calves is uncommon presently and suggested
modifying the RC907 permit to document the incidental
harvest of wounded or orphaned calves. Lastly, one
Council member expressed opposition to the harvest of
calves, noting that such practice is inconsistent with
contemporary Inupiaq cultural values.

Additionally, addressing Wildlife
Proposals 20-45, 46, the Council stated their support
stating their concurrence with the OSM conclusion on
Wildlife Proposals 20-45/46 justifying their position
that because of the actions taken on Wildlife Proposal
20-43 and Wildlife Proposal 20-44 and noting opposition
to requiring the RM880 permit.

And that concludes the Council's
recommendation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Zach. Any questions.

MS. MAAS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead.

MS. MAAS: Yeah, I'd just like to
clarify for the record, I think Zach got on the next
proposal 20-47, that the Northwest Arctic Council voted
to take no action on Proposal 20-45 and 46 because of
its actions taken on 20-43 and 44.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
the clarification. Any questions from the Board for
any of the RAC Chairs.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
hearing none, we'll move on to the Alaska Department of
Fish and Game comments, State Liaison.
MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
For the record, Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish
and Game.

The Department supports Proposal WP20-46. As you know the Board of Game considered proposals
similar to these during their January meeting up in Nome and passed a proposal to open a year-round
resident season for caribou bull harvest in Unit 23 and they also passed a proposal to remove restrictions on
caribou calf harvest in 22, 23 and 26A. We recommend adopting Proposal 46 with the modification to allow
that calf harvest in Units 22 and 26A to align Federal and recent Board of Game action.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions for the State.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair. We forgot something -- but, this is Tom. I was wondering if we had the tribal and ANCSA Corporation comments from Mr. Lind.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Maybe we can step back if we didn't get that one there, Tom. Orville, are you available?

MR. LIND: Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I could hear you, Orville.

MR. LIND: Oh, okay, I'm on again.
Thank you, Mr. Chair, board members and RAC Chairs. Orville Lind, Native Liaison of Office of Subsistence Management. During the consultation session held on September 30th there was just a request to overview WP20-43, 44, 45, and 46, however, there were no comments made.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that Orville. And thank you for keeping me on task, there, Tom. Okay. We'll jump back ahead now to the ISC Staff Committee comments, ISC Chair.
MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The ISC agrees with the intent of Proposals WP20-43 and WP20-45, which request a year-round bull season for caribou in Unit 23. This action may help grow the Western Arctic Caribou Herd by reducing pressure on cows and providing additional subsistence opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users. Local testimony has suggested that meat from young bulls is frequently palatable even during the fall rutting period.

The ISC has concerns regarding the portions of WP20-44 and WP20-46 that request that calf harvest be permitted for caribou in Unit 23. The issue of orphaned and wounded calves appears to be concentrated in the Kotzebue area. The situation may be better addressed with the formation of hunter education groups similar to the caribou hunter success working group that is facilitated by Western Arctic Parklands National Park Service. The Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and the Cape Krusenstern Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource Commissions have expressed concern regarding the hunting of calf caribou especially considering ongoing conservation concerns. Members of both SRCs indicated that active calf harvest is no longer a cultural practice. Several members of these bodies have indicated a need to address orphaned and wounded cows and not wanting hunters to be legally liable for dispatching and potentially utilizing calves in apparent distress due to these circumstances.

The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Management Plan recommends a prohibition on calf harvest while in the conservative management mode, which the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is currently in, and thus the prohibition on calf harvest may be warranted. The plan's focus on conservation could be justification for opposing the Western Interior and Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's recommendation to support calf harvest opportunity. Still, calf harvest is expected to compromise a very small portion of the harvest, and with the new registration permit in place if WP20-44 and WP20-46 are adopted, and if management agencies note significant calf harvest, they could submit a special action request prohibiting the harvest of calves. The Alaska Board of Game did, however, lift the prohibition on calf harvest in Unit 23 under State...
regulations so opposing this action would make Federal regulations more restrictive than the State. Because much of the land immediately surrounding Kotzebue, Kotzebue is State managed, a prohibition on Federal lands would still allow for orphaned and wounded cows to be harvested near Kotzebue.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, ISC.

We'll open up the floor now for Board discussion with RAC Chairs and State Liaison.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll go ahead and open the floor for Board action on this proposal.

MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair, Don Striker, with the Park Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Don, you have the floor.

MR. STRIKER: I move to adopt Wildlife Proposal WP20-46 and to take no action on 20-43, 20-44, and 20-45. To be clear, the intent of this motion is to adopt a year-round bull season for caribou and to lift prohibitions on calf harvest in Unit 23. If given a second, I'll explain my intent to support this motion.

MR. PELTOLA: Second.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

MR. STRIKER: Thank you. The Park Service supports a year-round bull season for caribou in Unit 23 as this would increase harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users and may also help grow the Western Arctic Caribou Herd by reducing harvest pressure on cows. While there have been repeated testimony in the region that adult bulls are not palatable during the rut, there has also been testimony that the timing of the rut can be variable, and that young bulls may still be consumed during this time. For these reasons I support the year-round bull season.
Concerning the lifting of prohibitions on calf harvest, I understand that this is a contentious and complicated issue. We've heard from both sides of the issue, from several of our advisory committees and I won't restate what we've already heard, but it is important, in my opinion, to understand that calf harvest is now legal under State regulation and so to the extent that lifting the ban would align the State and Federal regulations, I think this makes good sense.

So for that I'll be supporting the position of the Western Interior and Seward Peninsula Councils and the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group. I believe the prohibition on the calf harvest in Federal regulation should be listed, and that because most people don't target calves, calf harvest is expected to be very low, and should not affect the conservation of the herd. This would make it legal for hunters to kill and retain calves that are clearly abandoned or mortally wounded, and for people who have cultural opposition, it doesn't require a reg to conform to cultural norms. Additionally, I feel that lifting the prohibition on calf harvest would align with the newly implemented State regulations making it easier for users to understand.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any Board discussion or deliberation on this motion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll call for question.

MR. PELTOLA: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Roll call, Tom, please.

MR. DOOLITTLE: All right. This is Proposal WP20-43, 44, 45, and 46.

Proposal WP20-43 requests a year-round bull season for caribou in Unit 23.

Proposal WP20-44 requests that calf
harvest be permitted for caribou in Unit 23.

Proposal WP20-45 requests a year-round bull season for caribou in Unit 23.

Proposal WP20-46 requests a year-round bull season and that calf harvest be permitted for caribou in Unit 23.

The motion is to support Proposal WP20-46, take no action on Proposals WP20-43, WP20-44, and WP20-45.

We'll start with U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you. I support WP20-46 and take no action on WP20-43, WP20-44 and WP20-45 with the justification provided by the National Park Service as well as in deference to the Western Interior and Seward Peninsula RACS.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much, Dave.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Bureau of Indian Affairs supports adoption of WP20-45 and take no action on WP20-43, 44 -- no, excuse me -- WP20-46, adopt, and take no action on WP20-43, 44 and 45 as stated, and with the justification so eloquently provided by our National Park Service colleague.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much, Gene.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support the adoption of 20-46 and take no action on WP20-43, 44, and 45 in deference to the Western Interior and Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council, and also this increases harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified users and it aligns State and Federal regulations.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much,
Rhonda.

Charlie Brower.

MR. C. BROWER: Good afternoon. I support Proposal WP20-45 and take no action on Proposal WP43, 44 and 46, as recommended by the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Charlie.

Bureau of Land Management, Chad Padgett.

MR. PADGETT: Thanks, Tom. I support adoption of WP20-46 and take no action on WP20-43, 44 and 45 as stated by my colleague at the National Park Service. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Chad.


MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I support the motion to adopt WP20-46 and take no action on 43, 44 and 45 in deference to Western Interior and Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Councils and the justification provided by our National Park Service colleague.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much, Greg.

National Park Service, Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: I support for reasons already articulated. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Don.

And last but not least, Chairman Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support in
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1 deference to the RAC.

2 

3 MR. DOOLITTLE: Alrighty, Mr. Chair, 
4 that concludes that motion, which passed. And we would 
5 -- the next one on deck would be 20-47.

6 

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. 
8 Well, we'll go ahead and it looks like it's 10 to 1:00 
9 right now, can we take a 30 minute break for lunch and 
10 come back at 1:20.

11 

12 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. 
13 
14 MR. DOOLITTLE: We'll see you guys at 
15 1:20.

16 

17 (Off record) 
18 
19 (On record) 
20 
21 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Operator. 
22 Is this still Jordan, the Operator?

23 OPERATOR: Yes, Sir, I will be on for 
24 the next 40 minutes.

25 
26 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Jordan. 
27 Okay, let's see who's back, this is Tom back from my 
28 short lunch recess.

29 
30 Don Striker, are you with us on line.

31 
32 MR. STRIKER: I am here, thank you. 
33 
34 MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, good, Don. 
35 
36 Chad, are you with us, Padgett.

37 
38 MR. PADGETT: I am here, Tom, thank 
39 you.

40 
41 
42 MR. DOOLITTLE: Thanks.

43 
44 
45 SIEKANIEC. 

46 
47 MR. SIEKANIEC: Yes, Tom, I'm here.

48 
49 MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, Greg.
Dave, from the Forest Service, you with us.

MR. SCHMID: I'm on Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thanks, Dave.

Gene, are you on line with us?

MR. CHEN: Hey, Tom, this is Glenn Chen, I'm filling in for Gene until he steps back in.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, thank you, Glenn.

Rhonda, are you on line with us?

MS. PITKA: Hi, I'm on line.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hi, Rhonda.

Charlie, are you on line with us?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Tony, you're on line with us?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I'm here, thank you, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Operator, is Mr. Charlie Brower, do you see him in the cue?

OPERATOR: Charlie Brower is on with an open line, he may be muted on his end.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, good.

Our State partner, is Alaska Fish and Game on, is Ben Mulligan on?

MR. MULLIGAN: Present.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hi, Ben.

Just checking to see if Staff is on, Suzanne Worker, you on?

MS. WORKER: I'm here.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Great. Lisa Maas, are you on?

MS. MAAS: Hey, Tom, this is Lisa, yep, I'm here.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, great. Chris McKee, are you on?

MR. MCKEE: I'm here, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Great.

Orville, are you on?

MR. LIND: I'm here, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Wonderful. Alrighty. We have a quorum of the Board. And, Mr. Chair, we are at WP20-47.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Right on, we'll call on the Staff at this time to present the analysis, thank you.

MS. MAAS: All right, thank you, Mr. Chair, members of Board. For the record this is Lisa Maas and I'll be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP20-47 which begins on Page 1239 of your meeting book.

Wildlife Proposal 20-47 was submitted by the Northwest Arctic Council and requests closure of the cow moose season and requiring a State registration permit for moose in Unit 23. The proponent is concerned about declines in the Unit 23 moose population stating this proposal would help conserve cows, improve harvest reporting, align State and Federal regulations and aid in the recovery of the moose population.

The cow moose season and non-resident season have been closed under State regulation since 2017 due to conservation concerns. In 2018 both cow and bull moose seasons were shortened under Federal regulations. In 2019 the cow moose season was closed under Federal regulations by special action and authority delegated to the in-season manager to close to non-Federally-qualified users if warranted due to
serious population viability concerns.

The Unit 23 moose population had declined approximately 25 percent in the past two years from an estimated 7,500 moose in 2017 to an estimated 5,600 moose in 2019. Low calf cow ratios also indicate poor recruitment and that the population decline will likely continue.

Moose are a relatively recent subsistence resource for local people, although the recent declines in the Western Arctic Caribou Herd has likely resulted in more people harvesting moose to meet their needs. Harvest likely exceeds the harvestable surplus. Non-local resident harvest has averaged 42 moose per year and local harvest is estimated at 350 to 450 moose per year while the harvestable surplus is currently only 336 moose.

If WP20-47 is adopted, the Federal cow moose season will be closed and the RM880 State registration permit will be required to hunt moose under Federal regulations in Unit 23. The RM880 permit must be obtained between June 1st and July 15th in local villages which burdens Federally-qualified subsistence users with traveling to a licensed vendor to get a permit during a certain time period.

Serious population viability concerns exist for the Unit 23 moose population due to population decline, low calf cow ratios and likely exceedance of the harvestable surplus. Conserving cows is particularly important in conservation as cows are the engine of population growth. Adopting this proposal could aid in the population's recovery and decrease regulatory complexity in the area through alignment of State and Federal regulations.

The OSM conclusion is to support WP20-47 with modification to change the harvest limit from one bull to one antlered bull to prevent inadvertent cow harvest after antlers have dropped.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for Staff.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We'll move on to summary of public comments from the Coordinator.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. For the record Katya Wessels with OSM. We did not receive any written public comments for WP20-47.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Katya. We'll now ask the Operator, anybody on line to publicly testify to this proposal.

OPERATOR: As a reminder, if you would like to make a public comment, please press star one from your phone. One moment as we wait for any public comment.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none.....

OPERATOR: I'm showing no comments in cue at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. We'll move on to Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation consultation summary, Native Liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, but I didn't hear you go through Regional Advisory Council recommendations.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, sorry. I lost my connection from my Board here, so give me one second, I was just trying to pull my card back up here again.

MR. LIND: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that clarification.

Regional Advisory Council recommendations, Chair or designee.
MS. PATTON: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor, Eva.

MS. PATTON: Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. It sounds like maybe Zach is still trying to cue in to speak on behalf of the Northwest Arctic Council, I will provide the comments from the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. For the record this is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator, and, again, our Chair, Gordon Brower, is in other urgent meetings for the region. As you all know many Council Chairs wear many hats and these are some challenging times right now responding to the Covid-19.

So the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council supports WP20-47. The Council discussed that the North Slope community of Point Hope occasionally have an opportunity to hunt moose when they are pushed north into the area by wild fires. They're not familiar with other community subsistence moose hunting in Unit 23, however, the Council is supportive of the Northwest Arctic Council's efforts for conservation to help rebuild the moose population by closing the cow hunt and focus subsistence harvest on bull moose only.

Further, the Council recommended that if the use of a registration permit were to be implemented that managers work closely with the local tribes and community to distribute permits so that they are readily available in each rural community in Unit 23 including Point Hope.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board.

That concludes the North Slope's comments.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva.

Any questions for Eva.

MR. G. BROWER: Hello. Could I be recognized for a second, Gordon Brower, from the North
Slope.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes,
Gordon.....

MS. PATTON: Oh, wonderful, Gordon,
you're on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: .....you have
-- yes, yes, I recognize you now Gordon, you have the
floor, welcome in.

MR. G. BROWER: (In Inupiat) I just
got on and I got the messages and I appreciate Eva
stepping in to assist us here.

All I wanted to say was I'm on line if
there's questions I'll be on line to take any questions
as well.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Gordon, appreciate that. Calling on the other Regional
Advisory Council Chair or designee.

(No comments)

MS. MAAS: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is
Lisa, and if Zach's not on line I can provide the
recommendation.

OPERATOR: This is the Operator,
Zach.....

MR. STEVENSON: Hello, can you hear me?
OPERATOR: .....Stevenson's line is
open.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I.....

MR. STEVENSON: Hello, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: .....can hear
you, Zach -- yes, you have the floor, Zach, thank you.

MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
This is Zach Stevenson with the Office of Subsistence
Management. I'm speaking on behalf of the Northwest
Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, whose
Chair, Michael Kramer, is unavailable this afternoon and has asked me to share the Council's recommendation on Wildlife Proposal 20-47.

The Council voted to support WP20-47 as modified by the Office of Subsistence Management and justified its position noting a concern for conserving the region's declining moose population, while also expressing concern about the ability for Federally-qualified subsistence users to access the RM880 permit.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Zach. Any questions for Zach.

MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead, Charlie.

MR. C. BROWER: A question to Mr. Brower there, on the North Slope Advisory Council, you guys are just supporting the Proposal 47, do you support it with the modification by OSM?

MR. G. BROWER: Yeah, Mr. Chair. Yeah, Gordon Brower, North Slope Regional Advisory Council. Just having entered the meeting I didn't get to hear the reading of the proposal and so I need to look at that to refresh my memory, it's been quite some time, and I've been inundated with many different meetings here with the current work I'm doing right now with the Borough. But I did get the message.

MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Eva, could you clarify the position on that please, thank you, for Gordon.

MS. PATTON: Yes, Mr. Chair and Council [sic], and thank you Chairman Gordon Brower. So the North Slope Regional Advisory Council actually met prior to the Northwest Arctic Council meeting and so they supported WP20-47 as written and submitted by the Northwest Arctic Council.

Thank you.
MR. G. BROWER: And here's my question, Eva, can you tell me what that proposal was, I know the number but I'm trying to look at the documents here what it was supporting. Just hearing the number, that doesn't prompt my memory.

MS. PATTON: Yes, Mr. Chair, thank you -- thank you for jumping on teleconference here. Maybe what I can do is just repeat the Council's recommendation.

So this was a proposal submitted by Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council requesting that the cow moose hunt be closed in Unit 23, and use of registration of permit. So the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's recommendation was to support WP20-47 as written. The Council discussed the North Slope community of Point Hope occasionally has an opportunity to hunt moose when they are pushed north into the area by wildfires but were not familiar with other community subsistence moose hunting in Unit 23. However, the Council is supportive of the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's efforts for conservation to help rebuild the moose population by closing the cow hunt and focus subsistence harvest on bull moose only. Further, the Council recommended that if the use of a registration permit were to be implemented that managers work with the local tribes and communities to distribute permits so that they are readily available to each rural community in Unit 23, including Point Hope.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That concludes the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council comments.

MR. G. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Did that help -- yes, go ahead, Gordon.

MR. G. BROWER: Yeah, in response to the question, yeah, that was -- we've always had concerns among various different villages about the availability of moose and that -- yeah, we would support that with that modification of working the village.
MR. C. BROWER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other questions for Regional Advisory Council Chairs.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you guys for that clarification. Now, we'll move on to Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation consultation summary, Native Liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Board members, Regional Advisory Council Chairs. My name is Orville Lind, Native Liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management.

During the consultation session on September 30th, we did have one member from the Native Village of Kaktovik, and he stated that they are trying to have a small moose season so they can try and harvest moose in that area, moose harvesting has been an issue for some people in this area. And he also stated that some of the moose are skinny and it's not a good time to hunt in some areas but the people are hoping that the discussion at the public hearing ahead will result in the opening of a moose hunt. They're also working on changes with the Refuge to make the moose hunt work for them.

That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. Any questions for Orville.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll move on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments, State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. We have no comments on this proposal.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben. InterAgency Staff Committee comment, ISC Chair.
MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The InterAgency Staff Committee agrees with the OSM conclusion and the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council recommendation to support Wildlife Proposal WP20-47 with modification to change the harvest limit from one bull to one antlered bull. Given the serious population viability concerns for moose in Unit 23, substantial declines in the population, low calf/cow ratios and possible exceedence of the harvestable surplus, conservative actions and harvest tracking mechanisms are necessary.

The ISC would like the Board to be aware, however, of local concerns regarding implementation of the RM880 permit. Local testimony has indicated that the original intent of the RM880 permit being made available only to Unit 23 communities during this specific period was to limit non-local use of the limited resource. Requiring locals to obtain this permit adds to a burden on local users, and several Unit 23 residents have indicated access to vendors can be difficult, especially in the summer when subsistence activities are being undertaken. If implemented a resident who is unable to, or fails to obtain the RM880 permit within the available time period will have to hunt under a more restrictive State regulation that require larger bulls be taken only in the period of September 1st to September 20th.

Both the Northwest Arctic and the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's expressed concerns regarding local access to the RM880 permit. The North Slope Council recommended that managers work with tribes to distribute permits. The Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley SRC both supported the cow moose season closure but imposed the implementation of the RM880 permit. It is unclear what level of compliance will result from a permit that may be difficult for some to obtain, and if availability is expanded, to what extent non-local harvest may increase as a result.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for the ISC.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any Board discussion with Council Chairs or State Liaison.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll open the floor for Federal Board action on this proposal.

MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair, Don Striker, Park Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Don, you have the floor.

MR. STRIKER: Thank you. I move to adopt Wildlife Proposal WP20-47 with modification to change the harvest limit for moose in Unit 23 from one bull to one antlered bull, and to eliminate the RM880 State registration permit requirement portion of the request. The proposal language is shown on Page 1239 of your Board book and if I get a second I'll explain my intention to support this motion.

MR. PELTOLA: Second.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

MR. STRIKER: Thank you. There are serious population viability concerns for moose in Unit 23. Given that cow moose are important drivers of the population, I concur with the Northwest Arctic and the North Slope Council's that the cow moose season should be closed at this time. I also agree with the Northwest Arctic Council and OSM that changing the regulation wording from one bull to one antlered bull will further protect cows during this time of conservation concern. Conservative actions are necessary to protect the viability of this population and I applaud local users for taking actions to self restrict for both conservation and for future subsistence opportunity. I understand the need for improved harvest tracking mechanisms, but I don't support the requirement for an RM880 State registration permit currently, and I share the ISC's concern and very well articulated rationale for this component of the request. I think that requiring this permit for Federally-qualified subsistence users would add a substantial burden and therefore I'm not a proponent of
adding that piece. Additionally, Unit 23 residents are still adjusting to the relatively new State registration permit requirements for caribou and so for those reasons I oppose implementation of the RM880 permit requirement at this time.

I realize my position on that matter is contrary to the Northwest Arctic and North Slope Council's because I believe it would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs. I think it's worth noting that both of these Councils expressed some concern over this permit requirement as did the Cape.....

OPERATOR: This is the Operator.....

MR. STRIKER: Thank you.

OPERATOR: .....Don has disconnected.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Don, got lost, Operator.

OPERATOR: Yes, Sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We will wait a second for him to reconnect. It sounds like he was about finished with his justification.

OPERATOR: Please standby as he dials back in.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

MS. PITKA: It did sound like it was complete.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, we'll just wait a moment for him to sign in. Any other Board discussion or deliberation on this.

MR. STRIKER: Thank you. I think I'm back now, where are we?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Don, you were just finishing your justification.

MR. STRIKER: I think I left off at thank you, Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate that. And, again, the floor is open for Board discussion or deliberation on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. C. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, Tom, please.

MR. DOOLITTLE: This is on Proposal WP20-47 request a closure of cow moose season and require the use of a State registration permit to the harvest of moose in Unit 23.

If Scott could go to the top to the modification it would be helpful -- thank you, Scott.

Adopt as modified to change the harvest limit from one bull to one antlered bull and to eliminate the RM880 State registration permit requirement portion of the request.

We'll start with Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: The Bureau of Indian Affairs supports adoption of WP20-47 as modified and justified by the National Park Service in their motion.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Gene.


MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I support to adopt WP20-47 as modified and also in deference to the Northwest Arctic and North Slope Regional Advisory Council's desire to see conservation measures implemented regarding this moose population, and for the justification provided by our esteemed colleague at the National Park Service.

Thank you.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Can't agree more, thank you very much, Greg.

Chad Padgett from BLM.

MR. PADGETT: Thanks, Tom. Sorry, I had a little trouble with my mute button. I move to adopt WP20-47 as stated by my colleagues at National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service in deference to the RACs.

Thanks.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Sir, for that.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, also support to adopt WP20-47 with the OSM modification and the justification provided by the National Park Service.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Dave.

Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support WP20-47 as modified with the justification provided by the National Park Service.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Rhonda.

Charlie Brower.


MR. DOOLITTLE: With the -- along with the Park Service striking the registration permit?

MR. C. BROWER: Yes.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, thank you, Charlie.

National Park Service, Donald Striker.

MR. STRIKER: The Park Service supports for reasons previously identified and with a big thanks
to the ISC. Thanks, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: You betcha Don.
And Chairman Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support for
reasons stated.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
The motion passes unanimously. That moves us on, Mr.
Chair, to Wildlife Proposal 20-49 Eastern Interior,
North Slope Unit 25, sheep.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we'll call
on the Staff at this time to provide analysis.

MS. KENNER: Hi, this is Pippa, can you
hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Loud and clear,
Pippa, you have the floor.

MS. KENNER: Great. Okay. Hello, Mr.
Chair, members of the Board and Council Chairs. My
name is Pippa Kenner and I'm an anthropologist for the
Office of Subsistence Management. The analysis of
Proposal 20-49 begins on Page 1280 in Volume II of your
Board materials. It might be helpful for you also to
be turned to Page 135 in the State's wildlife
regulation book, or Handy Dandy.

This proposal was submitted by the
Alaska Department of Fish and Game and requests that
the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area reopen to the
harvest of sheep by non-Federally-qualified users, put
succinctly, the proponent states that the restriction
of sheep hunting to residents of only a few communities
is not necessary to accommodate local subsistence uses.
The proponent continues: Harvest records indicate
residents of these communities rarely hunt sheep and
there is no biological reason to preclude sheep hunting
opportunities by the public in the Management Area.

Orville Lind will provide a summary of
tribal consultation that occurred between the Board and
the Arctic Village Tribal Council.

We do have some new information.
In March the Alaska Board of Game amended Proposal 82, which is described on Page 1286, which was submitted by the Eastern Interior Alaska Council. The Alaska Board of Game adopted the following regulation changes within the Management Area.

It created the eastern Brooks Range Management Area which has the same footprint as the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area and expanded the hunter education requirement formally required for hunting in Red Sheep and Cane Creek drainages only to the entire Management Area. It changed the harvest limit under registration hunt 595, which occurs from October 1st through April 30th from three sheep to one ram with three-quarter curled horn or less every four regulatory years. It changed the resident and nonresident April 10th to September 30th hunt from requiring a harvest ticket to requiring a draw permit and it changed the resident harvest limit for this draw hunt from one ram with full curl horn or larger per year to every four years.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game reported to us that if the Federal Subsistence Board rescinded the closure at this meeting, the drawing could happen in the fall of 2020 for a hunt as early as 2021 dependent on having the hunter education program in place, which is necessary for anyone hunting sheep under State regulations in the Management Area. Also the number of draw permits available could be five to 10 sheep but that number could change, but the number would not be based on harvestable surplus.

Sheep densities within the Management Area have generally been low compared to some other areas in the Brooks Range. Sheep densities north of Cane Creek have been much higher than those south of Cane Creek, likely abundance of habitat quality. Densities south of Cane Creek have averaged around 0.3 sheep per square mile whereas densities north of Cane Creek have averaged around 1.3 sheep per square mile. In 2016, when the most recent survey was conducted, density within the entire Management Area was likely at about 0.7 sheep per square mile, which is comparable to other areas across the Brooks Range.

The Management Area was traditionally occupied by Neets'aii Gwich'in, who continued their
nomadic way of life into the 1950s when they
established more permanent settlement at Arctic Village
and Venetie. They followed to the Arctic Coast routes
that were situated within the Management Area for the
purposes of trade. Families went into the mountains to
hunt sheep and caribou, traders went forward to the
Barter Island area to exchange hides for Western goods
from whalers. People preferred the Phillip Smith
Mountains for sheep hunting, which is the source of
many East Fork Chandalar tributaries including Red
Sheep and Cane Creek and other drainages situated
within the Management Area. This trade continued
irregularly until about 1928.

Red Sheep Creek was a recognized
favorite sheep hunting area on the route to the Arctic
Coast. Food and tools were cached in the mountains in
the Red Sheep Creek drainage for returning traders and
for future trips indicating the cultural importance of
the area. Native allotments covered the confluence of
Red Sheep and Cane Creek with the East Fork Chandalar
River. Another Native allotment is situated further up
Red Sheep Creek. The Red Sheep Creek allotments were
not conveyed until 1996 and prior to this time the
confluence was a site of a large guiding camp. This
allotment contains a large airstrip identifiable from
the air and another smaller airstrip is situated
between the two Red Sheep Creek allotments. The source
of community concerns is trespassing and guides and
hunters creating air and foot traffic in areas with
prehistoric, cultural and scientific value.

Traditionally after caribou, mountain
sheep are the most important large land mammal for food
and moose were scarce. Neets'aa Gwich'in relied upon
sheep as a food source primarily in late summer or
whenever caribou were scarce. Arctic Village residents
generally harvest sheep in early fall from late August
or early September and in November. Sheep are
considered best in the fall. Residents generally
travel to hunt sheep by boat, then by foot from hunting
camps in the fall or by snowmachine in late fall, but
not in the winter, given the dangerous terrain and
winter weather.

Since 1993 Arctic Village residents
have noticed to the Board the plane traffic has
interfered with their ability to successfully hunt
sheep in the Red Creek and Cane Creek drainages.
Residents report that plane flyovers spook sheep, which climb to higher elevations making them more difficult to hunt. They explained that Red Sheep and Cane Creek are both very narrow valleys and consequently flights through the area disturb sheep.

Since 1995 Federally-qualified subsistence users have been able to get a Federal registration permit to hunt sheep in the Management Area, but we must take care when using these data as it is likely that many hunters have not reported their harvest efforts. Since 1995 they have requested 40 Federal permits. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game maintains a harvest reporting data base where hunters using State harvest tickets or permits report their hunting efforts. A description of hunter effort and success within the Management Area at the uniform coding unit level, or drainage level can be described, although harvest site documentation is not precise and is an approximation. Using State harvest tickets and permits from 2006 to 2010 approximately 22 sheep harvests, about four sheep annually, were reported in the area north of Cane Creek while it was open to the harvest of sheep by non-Federally-qualified users, from August 10th to September 30th each year.

The Office of Subsistence Management's conclusion is to oppose the proposal.

Sheep populations in the Management Area situated south of Cane Creek continue to exist at low densities and should remain closed to the non-subsistence uses in order to protect healthy populations of sheep as mandated in ANILCA Section .815(3). Since 1995 the Board has continued to hear substantial testimony and ethnographic evidence demonstrating the importance of Cane Creek and Red Sheep Creek drainages to Federally-qualified subsistence users, especially Neets'aii Gwich'in, who occupied the area historically and continue to occupy the area today. In 2012 the Board reiterated that the closure was needed to ensure the continuation of traditional subsistence uses of sheep by Arctic Village hunters, and, again, in 2014, and 2018. This area should remain closed to non-subsistence uses in order to protect the continuation of subsistence uses as mandated in ANILCA Section .815(3).

Thank you.
That's the end of my presentation. I'm available to answer questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Pippa. Any questions for Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. We'll go on to the.....

MS. PITKA: Pippa.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello.

MS. PITKA: Pippa, this is Rhonda.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda, yes, you have the floor.

MS. PITKA: Okay. Thank you for that analysis. And, also, how long is the Administrative Record for this particular proposal in this area?

MS. KENNER: It goes back to 1990, I believe.

MS. PITKA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other questions for Staff.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg, you have the floor.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. Pippa, do you know of, you know, I think in 2018 the Board, through me, primarily, suggested a working group become established and the Regional Advisory Committee Chair thought that, you know, they would work on trying to gather a group together that would potentially come up with an alternative to this, do you know what activities took place in and around them pulling together a working group through the Regional Advisory Committee, Arctic Refuge, State of Alaska, at all?
MS. KENNER: I am somewhat familiar but, no, I do not know all the details. I'd like to refer this question to another OSM Staff member who knows more.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Greg, maybe.....

MS. MAAS: Yeah, Pippa, this is Lisa, or Doolittle.

MR. DOOLITTLE: No, you can go ahead, Lisa.

MS. MAAS: Okay, sorry, jump in Tom if I misspeak. But, yeah, the Eastern Interior Council tried to form a subcommittee at one of their meetings between the State and Arctic Village residents and Eastern Interior Council members, and at a Federal Subsistence Board teleconference call where you deliberated several special actions this past summer you also considered Eastern Interior Council's request to form that subcommittee and that request was denied or deferred, but it did not happen. So if anyone else have more specific information regarding that subcommittee formation, feel free to jump in.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Lisa.

MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chairman.

(No comments)

MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, sorry, I was listening to conversation.

MS. WESSELS: Sorry. This is Katya Wessels, may I speak?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Katya, go ahead.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you. I just have a little bit of information on the formation of the subcommittee that Eastern Interior had requested. They requested the subcommittee to be formed during their meeting, fall meeting of 2019 and their proposal was put together and presented to the Board at one of the
meetings in November and the Board requested more information on the formation of the subcommittee and OSM is supposed to collect this information from the Eastern Interior RAC to find out exactly what the scope of the work of the subcommittee will be and supposed to present it to the Board when this document is ready.

Thank you.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for those answers. I think if I remember correctly, and there's certainly guarantee of that, that we agreed that a subcommittee would not be appropriate due to, I believe some Federal Advisory Committee Act concerns or considerations, but a working group was certainly something that could be, you know, implemented or put together. I'm concerned that, you know, for whatever reason, I don't know why this is taking so long and we're having so much difficulty in perhaps getting a working group together and not getting -- (indiscernible - cuts out) engage, perhaps, the villages of Arctic Village or those that would depend on this area, but I also will look forward to hearing from the State, maybe they have more information as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Greg, this is Tom, if I could answer this and I can put some closure to parts of this, I think. Through the Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tom, please, I would turn it over to you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yes. And Ken Lord can also verify this. The creation of a working group is something that, by terminology, is something that the State organizes and are very costly -- are very costly sorts of process and, again, would meet approvals that would be difficult through regulations and relative to FACA, however, the creation of a subcommittee to a RAC
is something that's well within the purview and
something that's normally done. But when the Eastern
Regional Advisory Council asked to create a
subcommittee, the Board did decline that, with pending
more information to form it. So not to play on the
semantics between working groups and subcommittees but
the subcommittees are something that are well within
the scope and normally get approved as an advisory body
to issues to the Regional Advisory Councils, but
working groups are far more formalized and costly
process, a good example would be the Western Arctic
Caribou Working Group and those working groups usually
sanctioned through the State and are not done as
commonplace.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and for the
comments to Mr. Siekaniec.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Greg, go
ahead.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Tom, thank you for that
explanation. I'll be real frank, I'm pretty
disappointed that we have not been able to move this
discussion between the Eastern Advisory Committee, the
Arctic Refuge, State of Alaska and the communities
involved. I think we've had, you know, more than ample
time. I understand we're waiting for some level of a
report back, I would really like to see this get the
attention that we thought it would be getting.

Thank you.

MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead.

MR. STEVENSON: Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, is that
you Zach?

MR. STEVENSON: It is, Mr. Chair. This
is Zach Stevenson with the Office of Subsistence
Management.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Zach, go ahead.

MR. STEVENSON: If I may, I'd like to read for the record a two page document that was submitted on November 7th, 2019 responding to the request raised during the November 2019 Federal Subsistence Board teleconference addressing the question posed by the Board -- or raised by the Board, if I may?

(No comments)

MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, go ahead, Zach.

MR. STEVENSON: Thank you. The document opened with expectations and the expectations were as follows:

One. For users of the area and Alaska Native peoples to develop a working relationship that does not exist at this time.

Two. The State of Alaska to develop and implement a hunter ethics course.

Third. To gather information pertaining to sheep management from local users in the area to be submitted to the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Federal Subsistence Board and the Alaska Board of Game.

Addressing the goals, also requested by the Federal Subsistence Board November 2019 teleconference. The goals were to -- and, again, this is a draft document.

Were to reach agreement and respect for future management of dall sheep in Unit 25A, as in Alpha. An open dialogue in the future is needed to support future management for locals to be informed when issues in the area come up.

Timeframe. Again, addressing timeframe of an issue requested by the Board. And this is, again, a draft. The subcommittee shall hold two....
MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, a question.

Why is a draft presentation being given to the Board instead of a finalized document.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think at this time they're trying to just clarify why the process doesn't seem to be where some Board members feel it was and I think Zach's filling in that timeline.

MR. STEVENSON: Through the Chair. In responding to Member Peltola's question. This process was not completed, but I did just want to clarify for the record and I'm happy to pause or stop at this point, that this information was prepared.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair. I'll put closure to part of this discussion relative to where some gaps were, if I may.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: I totally agree with Mr. Siekaniec and Mr. Peltola. There was a position that was presented to the Federal Subsistence Board to create an advisory committee to the Regional Advisory Council, that was kicked back to OSM for further clarification and for more information, and that the Office of Subsistence Management, in working with the Eastern Regional Advisory Council has not done as timely due diligence as it should have and will take full responsibility and we totally understand the full disappointment that Board Member Siekaniec and Board Member Peltola have both stated.

Thank you, Sir.

MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, this is Katya Wessels.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, for that Tom. Katya.

MS. WESSELS: Sorry to interrupt. The Chair of the Eastern Interior RAC, Sue Entsminger, she's on line and she wants to talk about that but her
line is closed, so if we can ask the Operator to open her line, please.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Please, Operator, can you open Sue Entsminger's line please. Thank you.

OPERATOR: Yes, I can.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Hello, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I can hear you, Sue, you have the floor.

MS. ENTSMINGER: In lieu of what Tom just said I think I will wait for my testimony.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you, Sue.

Any other questions for Staff from the Board.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead, Chad.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. I just have a quick question, and it might be more appropriate for the RAC. I was just reading through the Board of Game actions on Page 1286. Within that it says the Council states in the proposal that it intends for the proposal to become a joint effort between the Alaska Board of Game, Federal Subsistence Board and Arctic Village residents to find a workable solution to a historically contentious issue and build mutual respect between parties. In that vein, I just want to make sure that I've got a good understanding of pairing the Board of Game action that was taken in March to what action we're doing today. Could somebody help fill me in on that?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Can somebody from Staff have an answer for Chad?

MS. ENTSMINGER: Mr. Chair, this is Sue Entsminger, Eastern Interior RAC Chair.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sue, you have the floor, thank you.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, thank you. I'm going to try to answer that. As you guys well know this always continues to come up as long back as 1990, and in an effort to try to get things moving along the Eastern Interior did put that proposal forth and in hopes that something -- this working group would start. You know I have a prepared testimony when it's my turn to talk more to that, but maybe he could be more specific in the questioning because there's a lot that's gone on ever since this started and we could do that in my testimony, I guess.

MS. KENNER: Member Padgett, this is Pippa Kenner, I had been cut off.

MR. PADGETT: Oh, thank you, go ahead.

MS. KENNER: Hi, yes. So the proposal from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game that we're considering right now is to reopen the area to non-Federally-qualified users.

Now, our regulations only apply to the residents of those four or five communities that are in the C&T, including Arctic Village. The State's regulations, of course, will apply to all residents of the State and non-residents of the State. So often times when the State is providing a general hunt, it's done with a registration permit, and generally these permits -- there's an unlimited distribution meaning there isn't a number of permits that are given out, they're just given out to whoever asks for them. Now, what the Alaska Board of Game has done is basically for that fall season, it's removed that general hunt, and has replaced it with a draw permit, and that means there will be a specific number of permits distributed and no more, it means they can control how many people are hunting in the area.

Thank you.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you, I appreciate that clarification.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Pippa.
MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is that you, Gene.

MR. SIEKANIEC: No, this is Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, go ahead, Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah, Chad, thanks. I think you read just precisely what I think the expectation is for the -- you know, the State and the Villages and the RAC and the Refuge to all come together and reach some agreement as to how this would be workable and implemented on the landscape. I think the State has moved favorably in the area of a draw permit type system limiting the number of individuals. I'm not sure I understand the registration aspect of what I read in the most recent thing that came out. So my feeling is we're closer but we just haven't gotten there because we now have Regional Advisory Committees that are opposing this action. So I'm trying to figure out what work needs to be done yet to get us to this -- out of this continual discussion and have a very workable solution to provide the opportunities for both subsistence harvest as well as meeting the priority public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge system, which is, you know, all people have an opportunity to potentially hunt there but under a very limited circumstance.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. KENNER: Mr. Chair, this is Pippa.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Pippa.

MS. KENNER: I just wanted to clarify that the registration permit within the Management Area will still exist but it will not begin until -- that hunt will not begin until after October.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other discussion for Staff.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,

Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
I understand the desire to get everybody at the table
but, yes, this issue has come up and gone year after
year and time after time, depending on the composition
of the Board of Game, depending on the composition of
the Federal Subsistence Board, depending on the
Administration of land management agencies and such
but, of all the potential discussion to date, I think
it needs to be centered upon, why is Arctic Village and
the residents who reside there hunt keep coming back
and have told the Federal Program time after time
again, we typically hunt by boat and via hunting by
boat they go up river. The area which has the highest
density, and this closure area, for lack of better
descriptor at the moment, overall is a low density
population, the highest densities are up towards the
northern end of the area which happens to be the exact
same area which is accessed by the Federally-qualified
users who access -- who try to harvest from the
population in question, but that also coincides with
the two or three viable landing strips that are
utilized by the non-local user hence this body, the
Federal Subsistence Board, has been told time and time
again, they are not able to access, therefore, i.e., a
detriment to the Federally-qualified user based on the
presence of non-Federally-qualified users in the area.

So I think that is the question at
hand, not necessarily the question of can we all get
together at the table. If we don't get at the basis of
the desire for residents to utilize these sheep
populations, that they are not able to access the sheep
because of the non-local use, then everybody's sitting
at the table and it is a moot point.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I believe we
are opening the floor to public testimony.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair, I believe we
have the summary of written public comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I thought
I called on Katya so summary of public comments,
Regional Council Coordinator.

Thank you.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
members of the Board. We received no written public
comments on Wildlife Proposal WP20-49.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Katya. Now, we'll open the floor to public testimony,
anyone on line.

OPERATOR: Thank you, Sir, one moment.
We have Katie Vanzant [sic], your line is open.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: Katie, your line is open,
please check your mute button.

MS. LINNELL: For Karen Linnell, Ahtna
InterTribal Resource Commission?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, Karen.

MS. LINNELL: Hi. I got to sit in at
some of the Eastern Interior RAC meetings and with the
Board of Game through this process in the last few
months. I found it interesting that the Eastern
Interior RAC submitted a proposal to the Board of Game
reducing the bag limits and requiring full curl and
then later was modified, it was going to turn into one
every four years for a subsistence hunt, and then in
the very same turn, the State of Alaska is submitting a
proposal to the Federal Subsistence Board trying to
open Federal lands. To me there's a vested interest
happening here, in that it's -- you know, instead of
advocating and trying to protect those subsistence
needs, that they were trying to reduce them.

One of the things with the Red Sheep
Creek and if you listened to all the folks that were
testifying, that, there are low numbers. There are
lower numbers now than when it was closed before and
that those people that are closest to the resource are
even refraining from harvesting themselves trying to
protect that population. So I'd ask you to not open
this area to non-Federally-qualified users and to
protect and provide for that preference for rural
subsistence users.

    Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Karen for that. Any questions for Karen.

    (No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
any other public on line that would like to speak to
this proposal.

    MS. KENNER: Mr. Chair, this is Pippa,
can you hear me?

    CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Pippa, I
can hear you.

    MS. KENNER: Hi, I think -- I'm just
worried that we -- oh, no, we haven't -- I was worried
we were jumping over tribal consultation, I'm sorry.

    Thank you.

OPERATOR: Sir, the next comes from
Matt Gilbert, your line is open.

    (No comments)

OPERATOR: Matt Gilbert your line is
open, please check your mute button.

    MR. GILBERT: Yeah, hello, hi, I didn't
expect my turn to come so quickly, I apologize. Yeah,
hi. Gwich'in Athabascan from Arctic Village and I
actually am at the very end of an eight year journey of
mapping Gwich'in lands and it was all started because
of this Red Sheep Creek issue. And, yeah, and because
one of the RAC members kind of -- there's no pretty way
of saying this, I'll just say it, he kind of like
really aggravated me at the testimony back in '08 when
he said that -- or '07, that we had no documented use
of the land and so that set me off on this journey, and
I've been an independent contractor the last eight
years bouncing around different agencies, all of them,
actually, in the Interior, to map the lands with the
elders and a lot of these elders are not here no more
so these maps -- I'm writing the reports on them, I'm
just about done with them, and there is heavy, heavy
use of Red Creed Sheep.

But before my testimony time ends, I
don't know if it's timed, but I just want to say that
I've lived in Juneau, I've lived in Haines and I talk
to many people from Kenai, too, and all those southern
towns, and they've told me repeatedly, you know, I
don't know if this sounds radical or not, but they've
told me repeatedly that their wildlife populations have
been decimated even under the management of Fish and
Wildlife and so I think that's why you have a lot of
Native people up this way that just really, really
don't trust the management, don't trust anyone else
with their sheep because we've successfully managed
them for thousands of years and they're still here so
we must have been doing something right.

There's a story of a Tlingit elder, he
told me down there, it's so hilarious and cool, he said
there was one Tlingit Chief that was in charge of the
eulachon, he told people a long time ago, he told
people when to fish, when not to and nothing ever
happened to the eulachon population, but he said now
you have the whole Staff at Fish and Wildlife and the
eulachons are endangered now, so it's kind of like
that.

You know, that's why Native people just
are having a very hard time trusting and even feeling
safe with outside parties involved in the management or
hunting of the sheep, you know, and that's why we're
very protective. And I do have all the maps and I hope
to get them out soon, they might be published by the
University Press. Yeah, if I were to go into them we'd
be here for days.

But I just want to let you know I'm a
Gwich'in cartographer and I could tell you that the --
this is the end of Indian Country, too, you know,
Native American, we're the last chapter, you know, I
mean after this there's no other Native American
Tribes, so keep that in mind too everyone, sheep --
it's just really sensitive, really sensitive, and
please keep listening to the Arctic Village people.

Yeah, that's it.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
that. Any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
appreciate you taking the time to call in today. Any
other public on line that would like to speak to this
proposal.

MR. GILBERT: Thanks.

OPERATOR: The next comes from Curtis
Summers [sic], your line is open.

MR. SUMMER: Good afternoon. My name
is Curtis Summer. I'm currently the First Chief for
the Native Village of Tanana here in the Interior.

We are west of Fairbanks on the Yukon
River right where the Tanana River meets the Yukon
River and I have had a lifetime of living off the land.
I used to spend my youth in trapping camps screening
out, falling out fish camps, I think I've spent maybe a
total of two to three months in a village between
trapping camps and fish camps. But I was raised on
food off the land and in swimming in the water and also
flying in the air, eating the duck eggs in the
springtime and stuff like that.

I see that most of that is gone now and
all we have are a bunch of tightly regulated seasons
where my people, the Dena' is forced to abide by. With
that said, we have a very high price of food here, our
half gallon of milk is $8 here and a dozen of eggs is
almost $6, a loaf of bread is $6, a little steak is 16
to $20. We pay a high price for gasoline here even
though oil is syphoned out of Alaska lands. And right
now we have a flood warning here, potential flood where
we're going to have to evacuate our elders, our
medically challenged residents who live here in Tanana,
but for the rest of us we will be staying here to take
care of this village if it floods. That means camping
out, we'll have maybe generators and freezers but
limited food. We have a need to go and harvest several
moose to pass around between the villagers in order to
make ends meet while we're going through this flood
situation and after. So food will be needed and
freezers and generators and all that. We won't have
any access to the store, and possibly to the air
field. But we go through this every year. When people
are successful they always help other families who are
not as successful and pass the food around. We live by
a different philosophy than the Colonial philosophy.
Our tribal philosophy is us and we, it takes all of us
to survive. The Colonial philosophy is me. Me. It's
mine, you know, by any means of taking it, and we know
by the slaughter of 115 million Natives here in this
country alone and many more hundreds of millions of
Natives world-wide.

But, you know, we don't ask for much,
we ask for much, all we ask for is enough to live on,
and we let others take what they need. And if history
is correct, Alaska Natives take one to two percent of
the waterfowl, the wildlife, we do not hunt for sport,
we don't consider it money, we hunt to survive, and
that's something that the Colonial governments have
forgotten in their greed. And even I know, just like
that gentleman from Arctic Village who just spoke, you
know, you guys call this the Last Frontier, but, you
know, the State, the Federal governments are busy
screwing it up. Before ANCSA, the State and the
Federal governments has the entire state surveyed for
minerals and then they rammed ANCSA down the Natives
throats and jumped on all the mineral rich lands and
left us with nothing. That's what this mad rush to get
that Ambler Road project going for, is off of that.

But getting back to wild game, you
know, these Natives here in the Interior, when they
need meat, they don't have no store to go to, all they
have are White Man's rules to live by and they got to
live by them or go to jail. So I think what I'm asking
for is for you all to consider the people, the Natives,
and the non-Natives that live in the villages, they
don't live on the road system, they don't live in a big
city with a supermarket down the block, we only have
one store and that is priced out of our range for the
most part, but we do need help and for you guys to make
good decisions on our behalf, you might hear us
complaining, but for us, it's the only way for us to
maintain our way of life.
Thank you for listening to me.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, Chief Summer, for your testimony.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm sorry I got cut off here for a second. Appreciate the.....

MR. SUMMER: Do you want me to repeat it?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, I got it all, I just literally missed the last second there. I appreciate you calling in Chief and sharing the concerns of your community. We're all facing this together and I hope the best for you and your community and good luck with that flood there.

Operator, was there anybody else on line.

OPERATOR: Yes, the next comes from Charlene Stern, your line is open.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: Charlene Stern, your line is open, please check your mute button.

MS. STERN: Okay. Can you hear me okay?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, loud and clear, you have the floor.

MS. STERN: Okay. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board. My name is Charlene Stern, and I am the Vice President of Tanana Chiefs Conference. I am here today to respectfully offer comments on Wildlife Proposal 20-49 in support of Interior Tribes.

Your decision significantly impacts our people, communities and our well-being. The TCC region covers an area of 235,000 square miles in Interior Alaska which is equal to about 37 percent of the entire state, and just slightly smaller than the State of Texas. We encompass six subregions, the Lower Yukon subregion, the Upper Kuskokwim subregion, the Upper...
Tanana subregion, the Yukon Flats subregion, the Yukon Koyukuk subregion, and the Yukon Tanana subregion. Within our six subregions are 37 villages. Our mission is to provide a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development and the culture of the Interior Alaska Native people.

Alaska Native hunting and fishing practices including the harvesting and sharing of fish and game and other resources and the ceremonies which accompany these practices are essential to the social, cultural, spiritual, and economic well-being and survival of Alaska Native people. Alaska Natives have served as the stewards of their traditional lands and resources maintaining healthy and productive ecosystems for thousands of years and maintain the belief that human beings are an integral part of naturally functioning ecosystems not separate from them. Maintaining a balance in population dynamics has always been a critical element of indigenous management practices.

TCC opposes Proposal WP20-49 and any attempt to open a non-subsistence hunt in the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area. As a tribal member citizen of Arctic Village, the men in my family, including my grandfather and uncles were raised with sheep hunting as part of their seasonal subsistence cycle. The Gwich'in people of Arctic Village have inter-generational knowledge about the sheep of Red Sheep Creek and Cane Creek area and have consistently opposed efforts to open it to non-subsistence hunting. This area is included in our customary use area and is critical historical and spiritual site, including burial grounds. Any proposed change to the management of sheep must be discussed in advanced consultation with the Arctic Village Council and Venetie Village Council and Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government.

The Red Sheep Creek and Cane Creek area has a long history before any of us, in terms of State and Federal managers got involved. We have lots of countless testimonies over the years by tribal citizens of Arctic Village on record, and there have been, just this year alone, three tribal consultations alone on this proposal during the Interior Regional Advisory
Committee meeting and November consultation and then here again on Monday with the FSB. The Arctic Village people have never wavered in the protection of the sheep in the area. It is clear that our people, and our traditional hunters observe that the sheep population is insufficient to provide for our needs, let alone non-subsistence hunting opportunities.

Sheep populations by ADF&G estimates are lower than in previous years, and so we firmly believe that there is no biological reason for an opening at this time.

Additionally, there are no current surveys from Cane Creek or Red Sheep Creek to be able to make a determination on sheep population.

In addition to our stated biological concerns, we are gravely concerned about the political nature and the persistent pressures placed on this proposal, the threat of litigation by the ADF&G Commissioner at the March Board of Game meeting in Fairbanks broadcasts a hostile environment towards this proposal. The contradictory administrative record indicates land management ambivalence on this proposal and questions regarding the integrity of the core mission of U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The disagreement between the leadership of the agency and its own resource Staff suggests the political influence and the official position of the agency rather than an decision rendered on the basis of a disciplined approach supported by systematic biological and cultural historical documentation. The issuance of a favorable position on this proposal by the agency before obtaining renewed tribal consultation is misaligned with the statutory and regulatory environments of the Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and poses a conflict of interest.

It is critical that the Board oppose this proposal and the tribes officially requested consultation with ADF&G at their March Board of Game meeting. We envision a tribal consultation process which would result in more accurate sheep data. Consultation with tribes and local residents will give both ADF&G and OSM the opportunity to verify and improve data and address this ongoing concern so we do not end up here again in another two years.
TCC offers an invitation for Board members to coordinate village visits to better be able to understand the impacts of your decision on the people of the Interior. We urge the Board and OSM to implement your adopted Tribal Consultation Policy, which would allow us to address many of our longstanding issues that continually come up before you again, together in respectful consultation we are more likely to develop solutions that we can all advance.

I want to thank the Board and the Chairman for the opportunity to offer this testimony on behalf of TCC.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to call in today and clearly articulate that position, I appreciate it.

Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, thank you for calling in. Operator is there any other public on the line that would like to speak specific to this proposal?

OPERATOR: Thank you. The next comes from Tonya Garnett, your line is open.

MS. GARNETT: Hi, can everybody hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tonya, you have the floor.

MS. GARNETT: Thank you. Thank you to the Board and Chairman for allowing us this time to testify. My name is Tonya Garnett. I work for the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government as well as I'm a tribal member, and we have other people on the line as well who are waiting to testify and I hope that you're able to get to all of them, including elders and chiefs and councils.

First, I'd like to open with a concern that we evaluate the decisionmakers and any conflicts
of interests. We're concerned about this proposal being fairly and equitably considered as it has a contentious history with the State publicly threatening to sue pending the FSB decision and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife making public comment in support of providing non-subsistence opportunity and without any tribal consultation.

The Arctic Village Council -- I also work for Arctic Village Council. The Arctic Village Council and the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government are Federally-recognized tribes that oppose Wildlife Proposal 20-49, which seeks to open the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area in Unit 25A to the harvest of sheep by non-Federally-qualified users.

As you know Arctic Village has long opposed such efforts. Our tribal representatives met with five members of this Board as recently as November 2019 to discuss this position. Today, together with Native Village of Venetie Tribal government, we own 1.8 million acres of land south of the Management Area and we represent tribal members from both Venetie and Arctic Village.

Some of our key points to consider for opposing this proposal, for over 29 years the Federal Subsistence Board has deliberated over decisionmaking on whether to keep the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area open or closed for the harvesting of sheep by non-Federally-qualified users. The Federal Subsistence Board is the record to consider.

Over the years Arctic Village residents have continually testified at numerous EIRAC meetings, tribal consultations, and the FSB meetings to close non-subsistence hunting in the Cane Creek and Red Sheep drainages. That record of contains important observational data as well as traditional and cultural use of sheep. In our language we call sheep, divii, to the Neets'aii Gwich'in people of Arctic Village and Venetie. This Management Area and the resources upon it are part of our traditional and customary use area. We have been stewarding these resources for far longer than any other manager and we have significant concerns with the changes being proposed before this body.

There are no current surveys from the Cane Creek or Red Sheep area to inform a proposed
change to current management. According to the ADF&G estimates, sheep populations are lower than previous closures. The Office of Subsistence Management reported at the 2012 FSB meeting indicated that a sheep population density of 1.7 sheep per square mile in 2006 and then .8 sheep per square mile in 2007. At the March 2020 Board of Game meeting biologists reported that the last surveys of the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area showed sheep density estimates of .67 sheep per square mile. The sheep density population is declining since the closure in 2012. There is no biological reasoning for any opening at this time.

The most current population data is actually from our Arctic Village elder Edward Sam, who was quoted at the 2019 EIRAC meeting by tribal representative David Smith and myself. Edward Sam's directive was not to hunt because of the low and unhealthy population of the sheep in the Cane Creek and Red Sheep area. Local observations of low sheep populations are one of the strongest indicators of the need to allow resources to replenish so as to allow future subsistence use. Based on these observations, Federally-qualified users have practiced self-imposed conservation and should be the first user group to be afforded the harvest opportunities when the sheep population is once again healthy and stable.

Stewardship practices such as these described are, in fact, acts of subsistence. These principles were recognized by Anthony Christianson at the 2014 FSB meeting before a vote on Wildlife Proposal 14-51, he stated: "The foundation of the testimonies that we heard is that it's cultural and spiritual connection that the people have with the resource, the level of spirituality people have and the act of subsistence. I think the resource is responding to the people in the region who care about the resource."

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has previously supported closure of Red Sheep and Cane Creek drainages reporting a long history of cultural subsistence use and essential to residents of Arctic Village. This position was contradicted in a recent letter to the Board of Game on February 4th, 2020 which supported Proposal 82 rescinding closure, yet, remained neutral on Federal proposals on the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area.

Our tribes and tribal members have had
to continually monitor the sheep management in this area. At the 2018 FSB meeting, Greg Siekaniec requested to defer Wildlife Proposal 18-56 until the Board of Game cycle because: "We've had it, sounds like the same discussion over and over, and so I would like to look for a way that we have further discussion around it, and I agree with Karen, we may not get to an answer that's agreeable with the State, or my perspective on the Refuge, but at least we would have some additional dialogue and information to make a decision."

We believe that the answer to request a moratorium that would prevent this issue from being prematurely being revisited again and again before the sheep population has had an opportunity to stabilize, and before we have current and accurate surveys of the Red Sheep and Cane Creek areas, which can conform (ph-muffled) a management change.

The Arctic Village Council and the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government are united in our opposition to Wildlife Proposal 20-49.

We also ask that this conflict of interest be addressed, the threat of litigation by the ADF&G Commissioner at the recent Board of Game meeting broadcasted a hostile environment on this proposal, the contradictory administrative record indicates land managing ambivalence on the proposal and questions the integrity of the core mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is the conservation management and, and where appropriate restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources. In the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge there is an additional mission of managing to honor the land, the wildlife and the Native people with respect and restraint. The disagreement between the leadership of the agency and its own resource Staff suggest the political influence and the official position of the agency, rather than a decision rendered on the basis of a disciplined approach supported by systematic, biological, and cultural history documentation. The issuance of a favorable position of the agency on proposals before obtaining renewed tribal consultation comment is misaligned with the statutory and regulatory environments of the Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and poses a conflict of interest.
This conundrum and agency expertise qualifies that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency seat to be recused from voting on the Wildlife Proposal 20-49.

Thank you, again, to the Board and Chairman, for allowing me to testify, and, again, I hope that our elder, Chief, and Councils and tribal members are to testify today as well.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for taking the time to call in on this issue, any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, appreciate your comments today. Operator, next public please.

OPERATOR: Thank you. Jessica Black, your line is open.

MS. BLACK: Thank you. Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I can hear you Jessica, you have the floor.

MS. BLACK: Okay. Thank you, Chairman and members of the Board. My name is Jessica Black. I am a Gwichyaa Zhee tribal member from Fort Yukon, and my partner, Danny Lee, is from VashraiiK'oo Arctic Village and a tribal member. I also grew up in the village of Nenana.

I would like to start by saying that I am opposed to the proposal, WP20-49, and any attempt to open non-subsistence hunts in that Arctic Village Sheep Management Area.

My partner, Danny and I, have been educated by our elders and Danny's Uncle, Edward Sam, is a Gwich'in elder from Arctic Village, and he continues to talk with us and educate us and emphasize the significance of Red Sheep Creek. He asks that we share this history and current situation with our daughter and he talks about why this area is so important to our Gwich'in people. Gwich'in people have
been connected spiritually to this place for thousands
of years. Edward has hunted in this sacred area for
decades, all of his life, and has witnessed significant
changes. He shared a story with us that approximately
60 years ago there was around 70,000 sheep from Kobuk
to the border, fast forward 60 years later, there are
approximately 2,300 to 2,500 sheep left. Edward shared
that after hunting at least 36 years in a row he didn't
get one sheep. He was in Red Sheep Creek for two weeks
this past year and only saw one ram but he let it go to
repopulate.

This is the kind of management he and
our Gwich'ins of the area engage in, respect. Respect
for the animal so it can repopulate.

He shared with us that he walked up one
valley and he walked up another valley and he only saw
ewes and lambs. Edward said we need to be mindful of
all of this and we need to continue to care for the
animals that give themselves to us and that we have a
spiritual relationship with.

I'm not sure why this proposal
continues to be brought up. The people of the area,
the Gwich'in people have resoundingly asked that it
remain closed to non-subsistence users. And we know
this area intimately because we have been here for
10,000 plus years, and our stewardship is based on our
traditional and customary use of the area.

Thank you, very much for your time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to call in today. Any
questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
appreciate your comments today. Operator, is there
another caller.

OPERATOR: Bruce Irvin your line is
open.

MR. IRVIN: Hello, Chair and members of
the Board, can you hear me okay?
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Bruce, you have the floor.

MR. IRVIN: Okay. I'll make my testimony quick. I oppose WP20-49, the Arctic Village Gwich'in people have been managing the subsistence since time and immemorial, and with that long history and the recommendations of closing the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area in Unit 25A from the tribal consultation testimony that Arctic Gwich'in representative gave on April 20th, 2020, there's clearly not a surplus harvestable animal to reopen this hunt without jeopardizing future Federally-qualified user subsistence hunt opportunities. This is a Federally-qualified issue opportunity to provide much needed testaments for the Arctic Village Gwich'in who rely on the sacred (indiscernible-muffled). If they decline to hunt sheep in the Arctic Valley Sheep Management Area because of a critically low population of 0.67 sheep per square mile, and it is disrespectful and unsustainable to suggest opening this opportunity to non-Federally-qualified users.

I urge you to respectfully support the Arctic Village Gwich'in people and keep the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area in Unit 25A closed to non-Federally-qualified users.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for taking the time to call today, appreciate it. Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you very much for calling in. Operator, is there another public on the line.

OPERATOR: Thank you. The next comes from Tiffany Yatlin, your line is open.

MS. YATLIN: Hi, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tiffany, I can hear you, you have the floor.

MS. YATLIN: Hi, my name is Tiffany
Yatlin. I am the tribal administrator for the Arctic Village Council. I would like to keep the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area closed due to the outside hunting, due to not enough sheep and we use the land for subsistence hunt, we also have tribal members that own allotments in that area. If it opens to the outside hunting it will make our job more difficult dealing with outside hunters. We also use the meat as medicine, and when the sheep population is low, we do not hunt.

So, again, I would like the Arctic Village, Red Sheep area closed.

Thank you.

MS. GARNETT: I also have -- we're on the same line here, and I have my Council member Faith Gimmell, if she can testify.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we'll take her now, thank you. Please state your name for the record again.

MS. GIMMELL: I'm Faith Gimmell, Arctic Village Council member.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate your call today and we'll wait for you.

MS. GIMMELL: I'm right here. Thank you for taking comments on this important issue.

I am speaking today in opposition to 20-49, which would open up the Red Sheep Creek, Cane Creek area to outside hunters within the traditional homelands of the Neets'aii Gwich'in. We are currently in crises with Covid-19, the coronavirus. This virus is impacting all Alaska Native communities and our ability to food from cities. We now rely on the land for our food security more to address the disparity. We cannot afford to jeopardize the sheep population as it is more needed for subsistence hunting during this time of crises.

The primary concern I have about this issue is that from my understanding the current population of the sheep in the area is low, as we have heard from all the previous speakers, and following our
own traditional hunting laws we do not hunt when the numbers are low, which begs the question, why should it be open to other hunters? What is the motivation in this? Instead of protecting and preserving our important subsistence resource of sheep, opening the area would serve only towards depletion of this important subsistence resource. The abnormal weather we've observed recently would also serve to lower the numbers further, in my opinion. As we have noted rain recently, and cold immediately after would serve to create icy conditions on the mountains, which in my opinion will impact pregnant sheep this year. The nourishment they need will be harder to reach thereby impacting the health of pregnant females and that will further lower the numbers. I believe biologists would come to the same conclusion in the near future.

The Gwich'in are the ones that have always been the stewards of this region. We are the ones that live here and monitor the game in our area, and always have, and our traditional law, when we take from the lands, we only take what we need, with the forward insight of always ensuring the resource would be available for people after. When we are hunting on our land, we are taught to be very respectful, we handle our hunt in a respectful way. We do what we can to keep the area clean and we always give proper thanks for what we take. If the area is opened, outside hunters, who do not understand traditional law, would compete with our subsistence hunters. Many times we are told of the waste they leave. The area where they hunted is not left clean. The hunting practices are not respectful. We ensure the continuance of our reciprocal relationship with the land and animals when we observe our customary and traditional laws, outside hunters do not, and, thereby, jeopardize our hunt as well in the future. Outside hunters are there to take for trophy, usually. We are there to provide food security for our community. We need this subsistence resource to feed our community. If the area is opened up, the activity of airplanes in the area would negatively impact our ability to hunt.

In the past when the area was open there was extensive history of conflict of non-Federally-qualified hunters and local subsistence hunters. This needs to be taken into account in the decision as well. We should not have to compete with outside interests when we need the traditional foods.
for our survival. A healthy sheep population is necessary for our customary and traditional use of sheep.

I strongly urge that the closure remain in effect. It is necessary for the conservation of healthy populations of the sheep to provide for our subsistence needs. Opening the area will adversely affect our subsistence access and ability to harvest sheep disqualifying the meaningful preference for Federal subsistence users.

I strongly oppose 20-49 and strongly support a moratorium to be put in place to allow the sheep to replenish its population.

Thank you.

(In Native)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that good testimony. Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I thank you for taking the time to call in and speak to this. Operator, any other public on line that would like to speak to this proposal.

OPERATOR: Thank you. The next comes from Deborah Lind, your line is open.

MS. LIND: Good afternoon, Chair, and members of the Board. My name is Deborah Lind. I work for Tanana Chiefs Conference. Today I speak as an anthropologist.

I read through eight proposals spanning 29 years of the Federal Subsistence transcripts, and this is my conclusion, I am opposing Proposal WP20-49, and my reason is to first support Dr. Charlene Stern and Tonya Garnett, and Dr. Jessica Black's testimony. They gave a complete record of reasons that I support.

I will provide additional information, which is going to refer to surveys conducted on sheep populations. The current sheep population does not support this hunt. I will reference OSM's well written
Staff analysis found in your meeting book starting on Page 1280.

The first evidence I will reference is this Board’s history on both to open up the area to non-Federally-qualified users. One proposal was passed in 2007 to open the area for non-qualified users, and seven proposals failed to open the hunt for non-qualified users. This historical vote, of one to seven, is a failed vote to open the area to non-qualified users in the Cane Creek and Red Sheep Creek drainage. This public process is comparable to a work group that concludes this Board’s decision to keep the area closed, so it should be considered and respected.

The other evidence that I would like for you to consider is that a healthy sheep population is the core and foundation for confirming conservation and biological concerns, subsistence opportunity, along with the cultural religious and health of the community that depends on it. So I want to provide to you a timeline using the surveys that were reported from your meeting transcripts that referenced the Cane Creek and Red Sheep population and reports are as follows:

In 1991 the sheep density in this area was 2.25 per square mile.

In 2006 was the next survey and the sheep density was reported at 1.7 per square mile, a decline of 24 percent in the sheep population.

In 2007 the sheep density was .8 per square mile, another decline and 40 percent of the sheep population, and that was the year that Proposal WP07-56 opened the hunt to non-Federally-qualified users.

In 2012 Proposal 12-76 closed the hunt to non-Federally-qualified users.

In 2015 at the State Board of Game, the State biologist reported that the sheep density in 2015 was .67.

So to summarize, the total sheep population that has been continuously declining from 1991 to the very last survey in 2015 reveals a total decline of 70 percent of the sheep population in the
Cane Creek and Red Sheep Creek population. In addition, numerous public testimonies, as noted by other testimonies that we've heard today, that the elders in the area have spoken of this decline and instruct hunters to not hunt, this is why it is always referenced that there is no harvest being taken, it is because they are in a conservation management decision by their elders as a traditional suggestion to protect the sheep for the recovery of the population.

In closing, I would like to oppose this proposal, WP20-49, and ask that it should remain closed to non-Federally-qualified users for conservation reasons for there is no surplus to allow this hunt, and to protect and ensure a healthy sheep population and to ensure subsistence opportunity as mandated by ANILCA Section .815(3), and most importantly to preserve sacred ground for cultural and health of the communities that rely on them for their well-being.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Thank you for calling in with your testimony today.
Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank you and appreciate it. Next, Operator, is there another public on the line.

OPERATOR: Thank you, the next comes from Bob Sattler, your line is open.

MR. SATTLER: Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to confirm that you can hear me.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Bob, you have the floor.

MR. SATTLER: Okay, thank you. Bob Sattler, I'm an environmental policy analyst with Tanana Chiefs Conference and work with some of the folks that you've heard from today. And I wasn't planning to testify because I don't have a laid out comment, but I would like to bring up the procedural question that was raised a little bit before this.
I'm new to this. I don't understand all the nuances, I have to admit that right up front. I'm not a lawyer, but it's been quite an education listening to the testimony and the Staff report that started this.

And, particularly, you know, in my work I did review the administrative record on this and I do understand that it's sort of a long controversial issue, this Red Sheep Creek area, and in the review of that I have noticed that the Refuge has positions on both sides of this. The expertise of the resources Staff has issued some opposition, but yet the leadership has taken a position in favor of this proposal. And it's not clear how the agency makes decisions in this, or how they have made a decision, and it just strikes me in my, outside, sort of a third-party review of it, until the land managing agency is more explicit and more forthcoming about how they make decisions, that perhaps they should be recused from voting on this issue.

And since I didn't have prepared testimony I'm going to keep it fairly short, and that concludes my comments.

Thank you, for the opportunity, Chairman and the Board.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Thank you for taking the time. Questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, thank you again. Operator, are there any more on line that would like to testify to this specific proposal.

OPERATOR: Thank you, Sir. The next comes from Sara James, your line is open.

MS. JAMES: Thank you for the Subsistence Department, and Eastern Regional Board, and every individual that have spoke strongly on it, against it. Hunting within Red Sheep Creek, outside user, unqualified user.

I just want to start out saying that we
are Neets'àií Gwich'in, we're proud to be Neets'àií Gwich'in. That means this side of ocean, Arctic Ocean, to the Yukon, to the White Mountain. I have to speak in my language times just to make it clear that I'm coming from -- where I am from.

My name is Sara James, and my dad is from Birch Creek, and he knew that area and got married to my mother, she's from Arctic Village, and she grew up up here, and she know the area, so I'm pretty well covered. And we live through those area in my lifetime, and we still do. We go to Fort Yukon, we go to Birch Creek, we got relatives scattered all over the place so we haven't leave yet, we're here to stay.

We're talking about trophy for outside user, unqualified user, no respect to our country, that, we don't want to allow that, we never did.

We're talking about Red Sheep Creek and Cane Creek. It's our spiritual area. Our name four -- four item that's very important to Red Creek Sheep in my language -- (In Native) when we talk about (In Native) we know we're talking about something that's sacred. And then when we talk about (In Native) we know we're talking about sacred. And then when we talk about (In Native), we know we're talking about sacred place. And then when we talk about (In Native) I know we're talking about sacred place.

So to talk about all these sacred spiritual connection we have, I'm -- I am considered elder to Arctic Village Neets'àií Gwich'in, and we're all Neets'àií Gwich'in, we always kept that name Neets'àií Gwich'in from way back before bow and arrow, before they even got there, we were all Neets'àií Gwich'in, so we're not leaving anybody out.

Caribou, moose, even bugs, fish, they got special place to get their mineral needs into their body and that's what we call (In Native), and this place, Red Sheep Creek, when they were talking about allotment way back when we were applying to allotment we only have certain time to do it, again, we were directed to, and at that time I remember people got together and said all these places is our place, we got to apply to places that we know that are sacred to us to survive, it's like a security area. So that's what they pick out first, they said this is -- these are the
sacred area, okay, and then they said, okay, who
originate from that area, who was there doing their
subsistence living, they going to apply for that place
so my sister, my family would go into the mountain for
-- sometime we pick out one summer maybe you could do
that and then come back with bunch of sheep, meat and
share, and that's our medicine. I know the medicine
part of the sheep. It's very important to me. When we
go sheep hunting, these young guys, I said the last
time, my testimony, a young guy had been living in
Fairbanks all over the place, he did this and that but
he wants to go to the spiritual place and go hunting,
and he moved up here in fall time, okay, when are we
going to go sheep hunting, and I said, no, it's low
population, he moved here just to do that. I seen lot
of young people that I went sheep hunting with, got
into the mountains, it's like sacred ground to them, it
is sacred. Nothing is impossible for them, that's how
spiritually the place is. When we were coming back, we
went to the mountains up that way for 20 days, we hate
to come back, we hate to come back to the so-called
civilization, when we were around the bend from the
village, they said, we don't want no, and then we came
around that bend they said turn the light off, you
know, that's how well connected they were to it
spiritually.

Because I want to talk about the
spiritual connection because that is very important to
us. It's our medicine. There's a part of a sheep that
we take in as a food, it's good for running and it's
good for high altitude, because it's high altitude up
into the mountains. And that's how we are connected.

So for last few years, I don't know how
long now, we're facing climate change. When I said (In
Native) that mean red ink, and before the bow and arrow
days, people used to come from miles and miles just to
get our red ink, we got it up here. Because of climate
change it got erode away, some part of it. Our river
was three -- three days red. Climate change. It's in
our subsistence way of life. It's like that all over
Alaska. Right now we're facing uncertain challenging
and that plays a very -- Red Sheep Creek, Cane Creek,
that's our food security, and now it's a low
population. Why do we even have to talk about non-
qualified user, which I don't like to see the red sheep
ram up in somebody I don't know, in their house, up on
their wall just to look at it, just to be -- I don't
know, they like to go for something unique, I don't
know why, even if it's the last thing they going to
get, last tiger, last lion, last hippo, I just don't
see any value in that. It's been a hard winter here in
Arctic Village, all over Alaska with lots and lots of
snow. We think about that, right now we're thinking
about how the sheep is, we're not talking about, oh,
we're going to go sheep hunting this fall and I'm going
to get my ram, no, we think about the environment, what
condition it is, what's going on in the world right
now, nothing is good. We don't have an answer. It's a
challenging time.

So at that time when they were picking
out allotments, they said we want to hold on to that
Old John Lake, everybody's spread out now where we can
all put our names on to apply, we did that. So on our
own, we move to Old John Lake, walking, boat, whatever,
and we claim the whole Old John Lake because that fish
in Old John Lake is very special to us as Red Sheep
Creek is. It's very hard to be a ram, it takes a long
time to be a ram. It's long time to be an Old John
Lake trout, 40 years to be. See, we think down in the
future, we're not talking about today, how good a
hunter we're going to be, how good a carver we're going
to make, that time, we kind of pray but before we take
-- pray when we get the meat, pray and tell each other
about the parts and tell a story, story about the area,
story about the hunt before, we got an excellent story
about Red Sheep Creek and Cane Creek. This guy lives
into the mountains so much where there's no tree, he
loves that place, it's a spiritual place. And when he
leave down to treeline, he runs back into the mountain
and said the enemies are coming, let's not be the
enemy, let's be happy with our spiritual connection
which make us who we are, makes us strong and be proud
to be Neets'aii Gwich'in. I'm proud to be Neets'aii
Gwich'in. Nobody -- you know, God put us here to be
Neets'aii Gwich'in, to take care of this part of the
world, and I think we did fine. That's our
responsibility from our Creator.

So I don't know what else I can tell
you about the culture, spiritual connection and it's,
you know, there's more story. I just got done talking
to Honorable Trumble Gilbert, Reverend Trumble Gilbert,
he's the traditional chief in Arctic Village,
traditional chief for Tanana Chief, he said what about,
you know, the population is low, it's almost one week
they've been talking about it, that doesn't sound okay
so just tell them, you know, it's our security and
right now it's -- the population is low, and all our --
all us elders are staying home because there's not very
many of us and for life, for our children, for a
generation, that's why we're staying home, and that's
what we're talking about.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, thank you
for calling in, I was really talking on mute there.
Appreciate your testimony today, heartfelt testimony.
I always value, especially elder testimony, it really
gives us an idea and a place on what value system that
we utilize in rural Alaska and how we reflect that and
hand it down through generations and so I appreciate
that perspective today. Thank you very much for
calling in.

Are there any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
we'll move on, Operator, are there any more on line for
the public, and, again, we are.....

OPERATOR: At this time, Sir, there are
no further public comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
you. I appreciate that. And I appreciate everybody
that called in on that for the testimony and it gives
us a really good feel on how.....

MR. GILBERT: Hello.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, hello.
Hello, we're having a teleconference.

MR. GILBERT: No, no, no, yes, I talked
to the operator about being in line about testifying.
I am the First Chief of Arctic Village.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, okay,
you'll be the last one, so thank you for asking to be
recognized, go ahead, what was your name for the
record?
MR. GILBERT: Awesome, I'm happy I'm the last one. I am Galen Gilbert. I am the current first chief of Arctic Village.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Welcome to the Board, you have the floor, and we've been asking people to take 10 minutes, so thank you.

MR. GILBERT: Yes, thank you. First of all, I would like to thank everybody that testified, not only that I felt their testimony but, you know, I also heard them as a Chief, and most of them took the words right out of my mouth. But, you know, as a Chief to my people I got to speak my two cents about the situation. What our elder, Sara James, said about my Grandfather Trimble Gilbert, that he couldn't believe that we're still talking about this, about our Red Creek Sheep situation, yeah, it's unbelievable.

I mean the population is way down. I mean the human mind, human body should, you know, common sense, you should, you know, not bother them, their population is way down, and, you know, it sounds to me that the people that want to open the 20-49 area, they obviously don't care, so that being said, the sheep not only that it's sacred to us as a Neets'àií Gwich'in, you know, we want them around for our next generations to come. I mean I'm a father of three and I have a lot of nieces and nephews and I treat all of them equal and I want the best for them for their future, and I want the subsistence lifestyle to be their way of life, like it was ours, now these days, and, you know, when we say subsistence lifestyles, you know, these days it is still alive, very much alive, because you know for example we still trade, you know, like how long time ago they used to trade food, you know, like I just wanted to bring this up as an example that we still trade, you know, like for -- because we don't get salmon up here, for example, we get caribou, we're caribou people, so, you know, we dry meat and that's very valuable to the people that don't get caribou so, you know, the same with the salmon, and we trade dry meat for salmon and, you know, that trading stuff is still very much alive and, you know, we -- we -- you know, honestly money ain't really in our -- our deals, our trading deals. You know that's the old way and a lot of people these days are still for the old ways and so am I. I am 32 years old and I love my old ways and I will always love it and God forbid I'm going
to give it to my girls, my three girls and my nieces and nephews, I'll teach them what I know, you know, as far as I go and, you know, I'm here as a Chief for -- I don't know how long but, you know, the people put me here for a reason and I'm very honored for my village and I'm very honored that my people elected me as First Chief. I've been a First Chief on and off since 2015, so that makes me a five year Chief and probably 10 years of being in politics.

So, you know, with my Grandfather Trimble's statements being said that we're still on this issue, it's unbelievable. It's just -- we should be concentrating and the people that want to open it should just think about -- sit back and think about the people that are living a subsistence lifestyle, I mean we have enough on our plate already, that we're surviving, and like what the gentleman said from Tanana, the First Chief Curtis Summers, we only got one store here and, you know, the prices there are just -- it's really out of our range because of no income in the village sometimes. Summertime is our work season and that's when we make money then but, you know, the wintertime is mostly about subsistence and we do what we can to survive and, you know, get our income.

So, again, on Curtis Summers' remarks, you know, for example, at the store, I did this middle of winter sometimes, I looked at a steak, it was 27-something and some change, and a box of bullets is $26 at the store. And there was enough people for me there to show them that, you know, I gave them the option, and I said which one would you pick and their choice was obvious, you know, it was a box of bullets. So that there is a true example of what we go through with our, you know, stores, that you can't -- we can't go to the store and just, you know, get what we need, we use the land and Sara James' statements, you know, 90 percent of our diet is from the land, it's from subsistence, it's from the land, so that is very much true because, you know, God Bless my Grandfather Trimble Gilbert, he -- I talk to him every day and he tells me like how to -- what to do and like how to do it and on raising my daughters and, you know, he tells me, for example, make sure they eat their Native food once a day and I do my very best and I make sure they do every day. And like what -- long time ago, probably it's two or three years ago, my brother Daniel, rest in peace his soul, Daniel Tritt, he said one time that,
you know, the (In Native), you know that's like our candy, you know, and so that took -- I took that very -- I took that in and I used that statement for a lot of my testimonies because, you know, that divii is -- it's so rare because of the population but, you know, we're lucky sometimes if our hunters get divii, and they do that out of their own pocket, and that we very much respect them for. They love it so much that they even pay out of their pocket to get the plane ride over there, to over and back. They don't fly around and hunt the sheep, you know, they go where they're supposed to and they hike the rest of the way to get their sheep and they pack it also. It's a lot of work, but, you know, it's just a love they have for their subsistence lifestyle. And going back to the sheep meat, it's really rare, you know, that is like -- you know, they come back and share that meat with their people, you know, and we know as Neets'ài Gwich'in that that's really rare, that, you know, they ziplock the meat that they gave to us, you know, and we don't cook it up right there and, you know, eat it for dinner, you know, we put that away, we store it, you know, for hard times, like in -- like also what Sara said, you know, we had a really rough winter. I mean it was really rough. You know some people were out of wood and we had no choice, 50, 60 below, we had to go out and get wood and let me tell you this, it's not fun man, it's serious, it's for real, I realize that when I went out at 60 below to get some wood for myself and my old lady's grandmother.

And that being said, you know, it's like gold, you know, going back to that meat, you know, we know have it put away, you know, and for example, me, I'll take it out for a special occasion, one of my daughter's birthdays, for Christmas, at a community potluck or something, you know, and I'll share it, you know, generously. And what we want back is just we want -- when we feed people, you know, good food, you know, and that puts a smile on their face, hey, man, I'm all smiles too and I'm glad I got the opportunity to feed that person and I shared them with what was given to me and our tradition, you know, when you do good like that that good will come back to you; it's called good luck.

So, yes, I'm very much -- I'm 200 percent against, you know, the reopening of that.
I'd like to thank each and every one of you on the Board and thank you, again, for everybody that testified. I really heard and I got your message and, you know, as the Chief of Arctic Village, I'd like to say (In Native), and I always say (In Native) and that's the Lord Above Us, and thank you for hearing me and you all have a good day and stay healthy.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And I appreciate you calling in and speaking on behalf of your people. Appreciate that. That will conclude our public testimony today unless there's any questions from the Board.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, Chief Gilbert, for your testimony. I appreciate you calling in and taking the time today.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, appreciate that. That was a really good public testimony and it's good to have that involvement from the public like that and come out and really speak to the proposals, in support of or opposition of, and so thank you, that really is the essence of the Federal Subsistence Board Program and wanting to hear the people that we represent, is a priority for me, and so I appreciate the people who take the time to call in.

Again, next is the Regional Advisory Council recommendation, Chair or designee.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, can you hear me, this is Sue Entsminger, Eastern Interior.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Sue, you have the floor.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay, thank you. I prepared a little bit of information besides what's in the book. But the Eastern Interior took up this proposal 20-49, we opposed it.

The Council members engaged into a lengthy discussion with the tribal representatives from Arctic and Venetie, which you have heard a lot of them, they were the same ones at our meeting. The Council noted, according to tribal representative's testimony,
observation show that there are low sheep numbers. Council members pointed out although harvest records cited by the State may indicate the residents of these communities rarely hunt sheep, these records might not reflect the actual reality of the situation.

I would like to add one piece of information. In my tenure on this RAC, former Council member from Fort Yukon, Richard Carroll, had spoke to the importance of reporting to the managers and he felt very strongly and adamantly that people should be reporting. The Council noted that Arctic Village and Venetie tribal representatives desire to continue to dialogue about the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area and to have more in-depth government to government consultation on the issue, which has been a reoccurring concern for many years. The Council requested to have a more detailed tribal consultation with all of the involved citing the lack of local outreach. The Council voted to send a letter to the Board to form a subcommittee, a working group, composed of its stakeholders. You already talked about that.

But you know I've served on this Council 19 years, I've been the Chair for 13. This issue has come up many times. I want to let you know that I have lived 43 years near Mentasta and I have become adopted family to many of the villages, so I feel like I understand Native people. I have a mutual respect with them and I have incredible mutual respect for the people that have testified. This issue has been very sensitive due to the cultural and spiritual concerns of the people there.

The Eastern Interior RAC met in Arctic Village in 2006, we met a lot of the people and we really appreciated all the people that we met. I even, personally met, Edward Sam, he explained to me that these sheep hunts in this Arctic Village Sheep Management Area, the Cane Creek and Red Sheep Creek area, and we shared a lot of our sheep hunting stories because I, too, am very passionate about sheep hunting. Over the years I've had the pleasure to meet many of the people and I deeply appreciate them. And this lack of communication has caused so much frustration, multiple (indiscernible-background noise) for dialogue for a working group occurred over and over and over since 1976 [sic]. When I look back at the record in 1976 they complained that there was no dialogue between
them and the State. 10 years goes by and in 2006
Arctic Village reiterated their need of a meeting and
some more communication. And the Eastern Interior RAC
requested the formation of a working group then. The
people's request continued throughout the following
years. Our RAC, once, again, requested a working group
in October 2019 which was brought before the Board. I
was a bit disappointed in how that panned out, I know
you've already talked about it, but it just seemed so
sad that the need for working with people and to let it
fall through the cracks. I don't remember ever having
to really get Board's approval in the past to do
subcommittees and that kind of thing but that was what
we were asked to do.

Now, in the past our region has had
good working relationships with State and Federal
agencies regarding Federal subsistence. The Fortymile
Caribou Coalition is an example. With the closure
review process, this issue is likely to continue to
come up. The importance of reaching out to the people
would go a long way to building bridges. Maybe it could
be as simple enough as to having local and State and
Federal agencies working with the people together. At
our last RAC meeting in Fairbanks, we voted to write a
letter to present to the Board of Game asking for this
working group or subcommittee at their last meeting.
The Board's letter was supposed to be provided also to
you, the Board members. Our letter was to push the
Department to work on that orientation class that the
Board passed years back. The class was never
developed.

There seems to be a bloody standstill
here.

Face to face working with people gains
respect and understanding of each other. But with the
closure review process, this issue will continue to
come up. When I put myself in their shoes, the people
in that region, it's no wonder they are so against
this, I would feel the same way.

The Eastern Interior RAC did put a
proposal before the Board of Game to put the area on a
permit draw. The proposal before the Board, when we
took it up, it only addressed the winter season. We
were concerned about the winter hunt of three sheep in
the Arctic Refuge which allows all State residents,
under the State regulations, to hunt three sheep in the
winter for a long season. That's a concern of ours,
it's a conservation concern and we pushed -- even
though it -- the proposal said one sheep when it was
put forth, we amended it to say, destruction of horns.
When this all started, that regulation for three sheep
in the winter, the State was managing for rural
preference and it was not intended to be for the whole
state, but once the State lost the battle for rural
that's how it turned out.

Our RAC was very concerned about the
conservation issue. The drawing concept was an attempt
to restrict the amount of sheep hunters that would hunt
in that Arctic Village Sheep Management Area.

I wanted to say my membership on the
Council is to represent commercial/sport, even though
I'm also a subsistence user, I try really hard, I mean
really hard to do a good job representing both. This
is a very difficult and it's really hard on me,
especially as I get older, I do have a heart for the
local people, more than I can really say, I truly
deeply respect them, and their culture. For this
reason I will continue to push for some type of working
group so people can be respected of their culture.

That is all I have for today.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
appreciate you taking the time today to give us that
report. Any questions for the Chair.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, and
appreciate that. Is there any other Regional Council
Chair recommendation.

MS. KENNER: Yes, there will be from
the North Slope Council.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Pippa. Will North Slope please.

MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have

the floor.

MS. PATTON: Hi, good afternoon, this
is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for the North Slope
Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. Just wanted to
check on teleconference and see if the North Slope RAC
Chair, Gordon Brower, is still connected on line with
us today.

(No comments)

MS. PATTON: Okay, thank you. Mr.
Chair, members of the Board, he may have gotten
disconnected. I can read the North Slope Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council recommendation on Proposal
WP20-49. For the record this is Eva Patton, Council
Coordinator for the North Slope RAC.

The North Slope Subsistence Regional
Advisory Council opposes WP20-49. The Council
expressed support for residents of the community of
Arctic Village and Venetie recognizing the importance
of sheep in their subsistence and traditional way of
life. Maintaining the closure will help ensure
continuation of subsistence uses and traditional
hunting practices without conflict with other users.
The Council discussed that the North Slope community of
Kaktovik, which has customary and traditional use
within this region, currently primarily hunts on the
north side of the Brooks Range and the Council would
like to defer to the Eastern Interior Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council since they are more directly
involved with the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area.

The Council's vote is to oppose WP20-49
and that also aligned with the home region Council
recommendation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That concludes the North Slope Regional
Advisory Council comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva.
Any questions for Eva from the Board.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none, we'll move on to the Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation comments, Native Liaison, Orville.

MR. LIND: Yes, Mr. Chair, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I hear you, you got the floor Orville.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Chair and Board members and RAC Chairs. Orville Lind, Native Liaison from the Office of Subsistence Management. During our September 23rd consultation we did have one member from the Native Village of Venetie and she wanted to speak to the Red Sheep Creek issue and she is not sure why it is really going on and she is wondering why it would be open to the public and this is a really huge concern to her. And she states that they should leave it alone because the sheep are declining and they should leave it alone until the sheep populations have increased. It is a traditional hunting ground for the people living in the area so this is very concerning to her.

The second opportunity of consultation we had was September 30th and we did have one person from the Village of Kaktovik and he wanted a brief overview of the WP20-49, which was given to him by OSM Staff.

Our third consultation was held November 26, 2019 and as follows:

The Arctic Village Tribal Council requested to consult with the Federal Subsistence Board concerning this proposal. Five members of the Board, or their delegates, representatives met with six Arctic Village tribal representatives in the teleconference. And of course the tribal representatives supported the continued closure to the harvest of sheep by non-Federally-qualified subsistence users in the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area. Also the tribal representatives said that the Red Sheep Creek drainage situated in the Management Area is sacred to the Gwich'in people. And according to oral heritage [sic] Red Sheep Creek drainage is home to the distinctive sheep with red stripes on the back due to local minerals in the soil. Periods of high water cause erosion that results in the creek running red. The red
soil is part of those who the sheep are, making them a spiritual and intrinsic value to the Gwich'in people. Tribal representatives emphasized that we all need to weigh the potential loss of this unique assembly of sheep and landscape. Gwich'in people traversed in this long stretch of Brooks Range where they have detailed knowledge of the sheep and other animals, inhabitants and populations. The people residences are situated at the site of modern day Arctic Village due to the influence of Western culture and the site of the school. Several representatives reported traveling to the Red Sheep Creek drainage to harvest subsistence resources and to visit grave sites of family members.

One said the last time she was at Red Sheep Creek hunters came and went for many days at a time searching for sheep and caribou. When it was time to return to Arctic Village, she and others did not want to return, but they had employment and school obligations for which they must return.

The Gwich'in people have been taking care of the Red Sheep Creek drainage for a long time and sheep have been providing food for them for a very long time. The area must be cared for so that the children can experience it. For example, when tourists are in the area, sheep are absent. Sheep populations have been reduced in other areas and residents of the Arctic Village, they do not want this to happen in the Red Sheep Creek drainage.

Tribal representatives said that the State of Alaska allows non-residents of the state to deplete its resources, sheep included, for little benefit in return. They've identified a decline in sheep and moose populations in the Brooks Range. Sheep and moose populations were negatively affected by a January 2013 heavy rain event. The Refuge manager reported that many affected animals perished, additionally sheep populations in the area have declined since the 1940s, based on documented aerial surveys, few sheep remain compared to before 1940s. The Lacey Act instructs tribes, the State of Alaska and Federal agencies to work together towards consensus addressing problems. The tribe is a co-manager of the Refuge lands, there is work to be done, and the tribe and agencies must work together to protect the Refuge.

Tribal representatives said that for the Gwich'in people, subsistence is a matter of
survival. They live far from cities and it is expensive to bring in Western food items. They rely heavily on the land for moose, caribou, smaller animals and sheep, which are especially important in their diets. Residents of Arctic Village need sheep populations to stay at numbers that allow subsistence hunters to be successful. They often travel within the Management Area in search of sheep, moose and caribou to harvest even though there's no guarantee of harvesting.

(Teleconference interference - participant not muted)

MR. LIND: Sheep populations are far away from the village and it takes a lot of time for a hunter to get to them. The Gwich'in people have always managed wildlife in their traditional territory by only taking what they need during special seasons. They regulate themselves and this is why sheep exist in the area today. No one else should manage the wildlife like they do -- or no one else would manage the wildlife like they have. When the Management Area is open to other hunters, Gwich'ins are forced to compete in order to obtain needed resources. Those other hunters use technology, such as GPS trackers, high accuracy scoped rifles, and it is hard for local hunters to compete. Tribal representatives said that some especially older people do not regularly use computers and do not request permits or report their harvest on line, not everything important is written down in black and white and this does not mean that tribal members don't care, community members do care and they often speak to a range of issues at meetings.

Tribal representatives also said people need to continue to monitor the Management Area in order to protect it. Residents of Arctic Village take pride in the behavior of local hunters who carry out all meat from animals they have harvested. They often smoke meat for several days to make it lighter and easier to pack back to base camp, they would continue to move across the land, staying at Red Sheep Creek hunting and gathering for subsistence. But as they described, obligations have prevented them from leaving the village for long periods and a charter to Red Sheep Creek costs about 600 one way.

However, the land there belongs to the
Gwich'in people, they want to teach their children to
hunt sheep there. Some hold Native allotments in the
area and trespassing needs to be monitored also.

Tribal representatives said that it is
not necessary to make sheep into trophies, sporthunters
do, this is why sporthunting should not be allowed.
Air traffic in and out of the area creates too much
noise and sheep move to avoid the noise, sometimes
becoming isolated. This is not good for sheep. some
non-local hunters shoot moose, caribou and sheep and
use only the hindquarters leaving the rest of the
animal. They also leave litter that attracts bears.
This behavior harms the health of the wildlife
populations. There is only one Red Sheep Creek in the
world and it needs to be protected. Sheep have been
overharvested, allowing only subsistence hunting
contributes to this protection.

Tribal representatives invited Board
members and the Fish and Wildlife Service Staff to come
to Arctic Village to work on a conservation plan for
the area.

That concludes the consultation
summary.

Mr. Chair, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
that Orville. Any questions or comments for Orville.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
thank you, Orville. Alaska Department of Fish and Game
comments, State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
For the record, Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish
and Game.

The Department supports its proposal to
open up this area, you know, in consultation with our
area biologist, they do feel that the population is of
a size enough that it could handle this additional
harvest and we've listened, I mean, personally, just in
the last year since I've been here, have listened to
the concerns and I know that the education program is
important and even just this earlier, last month, I know the Board of Game may not have done everything, but they did listen to numerous public comment on the proposal that was in front of them and the issue with this area, hence, why they took the action they did to further ratchet down what would be any harvest from non-Federally-qualified users. So on our side, we do see, you know, at least some sort of recognition, maybe not the full way, to try to address some of the concerns from folks.

And I guess a final comment will be is we stand ready to get together with a group -- we were at the Eastern Interior RAC when we all got together, I know we sat at the table alongside the RAC and listened to the folks from Arctic Village and Venetie, and then we were, again, at the Board of Game meeting listening to their testimony.

I know this is a long time issue and if we can reach some sort of, you know, compromise decision, we look forward to it.

That's my comments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben. Any questions for the State.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none, we'll move on to InterAgency Staff Committee comment, ISC Chair.

MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The InterAgency Staff Committee agrees with the Eastern Interior and North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils and the OSM conclusion to oppose this proposal.

Harvest records for the area are incomplete and unreliable as identified in the OSM analysis, tribal consultations and public meetings. A very low reported harvest may not be reflective of true harvest and is important to consider. Stressing the need for better harvest reporting is appropriate.
The current sheep population within the Management Area is unknown and the last survey was in 2016. A current survey would be helpful prior to opening, as the most recent declines between 2012 and 2015 were influenced by winter conditions and changes in habitat that may be related to climate change.

A precautionary approach to opening may be warranted to ensure the slow density population is robust enough to sustain harvest beyond Federally-qualified users.

In March, the Alaska Board of Game assessed Proposal 82 submitted by the Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The Board of Game decision on Proposal 82 may be important for the Board to consider when assessing the outcome for WP20-49.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, ISC. Any questions for ISC Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We'll open the floor for Board discussion with Council Chairs and State Liaison.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair, this is Jack Reakoff.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Jack.

MR. REAKOFF: Supplementary information for the Board to consider. This is the third bad winter in the Brooks Range and I want to corroborate what the people in Arctic Village are saying. We just went through a week of range and the mountains are soaked and now it's 14 degrees and all that snow is crusted. You can barely see a windblown ridge. The sheep have had a heck of a winter. So that -- I would admonish the Refuge and the State of Alaska to do sheep surveys this next summer to get a good population of that. Last fall when I hunted -- I hunted 16 days, I glass the mountains all the time, I didn't see one sheep. There are sheep, but the sheep numbers are very
low. These are the lowest numbers I've ever seen.

So I wanted the Board to be aware of that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that, Jack. Any other discussion from the Board, questions, comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll open up the floor for Federal Board action on this proposal.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, Greg Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Greg, you have the floor.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to move to adopt Proposal WP20-49. The proposal language is shown on Page 1283 of the Board book. Following a second, I will provide justification for why I intend to oppose my motion consistent with the Eastern Interior and North Slope Regional Advisory Councils.

MR. PADGETT: Second.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. You know, the intent of ANILCA to provide for other uses when there is no conservation concern or risk to the continuation of traditional subsistence uses is important. Based on biological data for the sheep population in this area, I think it is uncertain or perhaps unwarranted that additional harvest would be appropriate at this time. There does not appear to be substantial evidence that the sheep populations have increased enough to lift the closure and to continue conservative — and a continued conservative approach is likely warranted. I believe based on our most recent assessments in 2017 by Refuge biologists, the sheep population in the Management Area situated south...
of Cane Creek continue (indiscernible-muffled) at low densities.

I'm not going to belabor this, I think everyone knows that my interests are in trying to find, you know, whether we do it through a cooperative working group or through, you know, good relationships with all of the interested parties, I think it was best said earlier today by our friends from the Tanana Chiefs Conference, that we need to develop solutions that we can advance and at this point in time I feel we have failed to develop a solution that we can advance, although I do thank everybody for the dialogue that has been initiated and begun.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Greg. Any additional discussion, deliberation on this proposal.

(No comments)

MR. C. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Roll call, Tom, please.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Proposal WP20-49 request to open the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area in Unit 25A to the harvest of sheep by non-Federally-qualified users.

I'll start with Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Hi, this is Rhonda Pitka. I oppose WP20-49. It is detrimental to meeting the needs of subsistence users. There is a need for further harvest data. The low density of sheep and overwhelming public testimony to oppose by locals. And, also, the cultural, religious and traditional uses of the Neets'aii Gwich'in will be impacted by the opening.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Rhonda.

Charlie Brower.
MR. C. BROWER: Good afternoon. I oppose WP20-49, the recommendation from the Eastern Interior and the North Slope and my colleague from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommendation.

I oppose it.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Charlie.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: I also oppose WP20-49 with the justification provided by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Also appreciate Greg's frustration at times, and ours on not being able to effectively, maybe communicate or cooperate, and hope that we can find something better in the future. But I also really defer, at this point, to both of the RACs and the overwhelming public testimony we heard.

Thank you.

(Pause)

MS. WORKER: Mr. Chair. I just got word that Tom Doolittle dropped the call, Eva, are you available to continue?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm still on, you can kind of tell when people get dropped, so are all the Board members still on.

MR. PADGETT: Chad's here.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA here.

MS. PITKA: Yes.

MR. C. BROWER: Yes.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, Dave's on, did you catch my vote?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I heard you in opposition in deference to the RACs and to the overwhelming testimony today.
So we'll give Tom a minute to get back on.

(Pause)

MS. WORKER: Mr. Chair. If Mr. Doolittle is having trouble connecting, we can see if Eva Patton is on the line and she is prepared to take over for Tom if needed.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Well, we'll give him another 30 seconds and we'll check with Eva.

MS. PATTON: Yes, hello, Mr. Chair. This is Eva Patton standing by if you need me to proceed with the roll call vote.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva.

(Pause)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Ma'am.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There you are, Tom, you got the floor. We left off with your last vote with Dave in opposition in deference to the RAC and that's where we were -- we're still right where you were.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, that was my first drop of the day, but thank you for everybody's patience.

I'll move on from Dave Schmid to BLM, Chad Padgett.

MR. PADGETT: Thanks, Tom. I oppose WP20-49 in deference to the RAC and the overwhelming testimony that we heard today. I deeply respect what the folks out there had to say.

However, I will note that the Staff Committee says a precautionary approach is warranted to ensure that the population is robust enough to sustain harvest by non-subsistence users. The State, as the wildlife manager, has stated that the population is
robust enough to sustain harvest but survey data is not complete. I'm concerned that keeping the area is closed does not meet the criteria of ANILCA, and may violate Section .815. As such, I hope that a group will move forward in a cooperative way with the State, the RACs and the affected communities to finally resolve this issue and I stand ready to help in that effort in any way.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much, Chad.

National Park Service Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: Thank you, Tom. The Park Service is opposed to WP20-49 in deference to both of the RACs and the overwhelming local opposition.

I will say that I'm very sensitive to the extensive public comment on the work required for everybody to constantly review this. And I'll just throw out another idea, I think a very similar situation in 2013 when I came to Denali National Park and I heard from an exhausted Board of Game at the State level about constant Park Service’s request for review of a wolf buffer. The Board of Game placed a moratorium on hearing any further wolf buffer proposals out of respect for the time of the Board members and the stakeholders who need to be responsive. It really kind of worked as a kind of cooling off process and an alternative to sort of ever changing seemingly competing proposals that keep coming at you. So I just throw that out there as another tool in our tool box.

I think the Vice President, maybe from Tanana Chiefs, similar referred to, maybe we take a one or two cycle time out while we take the time that we need to assemble the group, whatever we need to call it, and really come to terms in a productive way, and the Park Service stands by ready to help in that effort in any way we can.

Thank you, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much, Don.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Greg
MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I oppose WP20-49 in deference to the Eastern Interior and the North Slope Regional Advisory Councils and the justification that I provided. And I do appreciate and agree with my colleagues on, you know, that we really do need to find a solution to this, and, you know, maybe the Board should entertain something like a moratorium until such time as a solution that we can collectively advance is brought forward, may be warranted.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Greg, for that.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes. The Bureau of Indian Affairs opposes WP20-49, and I'd like to justify my vote.

One. We've heard from the Western Interior Chair and the presentation from OSM analysis and the public comment that the population in question is either a low density and/or a decreasing population.

Two. Traditional knowledge and experience expressed on a recent hunt by a hunter stipulated that he had seen only one ram on the hunt and chose not to harvest it.

Three. Title VIII of ANILCA establishes subsistence as a priority consumptive use.

For the aforementioned reasons, a closure remains necessary for reasons of conservation and the continued subsistence use, which should be adequate enough to address the .815 closure requirement.

And, lastly, and more importantly, we vote to express deference to the Eastern Interior and North Slope Regional Advisory Councils.

Thank you.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much, Gene.

Chairman Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I oppose in deference to the RAC. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: The motion fails. Mr. Chair, the next proposal on line is WP20-50.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. At this time we'll call on the Staff to provide the analysis. Thank you.

MS. MAAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the Board. For the record my name is Lisa Maas and I'll be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal 20-50, which begins on Page 1314 of your meeting book.

WP20-50 was submitted by the Eastern Interior Council and requests that Federal and State hunt areas, seasons and harvest limits for moose in Unit 12 remainder be more closely aligned. Please refer to Pages 1333 and 1334 of your meeting books for maps of the current and proposed hunt areas.

The proponent states that BLM lands in Unit 12 remainder have different seasons and antler restrictions under State and Federal regulations, and that distinguishing land ownership in the field is impractical. Aligning State and Federal regulations in this area would reduce user confusion and require registration permits in the intended hunt areas.

In 2012 when the Federal Subsistence Board established a joint State/Federal registration permit for moose in Unit 12 remainder, the BLM lands in this hunt area were selected, meaning they were not managed as Federal public lands, however, these lands have since become unencumbered, meaning they are now Federal public lands, which resulted in misalignment between State and Federal regulations for these BLM lands.

Overall the Unit 12 moose population appears stable and bull/cow ratios in Unit 12 remainder meet State management objectives. Unit 12 moose
harvest is within sustainable levels, a majority of the
moose harvest takes place near the highway system and
the Tok, Little Tok, and Tanana Rivers due to easy
access.

Adoption of WP20-50 would divide Unit
12 remainder into three hunt areas, which would mostly
align Yes. and Federal regulations reducing regulatory
complexity and user confusion. Again, these hunt areas
are depicted in Figure 5 on Page 1334. The pink hunt
area labeled RM291 contains 99 percent Federal land.
Establishing this hunt area would align the Federal and
State RM291 permit area, although the Federal season
would remain three days longer than the State season.
The only change to this hunt area is the hunt area
descriminator.

The blue hunt area labeled Tok River
drainage only contains three percent Federal land,
while the grey hunt area labeled Unit 12 remainder only
contains two percent Federal public land. The Tok
River drainage hunt area has antler restrictions, while
both hunt areas would have shorter seasons than current
Federal regulations.

While the moose population is not
expected to be affected by this proposal, the Chair of
the Western Interior Council who is very familiar with
this area stated that local hunters know exactly where
this small amount of BLM lands are located and that
antler restrictions would burden subsistence users.

The OSM conclusion is to support
Proposal WP20-50.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions for the Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
we'll move on to summary of public comments, Regional
Council Coordinator.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
members of the Board. For the record, Katya Wessels
with OSM. We received two written public comments in
support of -- from the Ahtna Customary and Traditional Committee and from the Upper Tanana Fortymile Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

The Ahtna Customary and Traditional Committee supports WP20-50 as a housekeeping proposal to clean up description in Unit 12 unencumbered Federal lands. Public members will have a precise description of Federal lands that are surrounded by State lands. Federal subsistence hunters will have a better understanding where Federal public lands are within Game Management Unit 12.

The Upper Tanana Fortymile AC supports WP20-50. The AC felt that the extension of four days without the antler restriction for the Federally-qualified subsistence users would be sufficient. The AC voted to write a letter of support of the Eastern Interior RAC recommendations. The AC also voted to express in the letter their support for the same season dates as the State season without an antler restriction for the Federally-qualified subsistence hunters that have priority.

This concludes the summary of the two written public comments.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Katya. Any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. hearing none, we'll open the floor to public testimony, Operator anyone on line.

OPERATOR: At this time there is no one on line for public comment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Regional Advisory Council recommendations, Chair or designee.

MS. ENTSINGER: This is Sue Entsminger, Eastern Interior, do you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Sue, you
have the floor.

MS. ENSTMINGER: Okay, thank you. Just a little history on why the Eastern Interior put this in.

Prior to the last 2018/20 regulation book that came out, there were no BLM lands in that remainder, and it was brought to the Eastern Interior RAC's attention that the RM291, which is considered the remainder was only the lands that were in the National Park Service lands down on the Nabesna Road, or half of it's in Unit 11 and half in Unit 12. That went into effect -- that proposal passed and it was in effect for several years now. I was told that -- it must have been because of the shutdown two years ago, that the Federal proposal book that brought these lands on to the book, because they were never in the book before, was late, it did not get to the people when hunting season started. So people were asking for the Federal book and it wasn't available. Although it could have been on line, but people don't tend to do that, and they just go hunting as they knew the seasons and bag limits. And then in the 2019 season, I'm told that there was no one from the -- this permit, the RM291 is issued in Tok at the ADF&G office and in Slana at the Ranger Station, and I was asking questions if there was any people asking about that season and they said there wasn't, people were so used to what the seasons were in the past. So as it turns out, the user, if they did want to hunt in that, they'd have to go get a different permit, that wasn't really intended for those two BLM areas, it was only attended for the lands on the Nabesna Road.

So this proposal was to try to knock down confusion. And in essence when I saw the map, well, it confused me a little bit, but I knew once they created the new areas in the proposal -- because we get help from Staff to write these proposals, that it did parrot the State season. At our RAC meeting when we took this proposal up, Tom Doolittle told us that if there isn't any conservation concern we have to have some reasonable opportunity for subsistence, and, therefore the Eastern Interior RAC modified it to add three days on the end of the season from 8/17 to 8/20 -- September, and then to get rid of the antler restriction, which is on our -- Page 1338 of the Board
book. In essence, it just takes the Nabesna Road and
puts it as one hunt area and then adds the remainder to
take in the two BLM lands.

I will say that the BLM land, the
Little Tok drainage, that's a remote area and on the
other side of that is the Tetlin Indian Reservation and
the people in the Tetlin Indian Reservation have to
abide by State law and it would not be advantageous for
them to go 14 miles out the village road, go all the
way down to the Tok cutoff and try to do a trail system
into that when they actually have a trail system from
the lake going up into the hills, which is actually
near this area. They would -- if that season, the way
it is on the Nabesna, that RM291, it extends that
season and that area 17 days. That was not a real
popular thing to have that conflict with other users in
the area. And the other BLM lands up on the northern
part of GMU12 is very remote and mostly aircraft
access. We aren't aware of any other river system or
any other way to get into that country.

So, therefore, the Eastern Interior is
supporting the modifications that I spoke of.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions for Sue.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll call on
any other Council Chair.

MS. PERRY: Mr. Chair, members of the
Board. My name is DeAnna Perry, I'm the Coordinator
for the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council. Greg
Encelewski, Chair of the Southcentral Regional Advisory
Council could not be on the call at this time, he's
attending a tribal council meeting, and with your
permission I can provide the Southcentral Regional
Advisory Council's recommendation on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, thank you,
appreciate that.

MS. PERRY: Thank you. On Page 1337 of
your meeting book you can see the proposed regulatory
language from the Southcentral Regional Advisory
Council.
The Council supported with modification. The modification was to maintain the harvest limit and season throughout the current Unit 12 remainder, and that's August 20th through September 20th with one antlered bull and create a separate hunt area for the RM291 hunt as described in the original proposal. The Council believes it should support subsistence preference on Federal public lands per ANILCA. This proposal affects Southcentral subsistence users who have C&T for Unit 13 and who hunt in this area. The Council stated that this would provide for a subsistence priority and it would assure that opportunities for local users is not limited. There was a concern that there would be a reduced harvest opportunity for local people, the antler restriction for Federally-qualified users, and that would make it harder to harvest an antlered bull.

The proposal was found to be confusing for the user, which led this Council to propose its own modification.

The Council stated that this would provide for a subsistence priority and assure that opportunities for local users are not limited.

And, again, you can find the exact language of that proposed modification on Page 1337 of your meeting book.

That's the recommendation of the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, appreciate that. Any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none. We'll move on to Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation comments, Native Liaison.

MS. WORKER: Mr. Chair. I just got a note from Orville saying he dropped the call, we might want to check if he's back on line or not.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

MR. LIND: I'm on.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, Orville, you have the floor.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Board members, RAC Chairs. My name's Orville Lind, Native Liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management. During the September 23rd consultation we had request to review -- or overview WP20-50 and after review there was no comments made.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. And we'll call on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments, State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Chair. For the record, Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Department supports the proposal as originally written.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Next, we'll call on the ISC recommendation.

MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The InterAgency Staff Committee agrees with the intent of the proposal to reduce user confusion within a somewhat complex existing hunt structure for moose in Unit 12 remainder. Both the Southcentral and the Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils expressed concern that fully aligning State and Federal regulations would not provide a meaningful priority for Federally-qualified subsistence users. These Councils indicated specific concerns that alignment with State seasons would decrease the opportunity of Federally-qualified users to harvest an antlered bull.

Each offered a modification extending the proposed season length, and the Eastern Interior Council's modification also included removing antler restrictions.

The Southcentral Council suggested
maintaining the current Federal season, a continuous season between August 20th and September 20th. This provides four additional days prior to the State season, 10 additional days in the middle of the State season, and three additional days at the end of the State season and aligns with the Federal season in the other portion of Unit 12 remainder.

The Eastern Interior Council suggested alignment with a split State season but with an extension of three additional days after the end of the State season, and the removal of the antler restrictions.

Given that moose populations appear to be stable and habitat is not found to be a limiting factor, the ISC agrees with the Southcentral Council modification to maintain the current Federal moose season in Unit 12 remainder to provide a meaningful priority for Federally-qualified subsistence users. The ISC also supports a harvest limit of one bull rather than one antlered bull in Unit 12 remainder, which includes the Tok River Drainage Management Area under Federal regulations. This harvest limit would align the State's resident hunt in Unit 12 remainder, though the RM291 permit would still be applicable in the Tok River Drainage Management Area.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for ISC.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll open the floor for Board discussion, deliberation with Chairs and State Liaison.

MS. ENTSINGER: Mr. Chair, this is Sue Entsminger. Is it possible to just add a little bit for the Eastern Interior?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You could at this time, too, you have the floor.

MS. ENTSINGER: Okay, thank you. I just wanted to respond to the InterAgency Staff recommendation. In that first paragraph I think it's a
little bit misleading that the Eastern Interior wanted a meaningful priority for Federal subsistence, we were originally wanting to have it the same as the State season, and then we were told that we needed a meaningful, so that was why we did our amendment to the proposal and modification. I think that this could be a little bit misleading also, in that, this is the home region for Eastern Interior, Unit 12, and on the Southcentral, I think it -- it appears to me, and I might be wrong, that they may believe that that was a season that we were restricting, and that isn't the case at all. That's a -- it's a brand new area that got opened to Federal land and it was the Nabesna Road that had the longer season, this area, especially the area -- the BLM land that's in that Tok River drainage, that's a high remote area, it's in a mountain pass on one side and in the State regs it's any bull, one side is not.

So I just wanted to add that to my testimony and I thank you for that.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you, Sue. Any other questions for Board discussion or deliberation.

MR. LIND: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MR. LIND: This is Orville. I just got an email from Gloria Stickwan, she's been trying to call in, she's dropped, but she's trying to give a short testimony on this proposal. So I told her to contact the operator again.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll give Gloria a few more minutes then. Is there any other Board discussion or questions or deliberation while we wait for Gloria to try to get on.

MS. STICKWAN: Hello.

OPERATOR: Her line is open.

MS. STICKWAN: Hello.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, Gloria,
go ahead you have the floor at this moment.

MS. STICKWAN: I just want to say that the comments that were written by Ahtna Tena'net, if they had -- we had understand what the proposal was about, they would have supported Southcentral Regional Advisory Council's position.

And I just want to add my own comment here. I did testify at the tribal consultation on Monday on this proposal. I also -- hello. Hello.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we still hear you Gloria.

MS. STICKWAN: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, we can hear you.

MS. STICKWAN: Hello. Okay. I did testify on this proposal on Monday and I'm just going to reiterate what I said to keep it short. We want to keep the existing hunting season September 20 and with the new remainder, RM2 [sic] proposed area added into the regulations. This is 54 miles of Federal public lands in Unit 12 remainder of the new proposed area.

That's a large amount of land, Federal public lands and as you know in Unit 13 we don't have very much Federal public land and across the river in Unit 11 no one hardly hunts there because it's -- we have to cross the river and it's inaccessible for us to hunt in. To go over there you have to fly or drive up to Nabesna or down to Chitina to hunt. Those areas are inaccessible to us to hunt and so we -- Unit 12 is in the Ahtna region traditional territory. So we are supporting the InterAgency Staff position for a bull moose. We don't think changing it from any bull would be that much of a difference to a bull moose.

It's important for you -- I'm thinking about the future, 20 years from now, we need to have more Federal lands to hunt in. And I'm going to remind you this is Unit 12, is Ahtna's traditional territory.

And if you don't mind I would like to speak to WC20-42 right now as well.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gloria, I.....

MS. STICKWAN: Is that okay?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, we want to stay specific to these proposals, sorry.

MS. STICKWAN: Okay. Hopefully I won't get cut off then. But that's my testimony.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you, Gloria, appreciate it. Any other Board discussion or deliberation. I appreciate your call, Gloria, I'm glad you were able to get through and we apologize for all the technical difficulties that we've been experiencing.

Thank you.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Not hearing any other Board discussion we'll open up the floor for Board action.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett with BLM. Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Chad, you have the floor.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, I move to adopt WP20-50 as modified by the Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. This proposal is shown on Page 1314 and modification is shown on Page 1316 of the Board book. Following a second, I will explain why I intend to support this motion with modification.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

MR. STRIKER: Park Service seconds.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. And I apologize if the justification is a bit long so bear with me.

This would create a separate hunt area
for the RM291 permit hunt as described in the original proposal, change the moose season dates in Unit 12 remainder to August 24th to August 28th and September 8th to 20, and change the harvest limit in Unit 12 remainder from one antlered bull to one bull. Creating a separate hunt area in the Unit 12 for RM291 permit hunt described in the original proposal will reduce the complexity of the regulations by aligning the State and Federal hunt area descriptions for the RM291 permit. Harvest reporting in Unit 12 remainder would be accomplished using the State harvest ticket, the same reporting mechanism used by those hunting under State regulations in the area. This change is supported by both the Eastern Interior and Southcentral Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

The BLM lands in Unit 12 remainder only recently became unencumbered and thus moose season has long been that which exists in State regulation, not the longer Federal season that applies elsewhere in the unit. According to the Eastern Interior RAC Chair, local people have testified in support of maintaining the previous State season for various reasons including, one, reducing the complexity of State and Federal regulation, 2, reducing user conflicts and competition, especially over the Labor Day weekend, and, 3, reducing the effect of competition for this moose population on the residents of the Tetlin Indian Reservation, which is managed under State regulations immediately adjacent to Federal public lands in Unit 12 remainder. Federal public lands in Unit 12 remainder are considered remote and difficult to access but people from other adjoining units are anticipated to increase competition if the longer season is maintained. To provide a meaningful Federal priority, the Eastern Interior RAC recommendation extends the Federal season three days longer than the State season from September 17th through September 20th. The Eastern Interior RAC indicated that having the priority at the end of the season is meaningful because it is typically cooler making it easier to prevent meat spoilage. And, finally, changing the harvest limit in Unit 12 remainder from one antlered bull to one bull will align with the State and Federal harvest limits in a portion of Unit 12 remainder, again, reducing regulatory complexity.

This recommendation is consistent with the recommendation of the Eastern Interior Council and
with that of the Southcentral Council regarding the RM291 hunt area. I believe it to be the best alternative for providing subsistence opportunity, reducing regulatory complexity, and addressing the subsistence needs of local people.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Chad. Any Board discussion, questions, deliberation.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Gene, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: So if I understand correctly, the BLM motion stipulates that the three day extension is a meaningful subsistence priority.

Two, is that the motion was made on the Eastern Interior's receiving comments, but are those comments consistent with what the Eastern Interior RAC voted on and forwarded on to the Board for consideration.

And with a slight pivot, I would have to ask for a few more minutes to concur with my ISC members if this motion stands to be voted on by the Board.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you, Gene. Any further Board discussion or some clarification for Gene on that.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, this is Chad.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Chad, you have the floor.

MR. PADGETT: Gene, just to make sure I understood your question, or make sure I clarify. I do have, as part of my justification, that we would provide a meaningful -- to provide a meaningful Federal priority the Eastern Interior RAC recommendation, extend the Federal season three days longer than the State season. Does that help you?
MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, that's what my first question, is the three day extension is a meaningful subsistence priority, okay, thank you.

And the second question was, you had mentioned during your motion about testimony received by the Eastern Interior, I just wanted to clarify that that testimony received by the Eastern Interior is consistent with what was passed by the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council and forwarded on to the Board for consideration.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg, go ahead.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, Gene, I would agree, I would like to have clarity as to whether or not the, you know, the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council's still in alignment with what has just been presented.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, this is Chad.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Chad.

MR. PADGETT: I would like that same clarification, thanks, Greg and Gene.

MS. MAAS: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is Lisa.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Lisa.

MS. MAAS: Yeah, the motion that Chad just presented is to adopt the proposal as modified by the Eastern Interior Council, so it's exactly the same modification that the Eastern Interior Council made. And in addition for the meaningful subsistence priority, the Eastern Interior Council's recommendation also eliminates antler restrictions as originally proposed in the proposal as submitted. So that's another way that it's a meaningful subsistence priority, is there's no antler restrictions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Lisa.
MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Lisa.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any further Board discussion, deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, I'll call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Tom, roll call, please.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Wildlife Proposal 20-50, and the motion on the floor is to support with modification the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council recommendation to extend the fall season in Unit 12 remainder from September 8 through 17 to September 8 through 20 and eliminate the Tok River Drainage Hunt Area which had antler restrictions.

I'll start off with Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Tom, can you come back to me, I'm still conferring with my ISC members.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Gene.

Bureau of Land Management, Chad Padgett.

MR. PELTOLA: I support as stated.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Chad.

National Park Service, Donald Striker.

MR. STRIKER: National Park Service supports this proposal as amended in deference to the RACs and for the reasons so cogently conveyed by Mr. Padgett. Also I'd like to thank my distinguished colleague from the BLM for assuming leadership on this really complicated topic and to Chair Entsminger for helping the Park Service to understand and put this issue in context.
Thank you, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Don.

Rhonda Pitka.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Rhonda.

I'll move from Rhonda, Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, we've got two missing.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, I think I've got this sorted out here, I'm going to go ahead and support WP20-50 as modified and explained and justified by the BLM and in deference to the RAC's input.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Dave.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg Siekaniec.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I support WP20-50 with modification as described by the Bureau of Land Management and in deference to the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory and also supporting the Central -- excuse me, Southcentral Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you.

MR. C. BROWER: I'm back on line, Charlie here.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hi, Charlie. Is Rhonda back on line?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, we're still
waiting for Rhonda.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene, are you ready.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, Bureau of Indian Affairs votes to support WP20-50 as modified and presented by the Bureau of Land Management and recognizing that there is a difference between the Southcentral and Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council's modifications although respecting the local desire of the Eastern Interior RAC.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much for that clarification as well, Gene.

Is Public Member Pitka on?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. C. BROWER: I support with modification as stated. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Charlie.

yet?

OPERATOR: She has not rejoined at this time, Sir.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Mr. Chair, we'll take a pause waiting for Board Member Pitka.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we'll take another one minute, we'll wait a minute here. We haven't taken a break this afternoon at all. I anticipate that we'll probably going to go at least another hour, if not a little longer, and so if Rhonda isn't back on in a few minutes then we just may take a couple minute break.

MS. LINNELL: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.
MS. LINNELL: This is Karen Linnell, we've been trying to get through. We've talked to the Operator and we -- the same as Gloria, we've been sitting here for quite some time trying to speak to this issue but the vote is already in process.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We apologize, Karen, about that, we've been -- towards the end of the day it seems like things are getting difficult to manage for the Operator so apologize about that.

MS. LINNELL: Yeah. Just for the record, the Mentasta -- the community of Mentasta is closer to this area and so it should be aligned with the hunt in that area, the Nabesna Road versus trying to align it with the Tetlin Refuge side. And then the modification with the removing the antler restrictions, I agree with. So I just wanted to put it out there. I've been wrestling with the Operators for a few minutes now so I don't know what -- where you're at in this process but thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Karen. We're waiting for Member Pitka to get back on line so we could take her vote. We're at the final vote, so thank you for that perspective though.

(Pause)

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, this is Chad, do you mind if we take a quick break.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, since Ms. Pitka's not on and we're in the middle of this vote, let's take a five minute break real quick and everybody could take a bathroom break or something because we've been going pretty steady here now for several hours. So let's take a few minute recess and we'll come back here in a few minutes.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you.

(Off record)

(On record)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair, are you back on line.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I'm on line.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, good. If we need to we can complete this vote because we do have quorum, and we do need to extend our phone call beyond 5:30 for an hour or so, so Operator could you please make sure that there's support Staff for an extension of this call?

OPERATOR: Yes, Sir, I will stay with you for the duration until you're finished today.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, very much for your patience.

OPERATOR: You're welcome.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. So, yes, if everybody's back let's go ahead and reconvene the meeting and we'll finish up this vote and just apologize that Rhonda lost her connection.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yes. Rhonda, I'm going to doublecheck to see if you're on line.

OPERATOR: I'm showing she has not yet dialed back in.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay.

OPERATOR: We do have someone waiting to rejoin and that may be her.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay.

(Pause)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Operator, is that Rhonda?

OPERATOR: I have placed the line in, Rhonda, have you rejoined us?

MS. PITKA: Yes.

OPERATOR: Thank you. I'm sorry it's a little difficult to hear you.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Hi, Rhonda.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Has Rhonda rejoined us, Operator?

OPERATOR: Ma'am, you're currently in the conference call, we're unable to hear you.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: I'm not getting any sound from that line, Sir.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Chairman Christianson, I'll ask for your vote on WP20-50.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support in deference to the RACs.

MR. DOOLITTLE: To the Eastern Interior RAC?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, as proposed by Chad.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That moves us out of the regular proposals. The last proposal that's on line is WP18-19, a deferred proposal.

MS. WORKER: Mr. Doolittle, if I might interrupt. I think what we need to do next is adopt the consensus agenda before we move on to the deferred proposal just to button up this year's proposals.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Thank you very much for that clarification, Suzanne.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MR. DOOLITTLE: We'll move on to the consensus.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, thank you, Suzanne, yes, I think the next order of business is that, Tom, so go ahead and entertain that and open the
floor at this time to adopt the consensus agenda as presented by Staff.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Gene, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, I move to adopt the consensus agenda with the Wildlife Regulatory Proposals as listed by the OSM Staff.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion's been made and seconded, any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, I'll call for the question.

MR. STRIKER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called, thank you. Roll call, Tom, on the consensus agenda.

MR. DOOLITTLE: I'll start with National Park Service, Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: Support, thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thanks, Don. Bureau of Land Management, Chad Padgett.

MR. PADGETT: Support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Chad. Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg Siekaniec.
MR. SIEKANIEC: Support motion to approve consensus agenda. Thank you, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: You bet, Greg.

U.S. Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: I support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Support to adopt.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Looking to see if Charlie Brower, are you on?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Charlie Brower, are you on?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Public Member Rhonda Pitka, are you on?

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Chairman Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support the consensus agenda as presented.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. We may have lost Charlie at the break, and we still had quorum and the motion carries.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. Okay, we'll move back to WP50, or....

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, I think it's 18-19.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, I mean 18-19, thank you, Chad.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yes.
MR. MCKEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. This is Chris McKee, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Chris, you have the floor, thank you.

MR. MCKEE: Okay, thank you. The analysis for deferred Proposal WP18-19 can be found in your supplemental materials packet. I'm not going to go over the biology and harvest history for the species in area of question as that was already done when this proposal was originally deliberated by this body during the last cycle. Rather, I would like to give the Board an overview and history of how we got to the point we're at now.

Proposal WP18-19 requested that the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission be allowed to distribute Federal registration permits to Ahtna tribal members for the Federal caribou season in Units 13A, 13B and 13 remainder. The proposal also requested that the Ahtna Advisory Committee be added to the list of agencies and organizations consulted by the Bureau of Land Management, Glennallen Field Office Manager when announcing the sex of the caribou to be taken in Units 13A and 13B.

During the Southcentral RAC meeting in November 2017, the Council, along with representatives of Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission and Staff from OSM discussed possible alternatives to what was originally requested in WP18-19 so that legal concerns associated with AITRC issuing Federal registration permits would be alleviated. During this discussion a modification was drafted to allow for a hunt via community harvest systems for caribou and moose in Units 11 and 13. In an effort to consolidate the three proposals submitted by AITRC, the hunts for moose in Unit 11 and for caribou and moose in Unit 13 were added to the species subject to the community harvest system in Proposal WP18-19.

The OSM conclusion for WP18-19 presented to the Board at its April 2018 regulatory meeting was to support WP18-19 with modification to establish a community harvest system on Federal public lands for moose in Unit 11 and moose and caribou in Unit 13 to be managed by AITRC and open to Federally-
qualified subsistence users living within the Ahtna traditional use territory subject to a framework to be established by the Federal Board unless the Ahtna Advisory Committee would not be one of the entities consulted with -- with the Federal manager during administration of this hunt and the modified regulation can be found on Page 33 of your supplemental handout.

During its April 10 through 13th, 2018 wildlife regulatory meeting, the Federal Subsistence Board deferred action on WP18-19 and instructed OSM to use the deferral time to work with AITRC, the Regional Advisory Councils, Federal land management agencies and ADF&G, as necessary to cooperatively establish a framework for a workable community harvest system for moose and caribou in Units 11 and 13. The expectation was that once a workable framework was developed, AITRC would then submit a special action request for the Board's consideration.

Despite this, AITRC submitted a special action request on April 17th, 2018, prior to developing a workable framework for the proposed community harvest system. In an attempt to validate the special action request submitted by AITRC, OSM sought clarification from the proponent on the proposed basic components of the community harvest systems such as quota, season dates, species and eligibility for participation. Despite a meeting and several email communications AITRC never submitted a framework for a community harvest system that included eligibility that was compatible with Title VIII of ANILCA. In a final iteration, AITRC requested that eligibility be limited to "Federally-qualified rural tribal members residing within the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory." In a letter sent on August 27th, 2018, OSM informed AITRC that the Board had determined that the special action request that they submitted was invalid because of limited participation in the Federal community harvest system based on tribal membership, which is not within the statutory authority of the Board.

Prior to the letter being sent to AITRC with regard to the special action request, the Board met for a work session in Anchorage on August 8th where the issue of WP18-19 and the AITRC special action were discussed at length. At the end of the discussion, the National Park Service proposed that representatives of the Park Service, BLM, AITRC and OSM meet in Glennallen
to work out details of the community harvest system
with an eligibility that was within the bounds of the
Board's authority under Title VIII of ANILCA as it
related to the Southcentral RAC's modification of the
original proposal, WP18-19. There was agreement amongst
the Board that the special action request was not
valid, and so that avenue was not seen as a viable path
forward.

On March 27th, 2020, the Federal agency
representatives met with representatives of AITRC to
present a new framework of eligibility for a community
harvest system that identified Federally-qualified
subsistence users living in specific communities within
the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory that could be
deemed eligible to hunt moose and caribou in Units 11
and 13. This amended language can be found on Page 67
of your supplemental handout. However, this framework
was ultimately rejected by AITRC.

So, Mr. Chair and members of the Board,
that's all I have for my general overview and I'd be
happy to entertain any questions that you might have.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Chris, for that presentation. Any questions for Chris
from the Board.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: So, Chris, I was looking
at the definition of 50 CFR 110.(D)(6) and it
stipulates the Board may delegate to agency field
officials authority to set harvest and possession
limits, and it goes on. So furthermore you have this
cite of 50 CFR 110.(D)(6), but what is the actual.....

MR. MCKEE: Yes.

MR. PELTOLA: .....official definition
of agency field official?

MR. MCKEE: I've asked -- I think this
question might be better asked of our regulations
specialist, Theo Matuskowitz, I've asked him to be
prepared to step in, so I'll see if he's able to get on
the phone call.

MS. PITKA: It's Rhonda, I'm back on
line.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Rhonda,
you're back.

MS. PITKA: Yes, sorry about that, I
had a massive power outage here.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, it's good
to have you back, I was just getting worried, so
welcome back to the meeting.

Okay, Chris, we were asking for
somebody else to get on line, Operator.....

MR. MCKEE: Yes. Our regulations
specialist is stating he's trying to get on right now.
But in answer to your question, Gene, my first
inclination on my read of the regulation, when it
refers to agency field staff, I would assume that it's
referring to Federal agency Staff. I'm not sure if
that's getting to the actual heart of your question,
though.

MR. PELTOLA: And I know it's been a
point of discussion in the past but I want to make sure
that we're all clear on what that legal definition is,
and.....

MR. MCKEE: Uh-huh.

MR. PELTOLA: .....actually if you look
up the regulation it says, agency field officials. And
the reason I ask is, a strict interpretation may fall
along the lines of what you mentioned, i.e., Federal
government employees, but the program has, in the past,
allowed non-Federal entities to distribute permits on
behalf of the Federal program.

MR. MCKEE: I'm not certain that the
issue is the distribution of the permits, issuance of
the permits, and, again, that.....

MR. MATUSKOWITZ: This is Theo
Matuskowitz, am I on?
MR. PELTOLA: Yes, Sir.

MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Would you like me to speak to this issue at this time.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, please. I was asking for if you look up and read the definition of CFR 100.10(D)(6) and I was just scrolling down but I moved my cursor away -- sorry about that -- but it stipulates that the Board may delegate to agency field officials the authority to set harvest and possession limits, define harvest areas, specify methods or means of harvest, specify permit requirements and open or close specific fish or wildlife harvest seasons within a framework established by the Board.

So my question was, because it has been a point of discussion, and in field meetings, what the actual definition of agency field officials was, and recognizing that the Federal Subsistence Program has utilized entities other than Federal government personnel to distribute Federal permits.

MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Okay. In discussions on this subject with our Solicitor's Office, the agency field officials are defined as a Federal agency. In this case, the Federal agency does not specifically have to be an agency involved in the Federal Subsistence Program. For example, there was an instance in the past where we had official or an official from the U.S. Postal Service in a rural community issue permits. That was sort of a one time deal based on a special circumstance, but it was still a Federal official.

Other times it has been done for community type hunts. The Board historically has done it a number of ways, sometimes it's in regulation, sometimes they've done it by letter authorizing a community hunt and they've done it where they either work with field -- the in-season -- or I'm sorry, the land manager to work out, you know, the details of harvest limits and a few of the other permit details. But no actual Federal permit is issued for those community hunts.

Now, we can. We could.

But historically we haven't.
It's just basically a letter or something in regulations and then that community, if they so desire, they can make their own permit, whatever method they decide to use to control or to track who is hunting and the results and, you know, other biological data that we would require to be gathered. I know some communities have done it as simple as a simple chart, or a piece of paper on a bulletin board and they track when the hunters go out, you know, what the results were and then at the end they send us the end results.

So basically for the permit, if you know, however the Board or, you know, wants to set up a framework for this community hunt, they can make it as simple or as complex as they want, but generally we kind of historically left it up to the community how they track it. The Board would tell them, all right, this is the information we need, we need, for example, the person's name, their hunting license number, number of days hunted, were they successful or not, and then occasionally there's other biological data that might be requested. But as far as issuing an actual permit through our Federal Subsistence permitting system, no, we have not done that.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you for that. So by looking at the key points then, I think that 50 CFR 110.(D)(6) might be misleading because if I understand your definition, you're talking more along the lines of a delegation of authority as opposed to actually the ability just to distribute Federal permits.

MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Well, it's not my definition, it's the.....

MR. PELTOLA: Well, no, I mean what you've -- and, yeah, I don't mean to put you on the spot, but what you had conveyed in your explanation it sounded to me more like a delegation of authority as opposed to just the ability to distribute Federal permits.

MR. LORD: Mr. Chair, this is Ken, may I weigh in?

MR. PELTOLA: Please.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Ken,
please thank you.

MR. LORD: Yeah, sure. The key word there is delegation. Inherent in that word is a transfer of authority to make a decision. So when you've got 110 refers to delegation to agency officials, that is a delegation of authority to make those decisions that are listed in that regulation, and that is very different than simply allowing some entity other than a Federal entity to distribute the permits or track, you know, track information relevant to the hunt, they're not making a decision. Only Congress has the ability to delegate authority to outside of the Federal government, the Board does not have that authority.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other questions for Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, Chris, appreciate that presentation.

We'll move on to summary of public comments, Council Coordinator.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Board. For the record, Katya Wessels with OSM. We received two written public comments on WP18-19. Both comments are in support, one from the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission, and the other one from the Bristol Bay Native Corporation.

The Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission supports WP18-19 that would allow it to distribute Unit 13 Nelchina caribou hunting permits to Ahtna tribal members for Federally-qualified, customary and traditional use hunters. The Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission has management capacity to distribute Unit 13 Nelchina caribou permits to tribal members. Ahtna, Inc., Staff who are on loan to the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission has coordinated
the Copper Basin community subsistence hunt since the year 2009. The Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission has experienced Staff to distribute Nelchina caribou permits and ensure tribal hunters return caribou permits.

Bristol Bay Native Corporation supports the intent of Wildlife Proposal WP18-19 authorizing the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission to distribute Federal registration permits for caribou to Ahtna tribal members and adding AITRC to the list of organizations that the BLM consults with when announcing the sex of the caribou that can be harvested. BBNC says, if adopted, WP18-19 would allow AITRC to distribute Federal registration caribou permits to Ahtna tribal members for Game Management Unit 13 and would require BLM to consult with AITRC when establishing the sex of caribou that can be harvested in Game Management Unit 13. BBNC supports the intent of this proposal. It introduces a long overdue change that is necessary to preserve Ahtna tribal members access to caribou in their traditional use areas. Ahtna tribal members are facing ever increasing competition for harvesting caribou from Anchorage and Fairbanks hunters who can easily access the Nelchina Caribou Herd by road and off road vehicles. Consistent with the mandates of ANILCA Title VIII discussed above, it is incumbent on Federal agencies to prioritize the subsistence take of this resource by rural Alaskans. The measures in WP18-19 offer a sensible means to do so.

Thank you.

That concludes the summary of the written public comments. Thank you for your attention.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Katya. With that we'll open up the floor to any public on line who want to testify to this proposal specifically, and we'd ask again to be mindful of 10 minutes. Thank you.

OPERATOR: We do have public comment from Erin [sic] Linnell, your line is open.

MS. LINNELL: Hi, this is Karen Linnell
with a K, representing Ahtna InterTribal Resource
Commission, and eight Federally-recognized tribes. Our
membership also includes the two land owners in our
traditional territory Ahtna, Incorporated and Chitina
Native Corporation.

As you all know, and that I've stated
many times, we have an MOA with the Department of
Interior to cooperatively manage wildlife on Federal
lands. The issuance of a community harvest permit --
to AITRC to issue permits for its tribal communities
has been on our agenda since the signing of that
agreement. We submitted a special action request by
pulling language directly out of the MOA that was
negotiated by Mr. Ken Lord and other folks with Ahtna's
attorney, Mr. John Sky Starkey. And so we were
surprised and shocked that it wasn't possible coming --
and those words coming from Mr. Lord himself, saying it
can't be done, when he was a part of the negotiations.

Then we took to heart your words about
negotiating with the land owners and developing a
framework, so we submitted a framework to BLM and
National Park Service and we copied OSM on it in August
of 2018. And we met with Mr. Bert Frost to discuss
this framework and it included a definition of
community that works for us, that includes folks like
-- that are still Federally-qualified but we don't have
to live within a specific boundary for that community.
For example, myself, I live in Glennallen but I'm a
Cheesh'na tribal member and so Chistochina would be the
community, and I would still be eligible to
participate, I am Federally-qualified, and to hunt
under the BLM regulations as it is now, all it would do
would allow me to hunt under the Ahtna InterTribal
Resource Commission managed community harvest permit.

So Mr. Frost said that he would get
back to me, he wanted to talk to some folks about that
definition of community.

We also submitted it to the BLM
Regional Director, and Karen, and her name slips my
mind again, it's been two years, almost three, she
ended up being transferred as well.

I got no response on that framework
from anybody since August of 2018.
You know, we're looking at community membership, we have many members in our communities that are non-tribal citizens but they are a part of our community. We also have folks who live within our community boundaries who do not participate or are a part of our community, they just occupy the space there and are contrary to a lot of the activities that happen within our communities. So we thought that this afforded that latitude. They share food with us, they participate in our community events, and dog races and softball tournaments, et cetera, they're a definite part of our community, they mourn with us, they help us to bury our dead, you know, and they help us celebrate life. Those are members of our communities.

And so when Mr. McKee said that, you know, we weren't trying to work with them, we've been. But this is a negotiating point, not an all or nothing. We could have had a meeting to negotiate this stuff. They submitted a framework without us, and they didn't call us once, and I didn't find out about that framework until I went to the Southcentral RAC meeting last month in Anchorage. I went to Fairbanks, Eastern Interior, reported on all of our activities here at AITRC, the growing Staff that I have, I have two wildlife biologists on staff, I have an anthropologist, I have a fisheries biologist on staff, and so I'm -- you know, we're growing and building capacity to wildlife management. So I reported that at Eastern Interior and told them we hadn't had any movement on that local advisory committee charter that you, the Federal Subsistence Board, passed over three years ago. And there was no proposed rulemaking. There's been no other activity on the other end of this agreement.

And so when I went to Anchorage to report that same thing, it wasn't even five minutes after I got done talking, one of the OSM Staff brought me a framework and said this is -- here's what we developed, and it was developed by the InterAgency Staff Committee. Again, not including me. I would have preferred for me to be able to meet with, as you directed, meet with the Regional Directors to negotiate this out. And so it's been an all or nothing with them for quite some time and I'm quite frustrated with this whole process, and the lack of attempt to work on this negotiation.

So I believe that we've been working in
good faith and working towards this negotiation and I thought we were getting somewhere with Mr. Frost before he left. We did, just a few weeks ago, have a teleconference, and I think it was the deadline of this meeting that actually made this happen, between the National Park Service, BLM and the U.S. Forest Service. So, you know, I think it was like, oh, crap, we didn't do what we said we would do and then they started hustling to try to get a meeting together. And of course the coronavirus put a stop to face to face meetings.

But I do want to say that we've been trying and working through this system and trying to make it work. I do want to say that 50 CFR 110.10(D)(6) says that you may delegate to other agencies but it doesn't say that you only can delegate to those agencies. And so I'd like you to consider that we have this agreement that allows for cooperative management and, therefore, it allows you to delegate to us, the ability to handle this community harvest permit.

With that, I think I'm going to take any questions.

I do have Jim Simon, who's been a consultant with me on this, and, Jim, did I leave anything out?

(No comments)

MS. LINNELL: Jim, did I leave anything out.

(No comments)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Operator, is Mr. Jim Simon on the call?

OPERATOR: Sir, that line is open.

MR. SIMON: Hello, this is Jim Simon.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, Jim, Karen just finished her testimony and was asking if you had any additional.

MR. SIMON: Yeah, I think the only
thing I have to add is it might be beneficial for OSM Staff to resend that August 27th, 2018 letter that was referenced in the introduction for this proposal because to my knowledge, AITRC has not received that response to the community hunt frameworks that have been presented previously.

I don't have anything else to add at this time, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions from the Board, or for Karen.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, this is Chad.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair. Oh, go ahead, Chad.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Chad.

MR. PADGETT: Karen, I just wanted to clarify a couple of things, or put a couple of things on record because I did come out and meet with you and I know that my Staff was on the phone so this wasn't anything that, at least, on my part was being done last minute. So I just want to make sure that we're clear on, you know, that we have been trying to work this through and so I just wanted to clarify that point.

Thank you.

MS. LINNELL: Is that Mr. Padgett?

MR. PADGETT: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Karen.

MS. LINNELL: Okay, thank you. Yeah, and we met it was the last minute, you came, we had lunch, we had an hour, or so for lunch here at my office. And I thought, you know, this was our first getting to know each other, let's build a relationship so we can get to that point, so thank you for coming out, I appreciate that. But in the timeframe that you were here we didn't have enough time to go through this issue.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you.
MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA, if I may.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good evening, Karen. so what we have before us today is the analysis for WP18-19, which is the original proposed regulation and ISC modification that identifies a community harvest. And I was going to ask if you would be willing to accept that maybe harvest structure management recommended by OSM as a starting point and then if you had a commitment from the Federal leadership, of the agencies involved in the land areas and the traditional Ahtna harvest area and continued to work with you towards something that, if at all possible, get closer to what your organization had desired, then I think that might be a bit unfair now that Mr. Simon came on and said that you haven't seen that letter yet, and asked that it be resent.

And the reason I ask that is that we have a couple options. The Board can review, get your comments imputed and we could vote up or down what's before us, or if there are still issues and you feel like moving forward, although not having the Board vote something down, we could try to get the Federal involved agencies to commit to make that time to try to improve the product and the Board address and then maybe in the future, so I'm just curious of what your thoughts are on any of those options.

MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Peltola. I just want to say, you know, we're interested in anything to start moving things forward. We've been trying to do what we can on this side and like I said, and with the Board's direction, was supposed to be a negotiation point to get moving, but I would rather see us get something started so that this MOA actually means something and move forward towards our common goal, which is healthy sustainable populations.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA again, could I get a follow-up.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So Karen with you saying that you'd like to get something
in place, does that mean that if the Board was to act
on the proposal before us as recommended by OSM with
the community harvest, you'd be willing to accept that
with the understanding that you'd like to see a firm
commitment from the Park Service direct leadership, and
in addition BLM leadership to continue to work with you
in a meaningful capacity to try to advance this if the
program could provide for something that's closure to
what you and your organization desire, or do you mean
by get something started, by continue to work with
meetings and not have the Board deliberate something
today?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. LINNELL: Oh, sorry, if I wasn't
clear on that, no I would love for the Board to pass
this and get something on the books.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Karen. Thank
you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
structuring that question there, Gene, appreciate that.
Thank you, Karen.

Any other questions from the Board for
Karen.

MR. MCKEE: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
the floor.

MR. MCKEE: Yeah, this is Chris McKee
again. I just wanted to make clear that once we --
after we got the special action request submitted by
AITRC after the Board's 2018 meeting, we did sit down
with AITRC, on, I believe, the 11th of May, to discuss
their special action issues regarding eligibility to
issue the permits and et cetera, and I think we made it
pretty clear, you know, what our sideboards were, what
the limitations in Title VIII of ANILCA were
particularly in terms of eligibility. I know after
that, I'd have to go through the variety of emails we
got, there was a lot of back and forth between OSM and
AITRC about eligibility and we did get, at least one or
two different attempts that AITRC made a lot of hard
work towards trying to meet the provisions of Title
VIII. But every eligibility framework that we got after that initial meeting was never compatible with what is within the Board's statutory authority.

So I just want to reiterate that OSM and a lot of other Federal Staff have made, you know, more than one attempt to try to come to an agreement on the eligibility that would be satisfying to AITRC and is within the Board's statutory authority.

MS. LINNELL: So to that, you also told us that we had to take all of the non-residents in those communities and that is not what we're saying. Those folks have other opportunities to get their permits at BLM.

Like I said, we have a few people that live within our communities that are not part of our communities and are contrary to -- their extractionists, they take, take, take, and wouldn't care, they moved into our community, they wouldn't care if they took everything of a species and that there was nothing left for generations to come, and so we didn't want those people to be a part of our community and it was sounding like an all or nothing. And what we're trying to say, that this is an option, we're creating this community harvest permit, there is still plenty of opportunity to participate under the Federally-managed hunt with BLM or the National Park Service.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you, Karen. But I also think what we made clear, though, is that if.....

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA, if I may.

MR. MCKEE: .....the.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, please interject, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, thank you. I understand that perception is each individual's reality, although I think we were at a common point about five to seven minutes ago, I would like the Federal Subsistence Program to proceed from that point on.

MR. DOOLITTLE: And if I can, Mr. Peltola, this is Tom Doolittle, Deputy Assistant
Regional Director, I would like it to commence, too, through the Board, and not through our Staff at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we're on the public. Is there any other questions for Karen or Jim at this time.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, Operator, were there any other additional public testimony on line that would like to speak to this specific proposal.

OPERATOR: Once, again, if you have public testimony please press star then one.

One moment, Sir.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: At this time I'm showing no further.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you. We'll move on to the Regional Advisory Council recommendation, Chair or designee.

MS. PERRY: Mr. Chair. Members of the Board.....

OPERATOR: Sir, I apologize, we do have Gloria Stickwan who has cued up, would you like to go ahead and take that at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we'll listen to Gloria, thank you.

OPERATOR: Thank you, Sir. Ma'am, your line is open.

MS. STICKWAN: Good afternoon. I just want to support Karen's position and that we -- that the Federal Board pass this today, it's been going on for several years. Our understanding is the MOA, as it was written, we were allowed to do permits, we were allowed to -- the agreement as written allowed for us to do the permits, create our own hunt for our people,
the tribe, it nowhere say that we would include all communities, so I just want to say that I support Karen and AITRC's position.

That's it, good bye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gloria, for calling in and testifying today. Any questions for Gloria.

MS. STICKWAN: Hello.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello.

MS. STICKWAN: Did you have a question?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, I was just asking if anybody had a question, appreciate you calling in Gloria, thank you. Operator, were there any others on line who would like to testify to this proposal.

OPERATOR: At this time, Sir, I'm showing no others.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, appreciate the public calling in and hopefully we'll remedy this here today.

All right, we'll move on to Regional Advisory Council recommendation, Chair or designee.

MS. PERRY: Mr. Chair, members of the Board. This is DeAnna Perry. Again, I'm standing in for Greg Encelewski, Chair of the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council who could not be on the call at this time. On Page 39 of your supplemental materials for deferred Proposal 18-19, you'll find the Regional Advisory Council's recommendation.

The Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council supports WP18-19 with modification to establish a community harvest system for moose and caribou in Units 11 and 13 to be managed by AITRC and open to Federally-qualified residents of the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory.

That was the recommendation of the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council.
Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll move on, Eastern Interior.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom, was there two RACs on this one?

MS. WORKER: Mr. Chair, there was only one Regional Advisory Council that weighed in on this proposal, I believe.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you, appreciate that. We'll move on, Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation comments, Native Liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management. During the consultation held on April 10th we had two comments.

One from the Ahtna InterTribal Council, very important there's a need to protect cultural and subsistence way of life. We heard from another person from the InterTribal Village, Gulkana, Mr. Simon is very in support of WP18-19.

And that's all I have, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. Moving on to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments, State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Chair. Ben Mulligan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Department is neutral on this proposal and we do emphasize though, the need for harvest reporting.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.

InterAgency Staff Committee comment, ISC Chair.

MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The ISC comment for deferred proposal WP18-19 is quite long, it's several pages long and it contains a substantial amount of regulatory language. I can either read the comment in its entirety, it is part of the administrative record as it begins on Page 67 of the supplemental materials, but I can also provide a summary to the Board. I'll wait for feedback on which the Board prefers.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, with concurrence from the Board, I think a summary would work at this time, you know, it's already getting to be a quarter to 6:00 and so I would appreciate a summary. If there's any opposition to that at this time, I'll just state so and we'll go through the whole motion.

(No opposition)

MS. WORKER: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. The ISC comment includes two modifications for WP18-19 relative to the 2018 OSM conclusion and the modifications included in the ISC comment were also included in the framework that the ISC developed this spring.

The first modification is to name the individual communities in Units 11 and 13, unit specific regulations and deleting the broader definition of Ahtna Traditional Use Territory. This modification is made as the result of the review of past Board actions involving rural determinations and customary and traditional use determinations. In these determinations the Board has treated the concept of a community as being geographically based and involving all residents of the community. In creating a community harvest system then, the relevant community must be geographically defined and all residents of the community must be eligible to participate in the community harvest regardless of tribal membership.

The second modification is to add a December 1st to December 31st may be announced season for moose in Unit 13. This modification was recommended by the Southcentral Subsistence Regional Advisory Council for a related proposal WP18-18. The
proponent withdrew WP18-18 with the concurrence of the Board and the understanding that its provision would be included in the community harvest system recommended in the Southcentral modification of WP18-19.

So that's a summary of the modifications that are including in the ISC comments and, again, I'll just state that the full comment begins on Page 67 of your supplemental materials and it does include the specific regulatory language that the ISC is suggesting.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Susan, appreciate that. Any questions from the Board for Susan.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we'll open up the floor for Board discussion with Council Chairs and State Liaison.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Chad, you have the floor.

MR. PADGETT: Just real quick, I'm not sure if anybody knows this, has the Department weighed in on the MOA at all, I don't know if anybody would know that or not.

MS. PITKA: Do you mean the Department of Interior?

MR. PADGETT: Correct. Recently, have they weighed in on the MOA, because I think there was a question that was posed to the Department as well.

MR. STRIKER: Not since this administration.....

MR. LORD: Mr. Chair, this is Ken.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Ken, please.
MR. LORD: Yeah, so the original MOA was signed by Michael Bean, who was then the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, but this Administration has taken something of a hand's off approach to this. I know that Karen has met with Steve Wackowski at least, I think on several occasions, and I don't know if that's happened recently, but other than that, as far as I know it's been radio silence.

MR. PADGETT: Through the Chair, this is Chad.

MR. STRIKER: Park Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Don.

MR. STRIKER: Yeah, so, Chad, the other thing that's important to note here is that this proposal is not the only way to comply with the intent of that MOU signed by the former Administration, so I think all options are available to us.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board discussion or deliberation.

MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair, Don Striker with the Park Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Don, you have the floor.

MR. STRIKER: This is a complicated issue and words are important and words are important in ways that we, as Department of Interior, at least, have not sorted out yet. What we're learning on this front and on other fronts is that there is a big statutory difference between co-management and collaborative or cooperative management. And I think that this might be something that is at heart in the difference between what we've heard described as decisionmaking regarding who participates in the hunt and a delegation of distributing permits that does not involve decisionmaking, and that's a terribly important set of definitions to get our head around.

I will say I understand fully Ahtna's frustration because this does go on for years, but
there is no ill-intent, certainly not on the part of
the Park Service, we have continued to explore this, we
continue to explore this, and, if anything, we are
willing to take any and all creative alternatives, but
we're just not sure that we can do something that's
beyond our statutory authority.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.

Any other Board discussion or deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
we'll open up the floor for Federal Board action on
this proposal.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
floor, Chad.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. I move to
adopt WP18-19 as submitted by the Ahtna InterTribal
Resource Commission. This proposal is shown on
supplemental page 1 of the supplemental Board book.
Following a second, I will explain why I intend to
oppose this motion.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

MR. STRIKER: Second.

MR. PADGETT: My justification is the
following. The framework for a community harvest
system includes eligibility that is not compatible with
Title VIII of ANILCA. The request is not within the
Federal Subsistence Board's authority. We can continue
to explore options to design a management framework and
BLM will commit to continue to work with AITRC to try
and resolve this problem, but under the current
framework, I just don't see a statutory way forward.

Thank you.

(Pause)
MS. PITKA: Am I still on line?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, there was silence there, uh.

MS. PITKA: Yeah. I don't know who is still on.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Maybe we're the last two standing.

MR. SIEKANIEC: This is Greg, I'm still here.

MR. SCHMID: We're all on.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Tony, are you on, this is Tom.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MS. PITKA: I'm on.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Rhonda, you might have to.....

MR. C. BROWER: I'm on.

MR. DOOLITTLE: .....take over part of the discussion. Oh, is Tony back on -- Tony just got dropped he's dialing back in.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm on.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Mr. Christianson has rejoined the call.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair, this is Tom.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tom, sorry, I was kicked off.

MR. DOOLITTLE: We're at the stage where Board Member Striker -- or excuse me, Board Member Padgett provided a motion on the floor and a
justification not to adopt.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.

MR. C. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any Board discussion before we call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: BIA, go ahead.

MR. PELTOLA: So as the motion has been made, this would kill the proposal and if Ahtna still wanted to pursue they'd have to go through another wildlife cycle which means we're more than two years out from this point on because we just went through a boat load of wildlife proposals, and I do not intend to speak on Karen Linnell's behalf, but I thought I heard during her comment period that she's willing to accept something similar to the ISC framework, if that was still the case, we'd still be at a better point than starting all over and there may be only a few points of contention between what Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission wanted to see and what our current definitions could provide.

My concern is if we vote this down we'll be in the same position the next wildlife cycle still wondering what we can and can't do.

With that being said, and, maybe, Mr. Chair, you could confirm with Ms. Linnell, that I thought I heard her say she was willing to accept the ISC framework presented to the Board for consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. STRIKER: Point of order. If we voted this down, couldn't you make an alternative proposal.

REPORTER: So wait a second, this is Tina, the court reporter, who just said that?

MR. STRIKER: That was National Park Service, Don Striker.
REPORTER: Thank you.

MR. C. BROWER: With the concurrence of the second you can remove your motion.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, BIA, Gene. In the absence of a second, the motion would fail and a replacement motion could be made.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I guess we're at the point right now where we have a motion on the floor that is to not support the proposal as written, but, again, Gene, you had a point there that I'd like to hear if Karen is still on the line. I thought I heard the same thing about her willingness to go with the ISC recommendation as a starting point, which would blend us with a place to begin trying to support their efforts, you know, albeit within the framework and within our authority.

And, so, if Karen is still on, I'd just like to hear her feedback on, again, that what is being presented is a starting point and was supported by the Ahtna.

OPERATOR: Sir, her line is open.

MR. DOOLITTLE: And, Tony, there was no motion -- I mean no second to that motion. Thank you.

REPORTER: Tom, there was a.....

MR. STRIKER: But there was a second, there were two seconds to that motion.

REPORTER: .....second, more than.....

MR. STRIKER: Sorry.

MR. DOOLITTLE: I'm sorry, and I didn't hear that Don, excuse me.

MR. STRIKER: Right.

MR. C. BROWER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
Charlie.

MR. C. BROWER: This is Charlie, I'm one of the seconder, I concur.

MS. LINNELL: Mr. Chair, this is Karen Linnell.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Karen, go ahead, you have the floor.

MS. LINNELL: Yes, I do agree, it's not everything that we want but it is a good step forward. I would hate to wait another two years to get something going. So I will agree to the ISC framework.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg, go ahead.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Sir. So now I'm getting a little confused that how would we turn the framework into, I believe what we have is a proposed regulation. Maybe I need some legal perspective on that if there is. I'm just getting confused as to what it is we're actually offering up here or discussing.

MS. WORKER: Mr. Siekaniec, I might be able to answer that question for you, this is Suzanne.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Suzanne, go ahead you have the floor.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you.

MS. WORKER: The modification that the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council offered, I closed the document, but it says that users living within the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory, for those users, the community harvest system for moose is authorized, and under the ISC framework, anyway, the unit specific regulations would read: For Unit 11, for instance, for Federally-qualified subsistence users living within the Ahtna Traditional Communities of Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake and Tazlina, a community harvest system for moose, if moose is authorized on Federal public land.
lands within Units 11 subject to a framework to be established by the Federal Subsistence Board.

And that speaks to the point that the ISC made about the Board's history of treating communities as geographically based places and so the regulation reflects that.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Suzanne. So that’s geographically based places as well as then where all rural residents within those communities are considered?

MS. WORKER: Yes, that's correct.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay, thank you.

MR. LORD: Mr. Chair, this is Ken.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Ken, go ahead, thank you.

MR. LORD: Point of order on the motion, the motion was made in the negative, which we know from past experience leads to confusion when we have double negatives and people vote no and it's unclear as to whether or not they're voting in favor of the ISC recommendation so I would ask that the motion be withdrawn and rephrased in the positive.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, I was going to say that too because the motion was so -- if the second would concur and the maker of the motion, just for the order of process, whether we vote in the positive or negative, if we could make the motion to the affirmative, and then we can place our justification on the record to reflect our wishes.

MR. PADGETT: So hang on just one sec, I'm going back to it here.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: I have a procedural question of either you or Ken, so if the original motion which was seconded, which we all agree to now
was framed in the negative but we normally do them in
the positive and since this could be withdrawn and
restated, would it be appropriate to restate the motion
to be I move to adopt WP18-19 as modified by the Office
of Subsistence Management and incorporating the ISC
comments so we can get to where we want to be, which
the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission has agreed to
accepting as a starting point.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. LORD: Mr. Chair, yes, that would
be a possibility.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
that legal feedback. And then to the maker of the
original motion, there's a suggestion of wording.

MR. STRIKER: As a point of order the
original motion was not to accept the modified, nor was
it phrased in the negative, unless I heard incorrectly.
This is Park Service, Don Striker. It was a motion to
adopt the original proposal and.....

MR. PADGETT: Correct.

MR. STRIKER: .....if seconded, Chad
was going to explain why he was going to vote to oppose
it.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
Greg, I agree with that, that's what I heard.

MR. STRIKER: So what we have is a
motion to adopt the original proposal, and I'm all for
like however administratively we like drop this one and
go for a different motion that maybe Gene can
recommend.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, that's
procedurally, Don, so we get it right on the record.
So, go ahead, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: So if I understand
correctly and so we're all in agreement, that the
wording of the original motion by BLM was accurate, so
could we not enter a motion to amend that original with
a different direction, vote on the amendment then that
would change the original and then vote on the modified
original?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Gene, this is Tom, that
is the correct process is that you would have an
amendment to the original motion. Vote on the
amendment. And then go back to the original motion
with your inserted amendment, but address the amendment
first.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, this is Chad.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Chad, you have
the floor.

MR. PADGETT: Okay. Sorry, let me back
up here. I believe my motion was done in the
affirmative, I did say move to adopt, that said, if it
would help the process and if it works better, I would
withdraw that and this is my question, if I withdrew
that motion and we backed up and looked at a deferral
would that help the process?

MR. DOOLITTLE: And I believe Ken can
correct me but the original person proposing a motion
can propose to withdraw that motion.

MR. LORD: Concur.

MR. PADGETT: Okay, that said, sorry, I
did not mean to -- excuse me, Mr. Chair, Chad. I did
not mean to get the process muddied here. So rather
than muddy the process any further, I will withdraw my
first motion.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Does the second
concur.

MR. C. BROWER: Second concur.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
you. We withdrew that motion. Okay, so it currently
stands with the floor open to make a new original
motion with the concurrence of the second. The floor
is open.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Chad, you have the floor.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. I move to defer WP18-19 as submitted by Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission. This proposal is shown on supplemental Page 1 of the supplemental Board book. Following a second, I will explain why I intend to defer this motion until January 2021 Federal Subsistence Board Fish Regulatory meeting.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Personally, the Bureau of Indian Affairs hopes that we do not get a second on this motion. I don't believe there could be any benefit made from a deferral when we have a recommendation from the ISC, which is willing to be accepted by the proponent of the original proposal that is before the Board.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we still have the motion on the floor that needs a second. Go ahead, Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: I would also oppose a deferral.

MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. C. BROWER: Point of order, you can't discuss unless someone seconds it and it hasn't been seconded so if there's no second and the motion dies.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'm waiting to see if it gets a second, and we haven't had that yet. So thank you for that point of order clarification, Charlie.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So with a motion to defer, not hearing a second, the motion will die on the floor right now. I will continue to entertain a motion to the affirmative on this proposal so we can actually vote it up or down or maybe get some clarification or recommendations on how we move forward to provide an opportunity to work with Ahtna.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, this is Chad. Give me just one second here.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Chad, thank you for the patience.

MR. STRIKER: Well, point of order, Gene, you seem to have this, you can make the motion.

MR. PELTOLA: I completely understand that here at BIA but my preference was since Chad has been actively engaged in the process that he continue.

MR. PADGETT: Through the Chair, I'm just trying to pull up my original motion.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we'll give you a moment there, Chad.

MR. PADGETT: Okay, sorry about that. Okay, so I will reiterate.

I move to adopt WP18-19 as submitted by the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission. This proposal is shown on supplemental page 1 of the supplemental Board book. Following a second, I will explain why I intend to oppose this motion.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Was there a second.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Second.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, there was a second for that motion there, Chad, you have the floor.

REPORTER: Wait a minute.

MR. PADGETT: Okay, thank you.

REPORTER: Wait a minute, this is Tina, could you tell me who made the second, I think it was Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Fish and Wildlife Service.

REPORTER: Thank you, Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, go ahead, thank you. Chad, you have the floor.

MR. PADGETT: Okay, thank you. My justification is the following:

The framework for a community harvest system includes eligibility that is not compatible with Title VIII of ANILCA. The request is not within the Federal Subsistence Board's authority. However, we can continue to explore options to design a management framework with AITRC and BLM will commit to continue to work with them on the proposal.

Thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: BIA, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the motion that BLM just made is exactly the same as their very first motion and since we have a second it's open for discussion, and if I assume correctly, that, the ISC recommendation includes and has been vetted by our Solicitor, which includes the concerns which BLM has raised for their reason to oppose the original motion, it includes communities which are legally supported, it does not include the two additional communities which Ahtna had originally hoped would be included on, and everything is included in the ISC
modifications to address the community harvest within
the parameters that can be provided by the Federal
Subsistence Program at this time.

   Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. The
floor is open for discussion.

MR. STRIKER: Mr. Chair, point of
order, Park Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Park Service,
go ahead, Don.

MR. STRIKER: I'm really confused now,
is this the original proposal that you're supporting or
is this the proposal as modified?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That question
is for Gene?

MR. STRIKER: That question is for
Chad.

MR. PADGETT: Can you repeat that, Don,
through the Chair -- sorry.

MR. STRIKER: Yeah, I'm sorry, I'm just
confused if this is -- if your proposal is to support
the original WP18-19 or to support the WP18-19 as
modified.

MR. PADGETT: Sorry, Don, it was to --
well, sorry now my language is getting confused. It
was the original.

MR. STRIKER: So that's the same as we
started with a little while ago.

MR. PADGETT: Correct.

MR. STRIKER: I think maybe -- Gene,
were you suggesting that somebody make a motion to
propose the WP18-19 as modified by our ISC?

MR. PELTOLA: Yes. Thank you, BIA.
Yes, my recommendation was, since we already have the
proponent agreeing to accept the recommendation from
the ISC that the motion be to support WP18-19 as modified by the InterAgency Staff Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda Pitka.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Rhonda, you have the floor.

MS. PITKA: I'd like to amend the original motion to include the language as modified by the ISC.

MR. STRIKER: Second.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's a motion on the floor to amend the original motion to include the modified language by the ISC with a second, any discussion on the amendment to the original motion, the floor is open for Board discussion.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: BIA, go ahead.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so I don't mean to be a stickler, but if we have the motion to accept the ISC modifications, there's still the question, was deferral mentioned in this most recent motion by the Bureau of Land Management, I recall their Director talking about deferral, was deferral mentioned in his motion?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, this is Chad.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Chad, go ahead.

MR. PADGETT: Gene, to answer your question, no, deferral was not mentioned in my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Chad.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, we're on the motion to amend the original motion. Discussion, does anyone want to be recognized at this time?
MR. STRIKER: No, thanks, Rhonda, and I call the question on the amendment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Roll call, Tom, please on the amendment to the original motion to include the ISC recommendations.

MR. DOOLITTLE: This is the amendment, a vote on the amendment on WP18-19 on the original proposal to incorporate the modified -- to incorporate -- okay, here we go. Let's see, now you guys got me going.

Again, this is to accept the proposal as modified by the ISC to provide a framework through the Federal Subsistence Board.

Okay, we'll start with, on the amendment -- this is, again, for the framework as provided by the ISC, through the Federal Subsistence Board, we'll start with Donald Striker.

MR. STRIKER: I support the amendment in deference to AITRC and I think every member of this Board as spearheaded by Gene's desire to really move forward on this issue.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Don.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg Siekaniec.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Greg.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Gene.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: I also support and hope this is a path towards progress.
MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Dave.

Bureau of Land Management, Chad Padgett.

MR. PADGETT: I support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Chad.

Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Rhonda.

Charlie Brower.

MR. C. BROWER: I support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Charlie.

Chairman Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you. Now, we can go to the amendment to the original motion, and I'll just -- Scott, if you could put that back up, thank you.

MR. STRIKER: The amended motion.

MR. DOOLITTLE: The amended motion did pass, and so this is WP18-19 adopt with modification of naming individual communities and deleting the broader definition of Ahtna Traditional Use Territory, the modified regulation would read:

Unit specific regulations for Federally-qualified subsistence users living within the Ahtna Traditional Communities Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake and Tazlina, a community harvest system for moose is authorized on Federal public lands within Unit 11 subject to a framework to be established by the Federal Subsistence Board;

And the unit specific regulations for Federally-qualified subsistence users living within the
Ahtna Traditional Communities of Cantwell, Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake and Tazlina, a community harvest system for caribou and moose is authorized on Federal public lands within Unit 13, subject to a framework to be established by the Federal Subsistence Board.

We'll start on the vote.

National Park Service, Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: National Park Service supports as amended. Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you.

Bureau of Land Management, Chad Padgett.

MR. PADGETT: I oppose for reasons stated.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Chad.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg Siekaniecz.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. I support because I believe this actually does provide a framework for us to move forward on this in light of the discussions that have been happening between BLM and the National Park Service.

Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Greg.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: I support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Dave.
Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support, thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Rhonda.

Charlie Brower.

MR. C. BROWER: I support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Charlie.

And last but not least, Chairman Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you everybody, that's seven yeas and one nay, and the motion passes as amended.

Thank you, everybody.

And, Mr. Chair, this is Tom, we have met the regulatory obligations for the Federal Subsistence Board for all the proposals that we've addressed. If we take a look at the wildlife closure regulations, to defer those to the future, the ones that are remaining, they are status quo decisions, they would not be published until the unified agenda can be changed publication in 2021 but a decision at some time in the future can be made on those. So if one of the decisions of the Board is to recess the meeting to meet at another time to address the closure reviews or those at a later date, to address the other agenda items, which include the RFR and the Fortymile Caribou Herd plan plus in the near future to discuss the special action requests and relative to food security that has been brought up by multiple people.

But that would require -- and, Ken, maybe you can step in, do we need to set a date if we recess the meeting or can we repoll the Board to make sure that we have an agreed upon date to continue this meeting to the other items.

MR. LORD: So, Tom, you're talking about recessing this meeting rather than adjourning it, correct?
MR. DOOLITTLE: That's correct, Ken.

MR. LORD: Then you would have to pick a date specific.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, thank you, Ken, for that. So at this time if the.....

MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yep, go ahead, through the Chair.

MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: One second Tom, yeah, go ahead Charlie.

MR. C. BROWER: Okay, Tom, go ahead, I'll wait.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, if the Board does choose to recess the meeting they do have to set a specific date to meet and we do have a big item, which are the special action requests on food security, and then also we have an action item on the Fortymile Caribou Plan, and also an RFR to consider.

Please keep in mind that on the wildlife closure reviews, is that, they can be decided upon at any time here in the near future, that aren't as time sensitive as I would expect the food security special action part of this meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that insight to the schedule that we have before us. I know it's been a long day, I could tell we've been -- this last one stretched all of our capacity to the max, I appreciate the patience of all of you on the Board here in trying to manage the work schedule we have ahead of us.

I'm looking, you know, to hopefully continue to talk about this, I don't want to put off the food security issue too long and I don't know what the window, our timeframe is, for us to -- a time to be determined. I know we must allow our Staff a little
time on these SARs to do diligence on them and I'm just
wondering if sometime next week would be appropriate.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: BIA, go ahead,
Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Don't we already have a reserved date set up for May
1st to address the Kusko, and if the Board was to
reconvene in the morning from this Board, would four
hours give us enough time to address what's remaining
on this agenda and then in the afternoon pick up on the
special actions for the Kusko.

Just a thought, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Do you mean
tomorrow, Gene?

MR. PELTOLA: Oh, no May 1st, next
Friday -- isn't May 1st next Friday.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, that's
what I was thinking that's why I said some time next
week so I concur with that. You know it would give our
Staff time to handle all the business we have and then
we could add this stuff to that time to be determined
next week.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, because I thought
that Ken had stipulated that we have to give a date
when we reconvene to finish this up and, you know, so I
just thought if we already reserved part of May 1st, we
could pick this up in the morning and then finish out
what we can on this agenda and then follow through with
the Kusko special actions at 1:00 o'clock as we're
scheduled on May 1st for the Kusko special actions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair, Chad Padgett.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Chad, go ahead.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. I think
there's a precedent, for call for the Chair, so like I
don't think you have to, under that, have a specific
date, I may be wrong but I don't think you have to have a date for that, it's a call from the Chair, that way it might give us a little more time to at least get a solid date.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is Greg.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg, go ahead.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think we need to pick out a date. You know, in my opinion, either Monday or Tuesday to address the special action requests. I understand there are Board members that are not available tomorrow. The special action request, in my mind, needs a little bit of time because of what we're developing for the in-season manager, I guess, the letter, and we're working with the Department, so I think we could probably satisfy that tomorrow and then early next week we could probably be back together to go over it with the Board.

Ken, does that seem like a timeframe that would work based on what you've been doing?

MR. LORD: Yes, I think so.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So right now I'm hearing, there's two....

MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda Pitka. I would be willing to meet on Monday or tomorrow, and I believe that we also need action on the consensus agenda items.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We did the consensus, Rhonda, when you were off, and we had consensus and it was unanimous, Rhonda, so apologize for missing you on that but we were trying to get the order of business accomplished.

So right now on the floor we have two dates, I'm hearing Rhonda's available Monday, I'm hearing suggesting Monday or Tuesday to give the Staff a few days to pull together and concur and confer with the Department, and I think sooner than later would set a good tone for the public and the urgency that we heard through all of the public testimony all week about the food security issues. And so I think it
would behoove us to maybe recess the meeting until Monday.

MR. C. BROWER: Sounds great to me.

MR. STRIKER: This is Don Striker, I'll make this priority, you call the ball.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, okay, thank you. So I'm thinking we're going to recess this until 9:00 a.m., Monday morning.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Is everybody relative to that recess, make sure we have all consensus on that, please.

MR. C. BROWER: Concur.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, so Charlie you're concur, I heard Don concur.

MS. PITKA: I agree.

MR. DOOLITTLE: How about you, Greg.

MR. SCHMID: Hey, Tom, this is Dave, I can push most stuff around, Wayne or Tom may have to cover a little bit on Monday, I'm booked up but this is a priority so I'll see what between Wayne and I, we can make Monday.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, good, Dave. How about you.....

MR. PELTOLA: BIA concurs.

MR. DOOLITTLE: BIA's good.

Rhonda, you're good Monday.

MS. PITKA: Yes, thank you.


MR. PADGETT: I was just looking, I will try and make it work, did you say 9:00?
MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, we can make it at 0900.

MR. PADGETT: Any chance we could push it to 10:00.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: 10:00 o'clock.....

MR. PADGETT: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: 10:00 o'clock Monday.

MR. DOOLITTLE: 10:00 o'clock.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, time to be determined, we'll recess the meeting, this Federal meeting, the time to be determined 10:00 a.m., on Monday.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hey, Greg, you were the last one I didn't get to, are you good with that, too?

MR. SIEKANIEC: Absolutely. I'll arrange my schedule to make this work, this is a priority.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay, thank you, Sir.

MR. C. BROWER: So noted, we'll see you guys Monday at 10:00.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thanks, Charlie.

MR. STRIKER: Tom, do we think this is going to be the same call in information?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yes, it will be the same call in information and same passcode.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Meeting is recessed and thanks to the Operators.

(Off record)

(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)
CERTIFICATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )

STATE OF ALASKA ) ss.

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

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Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22