MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good morning. We'll go ahead and start this meeting off this morning. I'm Anthony Christianson, Federal Board Chair. I'd like to welcome everyone here to the work session, January 28th.

With that, I'll turn it over to Tom for a minute.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Alrighty. Good morning everybody.

REPORTER: Wait. Tom, your microphone.

MR. DOOLITTLE: My name's Tom Doolittle. I'm the......

REPORTER: Tom, please, your microphone.

MR. DOOLITTLE: .....Acting Assistant Regional Director with the Federal Office of.....

REPORTER: Tom. Tom, do it again, your microphone's not on.

MR. DOOLITTLE: .....Subsistence Management and so I welcome everybody to this work session here starting on January 28th here at the Federal building in Anchorage, Alaska.

The first thing I'm going to do is a roll call for those members present and once we're done with roll call and establish whether we have a quorum I'll just make sure that we got around and probably do introductions of the Board. There are new people that are on the Federal Board right now and so I think that would be appropriate to do.

So with the roll call. We'll start with the National Park Service, Donald Striker.

MR. STRIKER: I'm present.
Mr. Doollittle: Bureau of Land Management, Chad Padgett.

Mr. Padgett: Present.

Mr. Doollittle: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg Siekaniec.

Mr. Siekaniec: Here. Thank you, Tom.

Mr. Doollittle: You betcha, Greg.

U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

Mr. Schmid: Present, Tom.

Mr. Doollittle: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Eugene Peltola.

Mr. Peltola: Eee.

Mr. Doollittle: Eee. Public Member, Rhonda Pitka.

Ms. Pitka: Here.

Mr. Doollittle: Public Member, Charlie Brower.

Mr. Brower: (In Inupiat)

Mr. Doollittle: Ohhh. (Laughter)

Mr. Doollittle: And Chairman, Anthony Christianson.

Chairman Christianson: I'm here.

Mr. Doollittle: Okay, we do have a quorum. And I guess starting over with you, Chad, we'll do some introductions.

Mr. Padgett: Chad Padgett, State Director for BLM, Alaska.

Mr. Peltola: Good morning all. Gene Peltola, Jr., Regional Director for Bureau of Indian
MR. SCHMID: Good morning all. I'm Dave Schmid. I'm the Regional Forester with the USDA Forest Service here in Alaska.

MR. STRIKER: Good morning. I'm the acting Regional Director for Region 11, Park Service here. I've spent the last seven years as the superintendent in Denali. So I have some familiarity but fish will be new.

MR. DOOLITTLE: And, again, as I introduced myself at the beginning, my name is Tom Doolittle, and I'm the Acting Assistant Regional Director for the Federal Office of Subsistence Management.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And I'm Anthony Christianson, the Federal Board Chair. Good morning.

MR. LORD: Ken Lord with the Solicitor's Office.

MR. BROWER: Charlie Brower from Barrow. We must be getting short on our budget, our meeting rooms are getting smaller and smaller.

(Laughter)

MR. BROWER: Good morning everyone.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thanks for that reminder, Charlie. Good morning. Greg Siekaniec, Regional Director here in Alaska for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And thank you all for attending.

MS. PITKA: Rhonda Pitka, Public Member from the village of Beaver.

MR. DOOLITTLE: And also for some of our other guests that are in the audience. Is there anybody from the Senior Advisor's Office from the Department of Interior, on the phone lines or here?

(No comment)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Hearing none, anybody from the State of Alaska.
MR. BURCH: I'm Mark Burch with the Department of Fish and Game.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mark. And is there any other -- any other folks that'd like to introduce themselves, representing the agencies or the -- or the liaisons to the agencies.

(No comment)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. The first order of business here is to review and adopt the agenda as presented.

MR. BROWER: So moved, Mr. Chair.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, yes.

MR. PELTOLA: Before we move to -- since Charlie made a motion to adopt I'd like you to make a modification of that to modify the agenda, if I could.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

MR. PELTOLA: And what I'd like to do, with Charlie's concurrence, is the motion is if you look at the executive session agenda, we have review agenda, information exchange, the OSM Staffing update budget discussion. If you look at the Federal Subsistence Board's meeting guidelines regarding executive sessions, it stipulates executive sessions are held at the discretion of the Chair for the purpose of reviewing propriety data or private information engaging in attorney/client communications, making decisions on personnel matters, and addressing other issues determined by the Chair to be appropriate for a closed session for which a public meeting is not required by law.

The items on the executive session I don't feel meet the requirements of the executive agenda and there isn't a reason why they should not be discussed in a public forum so I'd like to make the motion to move the OSM Staffing update and budget discussion to the public agenda. And then under executive session I'd like to put under there a Board
concurrency with the selection committee for the ARD of OSM. The 2010 Secretarial Review stipulated that the selection of the ARD for OSM was a Board decision. We've had a panel that was created, that conducted interviews. My understanding is that the last interview was completed at the end of December and nothing has been presented to the Board yet for full consideration.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any discussion on that amendment.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: The budget discussion I'm not sure was prepared for a public discussion or presentation. I don't know if that makes any difference. I would like to ask, you know, Mary, and I don't know if Brian is here yet, and, Tom, did you -- do you have any thoughts on whether that's -- I don't think the information is of any issue, but the presentation was not designed to be presented that way.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, I think the presentation does get into kind of the nuances and has a bit of Federal speak to it, and so it was designed as more of an internal budget discussion but also in that I think that we're fully capable of being able to -- to explain it fully, you know, to make this appropriate and to maintain transparency in the -- in the public sec -- section as well. So I don't, personally, have an issue with it.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question or discussion on the recommendation to -- what was that, move the budget.....

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, move the two items from executive session, being OSM Staffing and budget discussion to the public agenda. And then under executive session, add the Board concurrence for the selection committee for the ARD of OSM.

MR. BROWER: And the budget.
MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, so it would be taking number 3 and 4 off the executive session and moving it to the public session and then adding a 3, so to speak, which would be the Board concurrence for the selection committee of ARD of OSM.

MS. PITKA: Does the amendment require a second?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I was just going to say I would like a second to that because it's an amendment.

MS. PITKA: Okay, I'll second.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any further discussion on the amendment to the agenda as discussed.

MR. BROWER: Question on the amendment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. All in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously. So we'll go ahead and go back to the main motion to accept the amended agenda.

Call for the question.

MR. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All in favor of the amended agenda say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously. Thank you.

We'll move on to information exchange.

Anybody up here has anything they'd
like to share.

Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just a couple of items.

I think most Board members would know that, Fred Bue, our Yukon River in-season manager, for the past several seasons has retired, so we'll be having a, you know, new in-season manager there, which is very appropriate given that the delegation is actually to the office in Fairbanks, not to an individual itself, so that'll be a fairly easy transition to make.

Another retirement of note is Refuge Law Enforcement Officer, Jim Hjelmgren, who has worked incredibly hard to bridge this sort of relationship between, you know, law enforcement and subsistence users, rural users themselves, in regards to, you know, what the Board here sets forth by way of both in-season management and regulations that carry through multiple years. So anticipate us, you know, filling that position at some point in the future here. You know, Jim did a great job for us at just building relationships so we will miss him.

I've had some questions on the Veteran's allotment that came out of the Dingle Bill that, you know, told us to, you know, sort of figure out what lands should be made available for the Vietnam era Veterans that are still in that allotment selection process so we've been working diligently and have our report ready to go to the Department, which ends up going to Congress for the purposes of fulfilling that obligation, as was dictated by the Act itself.

And new hires, other things of particular interest, maybe. Yukon Delta Refuge Manager, Izembek and, of course, was already noted, the ARD for OSM, we're in the process of looking and working to fill those positions.

And then the Mulchatna Caribou Herd, is the Board took some action on, just a short update of, you know, very little evidence of illegal harvest happening, of course, an incident here or there, and then -- but we've had a great discussion with the State
of Alaska at the Alaska Board of Game meetings and it looks like there could be some activity or interest by the Board to kind of come in alignment with, you know, making sure that we're taking care of the caribou from a resource standpoint and try and figure out and give that herd an opportunity to rebound or, you know, be able to meet subsistence needs in the future.

So I would just offer those as a few -- few updates. Looking at my -- oh, Kaktovik bull moose hunt of which had also been of interest to the Board here, 10 permits and, to date, no harvest has been reported. So we'll still wait to see if the spring brings any harvest opportunity there from the Kaktovik residents.

Oh, same, Unimak Caribou hunt, again, of Board interest, 10 permits, quota of four bulls, but also no harvest has been reported at this point in time so.....

And with that I would -- thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Greg.

Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: If I may, I'd just like to build upon something that Greg, you know, identified, is that when Jim Hjelmgren first arrived in the Alaska region with the Fish and Wildlife Service, he came from Minnesota, and he happened to be my supervisor when he first came on board, when I carried a Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement commission with the Service, he did bring a totally different approach to rural law enforcement and he put a lot of time and effort into building relationships and a lot of the success that the Federal program has benefited from over the years, especially with regard to the Yukon, is directly attributable to Jim's efforts on that river.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Chad.

MR. PADGETT: Thank you. Sorry about the phone drop -- I need a mic drop instead of a phone drop.
(Laughter)

MR. PADGETT: So just a couple of quick things.

As everybody knows Dan Sharp, who was our Staff person has retired. We are hoping to have an announcement on the street for his position here shortly, with the hopes of having that hired before the April Board meeting.

So just a quick update on that.

And I have Nichole Hayes, who's our branch chief for renewable resources, who's here with us today, at least for a little bit, filling in and trying to help me through it, babysitting me a little bit. So I just wanted to make that announcement.

Along the lines of what Greg said as well, on the Dingle Act, we've been working with BIA -- everybody's got a finger in this it seems, so we're hoping to get some draft rules out here in the next couple of weeks, but we have a decision memo that's going to be before the Secretary before we do the draft rule. So just to update everybody a little bit, we will be having the draft rules out in a couple of weeks, we hope.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Dave,

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of highlights here that dominated the Forest Service business over the last several months.

One of those is the Alaska Roadless Rule. We did put out our draft -- working on our Draft EIS, and throughout Southeast Alaska and we received, I think it was almost 400,000 comments from across the country. As part of that, though, that I did want to share, we did conduct subsistence hearings, .810 hearings, in, I think, 19 rural communities in Alaska and those are all part of the record and we will be making a subsistence determination here at the end of the process.

Then up north here on the Chugach, after a seven year effort, we're at the finish line here with the Chugach Forest Land Management Plan. I
hosted objection meetings here last week in Anchorage or the week before, and we'll be moving forward with a final decision that'll guide the Forest here for the next couple of decades likely. So that's been a herculean effort as well to get done.

And so two milestones here as we're moving forward.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board members.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: State.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thanks. I think that concludes our information sharing. If we keep at this pace we'll be done before lunch.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'm just teasing.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll move on to the recommendations of the 2020 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan.

Pippa, welcome.

MR. RISDAHL: Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. My name is Greg Risdahl. I'm the Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director for OSM, and also the Fisheries Division leader.

First, I'm going to apologize, you're all going to have to turn around.

(Laughter)

MR. RISDAHL: First let me allow my colleague here to introduce herself as well for the record.
MS. KENNER: Thank you, Greg. My name is Pippa Kenner, and I'm an anthropologist at the Office of Subsistence Management.

MR. RISDAHL: We do have a PowerPoint presentation here to share with you today. The primary goal here will be to give you a little.....

MS. KENNER: There's chairs in the front here.

MR. RISDAHL: Thank you, Chris.

MS. KENNER: Should we do some lights.

MR. RISDAHL: I think it's all right.

(Pause)


MR. BROWER: Yep.

MR. RISDAHL: Okay. Again, my name is Greg Risdahl, the Subsistence Division Leader for Fisheries. The following presentation is an overview of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program or FRMP. We're going to give you a little bit of information about the process that we use to develop the draft 2020 Monitoring Plan during the second part of this presentation.

Are you clicking for me, Chris.

CHRIS: I mean I can if you want.

MR. RISDAHL: Is it just the arrows, oh, there we go, technologically challenged here, too. Showing my age.

(Laughter)

MR. RISDAHL: Thank you. When the Federal government assumed responsibility for subsistence management on Federal public lands, the Departments of Interior and Agriculture made a commitment to increase the quantity and quality of information available for management of subsistence
fisheries on Federal public lands and waters.

The FRMP was created in 2000, specifically for this purpose.

The mission of the program is to identify and provide information needed to sustain subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands and waters for all Alaskans through a multi-disciplinary process.

The Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program is organized around six regions that correspond to fish stocks, harvest and community issues held in common within specific geographic areas.

One of the main functions of the FRMP is to develop the bi-annual Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan. This plan consists of fisheries research and monitoring projects that provide information to manage subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands and waters.

The Monitoring Plan processes evolved over the years. Proposals are now initially reviewed and scored on their technical merits, first by the Technical Review Committee, or TRC. The TRC is the only entity that sees the complete project proposals. Executive summaries of the proposals are reviewed by the Regional Advisory Councils, who have the opportunity to offer comments on the proposals relative to important regional subsistence issues within their respective regions. The InterAgency Staff Committee has the opportunity, following this, to provide comments on the Draft Monitoring Plan as well. Today, it's time for the Federal Subsistence Board to provide comments and recommendations about the Draft Monitoring Plan.

The final determination about which projects to fund is made by the OSM Assistant Regional Director, based on the availability of funding, comments provided by the Councils, the ISC, the Board, and the public, as well as a geographical regional guidelines and TRC ranking.

The Technical Review Committee is foundational to the development of the Draft Monitoring Plan. It ensures the credibility and scientific
integrity of the proposal evaluation process. The TRC is composed of senior technical experts from Federal agencies and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Office of Subsistence Management, Assistant Regional Director approves nominations for the TRC. Current members come from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and, again, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Two OSM Staff members act as co-Chairs to facilitate the project review process. For the 2020 Draft Monitoring Plan that was Ms. Kenner and myself. The TRC reviews and scores every project proposal submitted and the TRC is composed of a balance of fisheries biologists and cultural anthropologists.

Some of the FRMP program's major policy and funding guidelines are outlined on this slide. We consider projects of up to four year in duration, studies should not duplicate existing projects, monitoring program funding is prioritized for non-Federal agencies, strategies for long-term projects are considered on a case by case basis, and it is imperative to make sure we are funding the very best projects and those that are ready for implementation immediately.

There are some activities not eligible for funding in the Monitoring Program. These include such things as habitat protection, mitigation, restoration and enhancement, hatchery propagation, restoration, enhancement and supplementation, contaminant assessment, evaluation and monitoring, and projects where the primary objective is outreach and education. Examples of these would be science camps, technician training, or intern programs.

A question we're often asked is why are these types of activities not also funded by the FRMP Program. Simple answer is, there are other agency programs that specifically address these kind of issues.

There are five specific objective criteria used by the TRC to select proposals for funding. That's what you see up here on the screen. These criteria are summarized in this slide. Studies must have a Federal nexus and be responsive to issues identified through the priority information needs.
process, or we call it the PINS process. The technical
quality of the study design must meet accepted
standards for information collection, compilation,
analysis and reporting. Investigators must show they
are capable of successfully completing the proposed
study by providing information on the ability and
resources they possess to conduct the work.
Collaborative partnerships and capacity building are
priorities for the FRMP as well. In ANILCA, Title VIII
it mandates that rural residents be afforded a
meaningful role in the management of subsistence
fisheries. The Monitoring Program offers opportunities
for partnership and local resident participation in
monitoring and research for subsistence fisheries.
Finally, each project's cost is also evaluated for
reasonableness.

General budget guidelines are also
established by geographic region. These are displayed
on the slide. And this is in an effort to see that
some of the research and monitoring that takes place is
spread throughout the state of Alaska. The geographic
guidelines provide an initial target for planning,
however, they do not determine final allocations and
may be adjusted each cycle as needed to ensure the best
quality projects are funded. This process takes place
after the TRC has reviewed and ranked projects and the
Councils and ISC have had the opportunity to comment on
project summaries.

Yes.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. Could you
go back to the other slide.

MR. RISDAHL: You bet.

MR. SIEKANIEC: That Department of
Interior funds represents, is that this years that
you've put up there?

MR. RISDAHL: No, this is actually the
guidelines for the program as whole, and there will be
a slide.....

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

MR. RISDAHL: .....I think it's the
second to the last slide in the program that shows.....
MR. SIEKANIEC: What it looks like this year?

MR. RISDAHL: ....what the guideline is as well as what this year's..

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

MR. RISDAHL: ....funding spread would be.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

MR. RISDAHL: The total amount of funding used for subsistence fisheries monitoring through the FRMP program since its inception in 2000 through 2019 is an -- oh, for heaven's sake we didn't change this one.....

MS. KENNER: We updated it.

MR. RISDAHL: We updated it, yes, we did.

MS. KENNER: So we have better information.

MR. RISDAHL: We went back through our files, we -- basically what we found is the information from 2000 to 2004 seemed a little odd, but we discovered that there was a lot more money being spent and actually this number should be $117 million.....


MR. RISDAHL: ....since 2000 through 2019.

As a result the average cost per year has changed as well to actually 6.2 million, and the total number of projects that we have been able to tally up through 2019 is 480. I apologize for that not getting updated as well. It's updated in my slides.

This brings the average to about 25 new projects per year.

So in 2019 OSM did spend about 3.5 million on the FRMP program. This included 29 projects
from the 2016 and 2018 cycles as well. OSM recommends in -- today -- today, funding 21 projects out of 28, that were reviewed by the TRC for the Draft 2020 Monitoring Plan.

Let's see here.

During the 2020 notice of funding opportunity, 28 project proposals, as I mentioned, were submitted by principal investigators that totaled about $10.4 million or about $2.5 per year over a four year funding cycle. It's important to note that the TRC consider all 2020 project proposals worthy of funding, so this year compared to the previous cycle, all the projects that were submitted were considered high quality projects and if we had enough funding we would have funded all of them.

The remainder of my slides are now a summary of the overview of the Draft 2020 FRMP Monitoring Plan.

You'll recall that executive summaries have been reviewed by the Regional Subsistence Advisory Councils and the InterAgency Staff Committee. Both have offered comments on the Draft 2020 Monitoring Plan. Therefore, I'm not going to actually discuss individual project proposals unless there are very specific questions in which case at the end of the presentation OSM Staff would all be available to answer questions.

Now, if you'd turn to Page 39 of your book in the Draft 2020 FRMP Monitoring Plan you'll see these numbers. The DOI average estimated allocation for the 2020 FRMP projects is $1.875 million per year over a four year period. The USDA will contribute an estimated $277,000 in 2020. There is no estimate for 2021 through 2023 from the USDA at this time. The estimated total cost of the Draft 2020 FRMP Program for each of the four year funding cycle is also displayed on this slide. So that's 2020 through 2023. Note, that not all projects are four year projects, some are only for three years. Years 2020 and through 2022 also include some of the projects still being funded from the 2016 and 2018 cycles. One more important thing to notice is that the total estimated cost for each of the four years of the 2020 cycle presented in this slide are now considerably below the long-term average of
$6.2 million. As the availability of funding continues
to decrease this level of funding is not sustainable.
It's especially important to understand this because a
new FRMP cycle will be coming again in 2022.

The reason why those numbers decrease
is in 2022 and 2023 the number of 2016 and 2018
projects are basically finished.

The 2020 FRMP projects that are being
considered for funding are listed in chronological
order in the table on Page 39 of your book. That's the
large table on the upper half of the page.

And for your information, this morning
we handed out two additional tables for you that
display the actual project rankings as done by the TRC.
This first table, with no white breaks between projects
is the entire list of the 28 projects listed in ranked
order versus the table on Page 39, it shows them in
chronological order. The second table that I've passed
out, it separates the projects by region so they're
ranked within each region on this second table. So you
can see actually how the TRC ranked them.

Again, the average estimated cost to
fund the 2020 FRMP projects is $2.152 million, this
includes both USDA and the Fish and Wildlife Service,
or DOI funds.

For each of the projects listed on the
table in Page 39, you can see the proposal number, each
project's working title, the organization or
organizations that submitted the research or monitoring
project, the total cost of each project and the average
estimated annual cost.

This first slide shows the Draft 2020
Monitoring Plan projects that are being considered for
the northern region. They include a Bering LandBridge
National Park genetic stock determination study. A
Noatak River Dolly Varden project and a Dolly Varden
and whitefish traditional ecological knowledge project.

This slide shows the projects being
considered for funding in the Yukon region. They
include a Yukon River coho salmon telemetry project.
Yukon River chum salmon project. An Arctic lamprey
project. The Henshaw Creek weir. A Yukon River
subsistence salmon survey. A lower and middle Yukon River customary trade project. And the Yukon River in-season salmon management teleconferences. Some of these you may recognize, they are projects that have been continued from a previous cycle.

These are the Draft 2020 Monitoring Projects being considered for funding in the Kuskokwim region. They include a Kuskokwim River coho and whitefish sonar project. The Pitka Fork weir. A Kuskokwim River salmon assessment project. The Kwethluk River weir. And a Kuskokwim River food knowledge and place names traditional ecological knowledge project.

For the Southwest region we have two projects. The McLees Lake sockeye salmon escapement monitoring project and a Kodiak road system subsistence salmon and non-salmon project.

For the Southcentral region there are two projects. The Klutina River sonar and the Tanada Creek weir.

And last, but not least, these are the projects being considered for funding in the Southeast region. They include the Eek and Kasook Lake sockeye salmon escapement project. And a Southeast eulachon population dynamics monitoring project.

Greg, here's the question you had asked earlier, it shows both the guideline and the current proposed funding by region from both DOI and the USDA. And, of course, a lot of this depends on the kind of projects you receive. For instance, you may not receive any project for one region and you may receive a lot from another, and what we have done here is, for instance, if you look at the rankings of the two additional tables that I handed out you'll see that if you look carefully that there are some projects in there that were ranked lower, but because those were the only projects for that particularly region they also are being considered for funding.

As I said before, all the projects were ranked as good enough to fund by the TRC and based on the mount of funding we have available this is how we ended up.
This slide displays the amount of funding that would go toward harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge as compared to stock, status and trend monitoring by region. I guess, historically, this was before my time with this program, they used to shoot for about 30 percent HMTEK and 70 percent SST and it looks like we’re close to that anyway. But honestly, today, many of the projects have both elements of HMTEK and SST.

MS. PITKA: Can you please explain those acronyms.

MR. RISDAHL: Harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge, that's what HMTEK means; Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. So it's counting the number of fish that are harvested and doing cultural anthropological studies versus the science of counting fish migrating up stream and trends from year to year.

Finally, this is an action item for the Board as I mentioned. We're asking the Board to comment on the Draft 2020 FRMP Monitoring Plan and to make comments and recommendations to support or approve the plan.

If there's any questions, we'll be happy to take those now.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Dave.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, a question, Greg. So I know Staff has made me aware, I looked at the USDA Forest Service funding and while we are funding a couple hundred thousand this year, we have ongoing projects as well, and so the magnitude, at least the numbers they gave me, we have ongoing projects in 2020 that we're funding for about -- well, $506,000 and then with the two new projects here, you know, the total is about $784,000. That's, I think within the agency -- my question, are there other ongoing project -- what's the total magnitude of the funding in 2020 across the board relative to projects versus just the 2020, new projects coming on board, do you have an idea.

MR. RISDAHL: Mr. Schmid, through the
Chair. So for 2019 there were 29 projects that are still being funded from 2016 and 2018, and that -- the cost of that is shown in -- well, it was shown on Slide 12, which basically says that in 2019 OSM is spending approximately $3.5 million on 29 projects and that would include the USDA contribution as well.

REPORTER: Greg, lower that microphone a little, it's still bouncing off the ceiling and getting some feedback -- sorry.

MR. RISDAHL: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Tom Doolittle, Acting Assistant Regional Director. One thing that I did do was do a budget exercise, if we were fully Staffed, and that we could -- and whether we could handle the full load of, you know, the Fishery Resources Monitoring Projects and essentially for 2020 is that we could, just barely at this particular funding level. And then also -- but then in 2021, then that amount it -- then we'd be a bit over, if we were at full Staffing levels, and then in '22 and '23, we would be fine.

However, as you can see if we're adding new projects in 2022, is that, the funding levels for future resource monitoring projects will be considerably less.

One thing that happened, going back to 2016, and Mr. Peltola may remember that from his tenure at OSM, was at that time, we were in the situation where we funded all the projects and at that time in 2016, we funded $4.6 million worth of resource monitoring projects. And when we did that, in those subsequent years, we were paying back that larger load, so that's one of the reasons I am reluctant to go anywhere near the averages, and you'll see in our budget presentation, toward the end of our open session here, on kind of why we want to even fund this one at a lower level. And, specific to -- and so I don't want to see the program constantly catching up.

Last year, also, I forward funded about $1.8 million to take care of projects that were in FY'16, 17, '18, and forward funded some, you know, that we could take care of some of the burdens that we'd
experienced in 2020 and '21. So really our outlay in
2020, due to forward funding, is a lot less.

The same in 2021, is that I actually
grabbed some of those projects for 2021 to forward
fund, those previous or existing projects, so that
financial burden to the program would be less.

However, in a climate of forward
funding, we can do this kind of project level funding
that we're presenting today but in the next cycle
without that level of forward funding, and the reason
for that forward funding was obviously the Staff
shortage that we'll be discussing later, at OSM, those
FTE costs were moved into, you know, paying, you know,
forward funding those resource monitoring projects.

So it's not -- forward funding
processes are not sustainable, period.

It just happens to be a luxury at this
moment and at this time.

And then more specifically, to Dave's
question, is that the Forest Service is maintaining
their responsibilities through their USDA budget to pay
for existing projects in Southeast and in partly in
Southcentral. And also there is a larger, you know, a
first time contribution for taking on Southcentral and
Southeast projects at an estimated cost of $277,000 for
FY'20. One of the goals that we've had and Dave might
be able to speak to it more specifically, or one of his
Staff, is that the goals are eventually to decrease the
amount of existing burden that the Forest Service has
relative to the existing projects and trying to pool or
funding together as one whole project, so we don't see
that fragmentation and I think, you know, part of
Dave's, you know, concern is like are we including the
$500,000 in existing projects that the Forest Service
is paying for. And the answer to that at this moment,
Dave, is no, you're still paying for those existing
projects. So, yes, the cost of the FMRP [sic] in total
is -- is greater than what we've -- than what we're
depicting, if you look at those existing project costs
that the Forest Service is -- is also paying for at
this particular time.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom.

Dave, questions.

MR. SCHMID: No, thank you. That helped me considerably. And, yes, we are, Tom, working, you know, with appropriated dollars as well to fund this and I agree, I think long-term, as what you've indicated, is where we want to end up as well.

MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

MS. PITKA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: So I noticed in your presentation you indicated that these -- was it the rankings are prioritized for non-Federal agencies; do they get further points, is that what I heard you say?

MS. KENNER: Thank you for the question, Mr. Christianson -- Ms. Pitka.

So the prioritization of money for non-Federal agencies occurs primarily through the ranking process, the scoring process with the TRC so one way that the prioritization occurs is that if we receive proposals from any entity, any government entity, university, and the more a project is partnered with a rural organization, a non-government, a rural organization, the higher points they get in partnership and capacity building.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. So on Page 39, it indicates that pretty much 40 percent of the funding goes to non-Federal agencies, that doesn't include the State funding because 38 percent of that funding goes to the State of Alaska, with 22 percent going back to the Federal government. I want to point this out just so that it's transparent and very clear, that a majority of this funding goes towards funding State and Federal agencies, and less goes to those other organizations. So it's been a concern of mine for a long time, that very important monitoring projects that are critical for management, for in-season managers, go into a competitive process instead of being funded by their particular agency as a core function. And I think this process sort of really illustrates that for...
I understand that all of the agencies have had tremendous budget cuts, but it's very bothersome to me that it gets put into this competitive process for such important and crucial projects for management.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Rhonda, that's a great point and I had noticed that and had asked a similar question when I was talking with our ISC team member. And I want to point to the line that says Kuskokwim under the Federal agency of 181,583 when in actuality, we pass through 119,000 of that amount to the Native Village of Kwethluk for them to do the weir work. So these numbers are a little bit off in what they're actually presenting.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, Greg, and we had that discussion yesterday about, you know, maybe taking it one more level because there's -- like you said, some of these, that they are subcontracted out to, and there was a few examples yesterday that we discussed that, even though the Federal agency or the State agency is the lead and gets the grant, that there is subcontract work and some of those larger ones were to Native or rural organizations and so we kind of tasked maybe that we can take a look at other subset so that it maybe gives a clearer picture of who the partners are and where the money actually ends up.

So I mean we did have that in our briefing.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.


MR. BROWER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to echo some of the -- on the northern region, that the Advisory Councils from the Northwest, their concern about the beaver activity and is not a priority, I think the communities within that Northwest
area, that lives around the river, knows what's happening and how it can be detrimental to their subsistence activities and it's not a priority, and it was a concern, I guess, brought out by that Advisory Council -- why it wasn't pointed as a priority list, when the migration of more beavers coming in affecting their areas -- I'm just curious on that.

MR. RISDAHL: Mr. Brower, through the Chair. Actually that project was on the PINS, or priority information needs list of that region, however, when the TRC scored the projects it did not score in the upper part of the scoring and as a result, with the amount of funding we have available it did not quite make the cut. Like I said, we all agreed that it was still a worthy project, but we only had X amount of funding and we couldn't quite reach down as far as we would have needed to in order to pick that project up as well.

MR. BROWER: Thank you. But at the long run, you know, when people live in these communities know and see it first-hand, it's bothersome that, you know, their proposals or their requests are not approved to what they want.

Then another concern I have is what's this Arctic lamprey thing in the Yukon project, is it a -- they don't use that fish anymore, it's so muddy, there's no more dog teams to feed them with -- what's the -- I mean just to put transmitters to see where they're going; is that right?

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Brower. Thanks for the question. So as matter of fact through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, and the investigation into non-salmon fish uses on the Yukon River, particularly in the GASH area, there's a substantial number of Arctic lamprey that are taken each year, there's an active subsistence fishery. I think one of the reasons why there's -- there's probably two reasons why this is shown up as a PIN, as a priority information needs several times, and as you know the priority information needs are developed by our Regional Advisory Councils. One is that we don't know a lot about the migration of lamprey, and however people do rely on it. And the second is that they're either -- there has been small commercial utilization
of lamprey in that area and there may be more in the future, and I think that's a couple of the reasons why it has come up on our priority information needs.

We tend to be very -- we have been very salmon centric on the Yukon and the Kuskokwim because of the issues, and that's appropriate, but there are other species used for subsistence.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: So last night Pippa gave me a presentation on eel harvesting and lamprey harvesting because I had honestly never seen one and then I texted back and forth with a couple of friends of mine from, you know, who have experience in lower river with the lamprey and it's really a very fascinating harvest method. They take a stick with a couple of nails and then they swirl it around in an ice hole and then they pull it up, it's really fascinating. I spent a lot of time on this last night and I really appreciated it.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other questions in regards to the Fisheries Monitoring Plan presented by the Staff.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Please.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks Greg and Pippa. A couple of questions.

One, so there's nothing under multi-regional, is that just there's never been any projects submitted under multi-regional?

MR. RISDAHL: Yeah, Mr. Siekaniec, through the Chair. This cycle there were no multi-regional projects..

MR. SIEKANIEC: And so there's also no carryover.....

MR. RISDAHL: .....submitted.

MR. SIEKANIEC: .....so is that --
because it was zero in both columns. So I was just wondering if it's......

MR. RISDAHL: That's a good question.

MS. KENNER: Well, what does he mean by carryover?


MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah. I thought that's what I saw in the one slide.

MS. KENNER: Oh.

MR. SIEKANIEC: And you don't have to -- I just noticed that and thought, well, is that a remnant of this that we'd no longer need to consider because we don't ever get multi-regional or -- so.....

MS. KENNER: Thank you for pointing that out, and it should be fixed. We have one carryover project from 2018 that's multi-regional.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. And then, Greg, you had indicated, I think you called them worthy, so is that -- and I think I asked this same thing last year, I apologize, so is that the TRC that is responsible for making the determination as to whether or not the project itself, as submitted by the principal investigator, meets the intent of this Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program?

MR. RISDAHL: Okay, Mr. Siekaniec, through the Chair. two things come to my mind.

As I mentioned, in the past cycles, the TRC, when they ranked projects, they did have projects that they did not consider were fundable, that were just not up to par, and they color-coded the projects green, yellow and red. And the red projects were essentially those projects that just were not good enough to fund; yellow projects were projects that they felt were fundable, they may need some additional help to bring them up to the technical standards required for a study, and of course the green projects were the ones that were basically ready to go.

So this cycle the TRC, they didn't have
any red color-coded projects, they were mostly green
and there were a few yellow projects. And in the case
of a yellow color-coded project, the process has been
to go back to those principal investigators and say
these are some of the additional things that might be
needed to bring your project up standard to be
technically sound and get the results that we need to
have to be really useful for the Program.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. And we had
some yellow from this year that we had to go back to
the principal investigators on?

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
Mr. Siekaniec. This is Pippa Kenner.

What had been done in previous years is
they picked a cut off line, and I thin it was around
60, that anything under 60 was in that 60 point
score......

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

MS. KENNER: .....was in that yellow
range unless it was unfundable; there's something wrong
with the principal investigator, the organization, or
something about it that we could not go back and work
on with them to fund it.

This year the scores were low. The
scoring was a little bit low and the TRC thought that
all the projects that had been submitted could be
brought up to the -- that all of those investigators
could respond to the TRC comments in a way that would
have made that project higher ranking and more in line
with our program. And so if the -- if funding -- if we
were able to reach them with funding, those lower
scoring ones that had a lot of comments from the TRC
could not go in the water as written. An attempt would
be made to work with those investigators to bring those
projects up to a better level.

But this is not -- this is after this
process. The scoring of the proposals is only made on
the proposals that we receive.

MR. SIEKANIEC: So the scoring of the
proposals and then hence the recommended funding column
does represent projects then that you have to go back
to and work -- I'm trying to make sure I followed that train there -- so you have to go back on some of them and work the principal investigator to make sure they meet the intent.

MS. KENNER: What I'm concerned -- this is Pippa again. What I'm concerned about is that you think that all these projects were of such high quality they could all be funded right now.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yep.

MS. KENNER: The process is before we write the cooperative agreement, we always go back to the investigator and we look at the TRC's comments. We have to do a budget analysis, make sure the budget matches the project. There's always some correcting that goes on before we write the cooperative agreement. With projects that were lower scoring, that we -- that possibly the funding could reach, the TRC has a lot of comments of things that should be fixed before funding, we will go to the investigator and request those fixes, and work with them to make that, if the investigator isn't able to, then we'll move on to the next project.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay, thank you, Pippa. So I'm just -- so you're asking, I guess -- you're asking the Board to approve this without having a clear understanding that the project's actually reachable, so I'm just trying to figure out how we should be thinking about that.

MS. KENNER: I'm not quite sure what you mean by reachable.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Well, you said if you go back and the principal investigator can't do what was recommended by the TRC they get bumped off and then you go to a lower funded project and that's not reflected in here.

MS. KENNER: That's.....

MR. SIEKANIEC: You're kind of asking the Board to just approve a lump sum without a real understanding of what projects will actually represent the list for this year to a point. That's all I'm trying to figure out.
MS. KENNER: Okay, thank you. This is Pippa again. I might be being a little bit too transparent.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah, okay.

MS. KENNER: This is the process we go through every year and it's required for cooperative agreement funding.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. So maybe the -- I think what I heard Greg say, the TRC has decided that these are all worthy of funding, so they're in agreement then with the list that you had put forward, the way that it looks right now?

MR. RISDAHL: Mr. Siekaniec, through the Chair. Basically, as I said, when the TRC scored the projects we unanimously -- we were the facilitators.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yep.

MR. RISDAHL: But the unanimous conclusion was that all the projects were good projects. Some were just -- looked like they were ready to go right out of the box, others said, oh, there were a few tweaks and things that probably should be made to be able to bring forth the technical results that we need to find out. Some of them there were some questions about how they had done their budget calculations, or, you know, various, it could be any number of things, but in the end there was nothing so egregious or poor in any of the projects proposed for this funding cycle that would make them unfundable. And we basically reached down the list as far as we could go, to pick up as many projects as we possibly could.

And as Pippa is saying, I mean if something comes up and one of the project investigators says, yeah, I really can't do that, then we would probably drop that project and move down the list to pick up the next one based on the availability of funding, if we could afford it.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. So I think what I heard out of there is, yes, you Chaired that, and the TRC and you're in agreement that this list
represents their work?

MR. RISDAHL: Yes. Mr. Siekaniec, through the Chair. This is the work of the TRC.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah, okay.

MR. RISDAHL: And we're all in agreement with that.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

MR. RISDAHL: And then on Page 39, the way those projects are -- they're listed there in chronological order so they're not listed by ranked order on Page 39, we did that specifically -- we didn't want the Councils or the ISC or anybody to look at these projects and start comparing, well, this one should be higher than that one, we gave the projects in chronological to everybody at the start just to say these are the projects, to get their comments on the projects, we didn't want to have people comparing one over another. So that was the original purpose there.

But in the end the projects as they come out -- well, here's an example.

You don't see the -- you don't actually see the scores on these projects on either of these tables, but there are, for instance, a couple of projects for one of the regions, and we can talk about this later in more detail, that actually were lower down the ranking scale, but because they were the only projects for that region we have opted to suggest funding those projects as well so that we can spread out the research across the state.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Greg. And I think maybe a couple of more questions if you don't mind.

So on this draft funding recommendations that came out earlier, as an example, 20-351 was identified at $400,000 and then in a table that was provided this morning it's at $858,000. I'm not sure if -- was that just an error in the draft that was put out a little while ago, and the project submitted actually was for the 858?
MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Siekaniec. This is Pippa Kenner.

So the way the funding calculations are done is you fund projects in a region until if you funded one more project, your funding guideline would be reached. Then you go to the next region and you fund projects in ranked order until funding another project would exceed the guideline. Then you can go back and you can look at ties and you can look at the next highest scoring project statewide and continue to fund that way.

The project that you're referring to was the last project to be considered for funding through this ranking and regional funding process. And the TRC and the ISC had said that this project could not be funded at that level of funding, that it wasn't appropriate and so when we are suggesting to you, in this draft, our draft funding recommendation, we reduced that by half to make it more in line with the TRC's recommendation.

Now, we haven't gone back to the investigator, we've just said -- this is next on the -- if this project were to be funded, it would only be funded at this level. But we still have to work that out.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Through the Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Tom Doolittle, Acting Assistant Regional Director.

I think the answer, Greg, is that when you're down at the bottom of the list, you're trying to get to the next project in line and sometimes there might be a point spread or in lots of different circumstances, and when you look at that as a group and from the final decision, when the Assistant Regional Director for OSM, you know, allocates that funding, is that we will see, you know, whether we can fit in that project or not at the discretion of the proponent. And, in fact, I think I know of most, you know, area regional directors for OSM in the past have done that, and I remember in the last cycle there was a Federal agency that was, again, the last one on the list and we...
asked them, hey, would you take a -- you know, this kind of a cut so we could fit you in because that's the only way we can get to you with the amount of available funding that we had in our budget at that time. So this -- that process -- if I'm reading, A, the question; and, B, the answers from Staff, correctly, is essentially for that last type project type to be funded and whether we can stretch out those last dollars.

Is that correct, Pippa?

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Doolittle. Yes, that's correct.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Tom. Yeah, I think that does answer it because I think in the earlier draft you had made that cut with a $400,000 availability instead of the 858 and that's what I was trying to figure out, the difference between those two, so if that's that.

The only other comment I would make is that, you know, I've -- for 35 years I've not been a proponent of dividing up regions and just providing a certain percentage of money to regions, and, rather, I much prefer the idea that you look at, well, what are the needs that are from a conservation standpoint and/or anthropological standpoint that really rise to that priority level without just saying we're going to go reach lower scoring quality type projects just to push some money in that direction.

So that's just a comment, I think the Board needs -- should struggle with that at some point in time.

So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple comments.

One is specific to 20-351 and I also noted and it was brought to my attention about Staff had concerns about it. If you look at Page 19 the total project cost is 858, annual 214; but if you look at Page 39 the same project is 400,000 total, 100,000
annual. So my exposure to FRMP has been that we have never really provided an opportunity for the principal investigator, going through the point where you get to the TRC ranking, to modify the proposal and it seems like there has been a benefitted attributed to this program that has not been attributed to other proposals in the past.

That's one comment.

2. That's a lot different than the funding decision made by the ARD. And it has been commonplace within the program, example, you're in Region X and you're trying to decide whether you could get between Project 6 and 7 on that list, and the ARD's over the history of the program, have looked at each individual and said, okay, you stipulate, the PI, if you could do this project for $80, by going through the budget it has been commonplace, I did learn as ARD, I know my predecessor did, calling the PI, we could get to you and fund this if you're able to accept $60,000 and it does not take away from the primary benefit of the proposal itself. A lot of times the PI will say yes. That is different than within the TRC process, with regard -- within the FRMP process of modifying a proposal in process.

There's two different things we're talking about. The ARD making the funding decision and then the proposal changing as it goes through the FRMP. That's the one thing I'd like to point out.

The second point I'd like to make before we get to you, Pippa, is that, and that's the Chair's prerogative, but is if you look at the..... (Laughter)

MR. PELTOLA: .....intent of the program, and you might correct me on this, Pippa, is the blue book, was it titled, which is the guiding principles for FRMP, when the FRMP process was established, I have no problem with the regional percentages, I have no problem with the split between TEK and, you know, monitoring, enumeration projects, the blue book stipulated those percentages between regions such that -- and if you read through the blue book it's specific, such that, no one agency or program and no drainage, i.e., the Kusko or Yukon, would
dominate the funding cycle because we have 10
established regions under Title VIII of ANILCA. There
was proposed 12 to 14 but it was cut back to 10 such
that those regions are reflective of subsistence
harvest practices within the best fit for the state of
Alaska and the rural residents who we provide for.
There's a particular reason, purpose behind those
percentages, behind the split between enumeration and
TEK, in addition to, if we minimize the TEK, which I
know some advocate for and some do not advocate for,
that could potentially remove the rural organizations
who are engaged in the Federal program, we may not have
otherwise, if we start toying with the percentages and
that's split between TEK and enumeration.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
Mr. Peltola. I just wanted to point out that all of
these projects were scored based on the applications
that we received. So none of these have -- those
applications haven't changed. We haven't gone back and
asked anybody to change it.

In the past what we would have done, is
we would have stopped funding before we reached our
limit and so some of these bottom projects would not
even be here. For the sake of transparency, because we
were under our cap, we suggested that if we were to
continue funding, and if we were to find the extra
money this project could not be funded at that larger
level and that it just happened to be one of the end
projects, the last projects that we recommended for
funding. So the proponent, the applicant was not given
any advantage and this is a draft funding plan and we
appreciate your comments.

Thank you.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board Member Peltola. Help me understand what you
said, I don't think I followed you. That there was a
project that was given some consideration within the
either ranking or the TRC's review, or what was.....

MR. PELTOLA: Here's an example that I
was involved in when I was ARD of OSM.

So we had a particular region. A
project came in funded, say, at the $80,000 level. And
so we had $62,000 available that we could continue to
fund. So within that, and within the regional hierarchy, in addition to the overall TRC ranking, the next project we would have been able to get to was this $80,000 project. We didn't have -- we were $18,000 short. So I made the phone call to the principal investigator, by looking at your project, here's one line item, so which I identified, because I had some personal exposure to that, I said, I know that you have addressed that particular line item last year and may not necessarily be a big as need as when you wrote this proposal, if you were to accept $60,000 as opposed to 80, would you consider that because then we could fund you. The PI said, yes, you are correct, we did that fund that line item so, yes, we can continue with the project with the original goals and objectives without losing anything if we were to be funded at the $60,000 level. It was a boat.

(Laughter)

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. But you said there was a project in this list that was given not that level of consideration, it was done without.....

MR. PELTOLA: Oh, no, what I said was.....

MR. SIEKANIEC: I'm sorry.

MR. PELTOLA: My view of the list that came about, which 20-351 kind of flagged it for me, is that if you look at the other projects, we don't have a 50 percent reduction in the budget for any other projects, so what I'm saying is that, by the TRC going through this process, some how the $858,000 overall budget has been reduced down to 400,000, and so that one particular project may have been afforded attention and consideration that the other projects may not have been given. And no other budget has been modified to try to fit into a position so where it could potentially be funded.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Through the Chair. Yeah, and Gene that's very well taken, because I don't think that -- you know, I don't think that was intent, but, again, it can be perceived as being pre-
decisional, and I do not want to do that and so I'll take -- again, as the responsibilities of -- that I call the five-legged school, as the decisionmaker, both in the TRC's rankings and their notes about how they went through the process, the Board and RAC comments, as well as the geographic distribution, and the final leg of the stool being the ARD as the decisionmaker would look at that, and if there looks like there's any aspects of pre-decisional aspects, then those projects can be affected by that as well. So that, we'll take a look at, and you're absolutely correct, is that, that should be post a decision, and it should have been reflected at the full $800,000 level.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If this process was to the reduction of the budgets, per se, if that occurred at the ARD level, once the TRC has finalized their aspect of their engagement with the FRMP, then it would not be of a challenge, but since it occurred during the ranking process, so to speak, then, yeah, I have some concerns.

I'd like to also mention one other concern.

Is that I'm not talking about anybody in particular, but the members of the TRC are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. It has been brought to my attention from Staff and others that there's been information that was only presented to the TRC that filtered out to individuals who have not signed that confidentiality agreement, which means that some members have not taken as seriously as they should have. When my briefing occurred with my Staff, we were talking about the projects and I was not exposed, nor did I ask to be exposed -- actually I chose not to be exposed to the point scoring system, because that is something that is only contained and should be held with the individual that signs that confidentiality agreement, and so somewhere along the lines the system is not being executed the way it was intended to because information is filtering out.

And if you look at the structure with regard to FRMP today it had a big evolution, so to speak, three to four years ago. The reason the FRMP had that quote/unquote "evolution", is that the way the program had been executed, it wasn't -- decisions were made not based on the merits of a principal
investigator, the priority information needs, or the merits of a program, a lot of decisionmaking was based on a PI or advocate of the PI's ability to lobby the Board, the RAC, and that's how we -- that's one reason why the program modified the program to the way it is today.

I think we need to continue down this road, without modification, such that we get a true aspect of having the system work. I'm a strong advocate and was adamantly and vehemently argue about leaving the percentages in place, leaving TEK in place, because it addresses and assures that one, one agency, one program does not dominate and one region does not dominate and we have subsistence requirements and needs throughout the state.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Gene, again, I'm just trying to figure out, then on the 20-351, do you feel that that should be retained within this list for this year or should that be recommended to be held off until it gets resolved?

MR. PELTOLA: Based on the role that the TRC has played within the program, we have come out with a ranking, Staff has flagged that particular project with some concerns. So what we have asked the Board to do, the RACs to do and such, is that, I don't think it would be appropriate for the Board to change this list we've been given by OSM, but I think it's within our purview to say that we have enough concerns about this one particular project that we should consider, potentially not funding that, or any other project if it brings up yellow or red flags to this level.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Uh-huh.

MR. PELTOLA: And if we are to do that it would -- I think, my personal opinion, is that it would fall under the guidelines established for the program, and, two, for example -- if we decided to move it -- I'm not advocating for it or opposing that, but if we decided to remove 20-351, that would mean that anywhere from the 214,677 as stipulated on Page 16 or the $100,000 stipulated on Page 39 would be available. What I would anticipate and hopefully expect then is that since -- if that project was not funded, through the funding decision of the Acting ARD at this time,
that he sit down with Staff, look at the ranking within that region, if they're under the percentile for that region, and determine whether they go to the next project or not.

Long answer, yes.

MR. DOOLITTLE: And, therein lies the reason for the last leg of the five-legged stool, is to really look at these and look at these comments for the ARD in the decision process and this review process and take into those comments. So the role of the Board, as part of this, very similar to what the role of the Regional Advisory Councils are in the process, is to provide comment, both on process and when they see, you know, like these kinds of discrepancies. And this particular one, again, you know, will be addressed, and it was going to be addressed, you know, anyways, you know, in the final decision process and the second obviously part of that, is whether there's the available funds. And when there's available funds, you know, if there's less money, then, again, the rankings come into play about where everything shifts again, and that's an important concession to make in all of this, is that, none of these will come down for the final decision until we have a realized budget.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. Thank you, Gene, for those explanations. So I'm trying to figure out -- so, Pippa, you said there were a number of them that kind of rose to that last year's perspective on yellow because, you know, last year we were given this red, yellow, green way to look at the projects -- this year there's -- I thought you had said, there's a handful of yellow projects that are in there, so I'm trying to figure out what we would do, m what we should do with that as a Board. It feels like we should almost say, well, if the yellow projects still need to have work with the principal investigator, from a Board decision, we should pull those yellow projects off, agree with those that have risen to that level of absolutely everything is there that's needed and ask them to be revisited and then come back to us with a conference call and say, okay, this is what it should look like now, we've negotiated that out with the principal investigators, Gene, just as you had indicated, seems to be the right time.
MR. PELTOLA: I -- through the Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Based on Pippa's response to your earlier question, I get a feeling like there's a fixed spot where a project is green, and then a fixed spot where a project is yellow and a fixed spot where a project is red, so to speak. That varies for every -- that would vary -- this year it may be at a project that was scored 66 or above was green, but that all depends on the number of projects that the program has received, what the TRC has scored them at, potentially with what level of funding is available through -- for the FRMP, so that is -- that's a fluid position. It's not fixed on a chart somewhere.

And the way the system is established, I would have -- let's go back to 20-351, if the Board feels like that shouldn't be funded, I'm okay with that decision, if we decide as a group. So what then would happen with the 200 or $100,000 available, I would expect the ARD to say that, okay, we're dealing with the Kusko, that is slated for 26 percent, we're currently funded at 22 percent, I could bring the next one up on the list, whatever that may be, or if we pull it out and they happen to be three percentile over, and at 25 percent, then that's where the overall ranked projects as the program sees it, as come out by the TRC, so the next ranked one, since we are at already the funding level for the Kusko, we might go to the next one on the list. The next one on the list may be $47,000 for, you know, Region Y, and they are under funded and so I would expect the ARD to take the next on the overall ranking list and apply it to a different region.

So it's -- I have no problem with the ARD making those determinations.

I don't think the Board has to get into the position where we give it back to Greg and to Pippa and say come back and redo your homework and come back and give us -- I don't think we need to come back in in a teleconference. I think if we're going to take an action, and, say, like 20-351 is this sticking point because it's something that has red-flagged us, especially when in the pamphlet materials there's a 50
percent reduction in the budget so there's something going on there.....

MR. SIEKANIEC: Something going on, yeah.

MR. PELTOLA: .....so I would have no problem with the Board saying, let's look at that one particular project, nothing else is flagged, should we consider funding that, I think that's within the purview of the Board, as long as we don't start saying, well, I like the third one down after that project so we should fund that one instead of the next one on the list.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

MR. RISDAHL: Mr. Chairman. So just another example to speak to what Gene is talking about. It varies. It would vary depending on the projects you get, the quality, how they're scored, how they fall out in the total ranking. So in this case 351 was at the bottom based on the amount of funding we thought we could afford so we decided that -- about -- we could afford about $1.8 million for new projects for 2020, it was right at the bottom. Now, if we decided that we could afford a full two million that project wouldn't have been a problem at all to just bring it in, but because there was questions about it, the project, we would -- there are certain aspects about the project that are definitely beneficial, so by bringing it in at a lower level we could possibly help fund that project.

Now, we haven't even spoken with these people, I haven't, certainly, to ask them about how this would be done, but we felt there was value in that project. But there were also things that were probably being done -- this is what -- you know, I'm not supposed to go into details about it but there were things about it that didn't make it rank as high. It was at that lower level.

But based on the amount of funding that we have available, we thought we could possibly fund that project at a lower level as well.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Gene, thanks for the clarification on these, you know, in process, and, you know, I, like you, I have not been party to any of the scoring perspectives or ranks. So I'm still at a little bit of a spot on how we move forward with this because I think we need to move forward with it and give them the opportunity to get on with their business. Right now I think I would be inclined to say that we ought to pull 20-351 just off the slate for right now, while you work through whether the, you know, those issues can be addressed, and then I agree, Gene, then move forward and let the Assistant Regional Director figure out how they want to move that funding down into the rest of the proposals.

Yeah, and, unless, I hear other things, that seems like that'd be a reasonable way for the Board to respond then.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, Greg, and Gene, both, and respectfully to the Chair, is, instead, I think again giving that ARD purview in that recommendation to look at those last projects and how that was done, and with the full understanding, you know, there's no issue there. In the past the Board was the one that actually, you know, provided the recommen -- you know, the -- basically said who was going to get funded and not years ago. And so it was decided by the Board that, you know, we would go through this five-legged stool process and so I would, you know, it -- it really -- in a future review, in a future work session, you know, as we go through this process, I think it's always good before we get to the 2022 cycle, is that, we work through some of these nuances where we've seen problems, or whether we could do it better or not. But, again, to -- to make the recommendation for that further review and that scrutiny on that particular project, it seems very reasonable.

But on the other aspects, to have additional meetings and also to take on the responsibility that the Board is going to basically, rather than recommending a list for funding, suddenly become the decisionmaker, that used to be -- you know, that now as the ARD, I think needs to go through a new process considering that we published in the NOFO, we've gone through an ISC recommendation, we've gone through, you know, the TRC's review, and -- and I think that that's an important caveat to remember, as far as
a matter of process.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: So from my perspective, I disagree with the Board being the final decisionmaker on the FRMP process just because the fact is that we fund a lot of Fish and Wildlife Service proposals, a lot of government proposals and I think, that in it itself, is a conflict of interest; that we never really get transparent about.

I've seen through reading this book that several of these proposals have no letters of support submitted. So that, to me, brings a level of concern also. Is that a requirement for this program, and if it is and if people are not submitting those letters of support, does that then drop their scoring, is, I think, my main question.

And then my other question is just some of the -- yes, some of the -- it's just a little off for me.

Can you explain?

Thank you.

MS. KENNER: Thank you for the question. Through the Chair. Ms. Pitka.

So, yeah, an applicant is required to submit a letter of support if they are actually partnering with another organization. So if they're going to partner with the tribe or another rural organization, we need a letter from that organization saying we are partnering, and that usually has to do with budgeting. They're going to be receiving some of the funds.

On the other hand, when somebody is applying to do research in an area, maybe not specifically with a participating community, sometimes with a community they want to participate with them, for instance, in doing harvest surveys, you're not required to submit a letter of support.
The TRC does take that into account.

We have really good projects with no letters of support, we have lower scoring projects with letters of support.

Thank you.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. Thank you for that clarification.

I had one more specific question about a specific project and it's 20-352 on Page 24. The improving communications and sharing of information. So it doesn't list out the partners. Is the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission one of the partners on that project? And my concern here is that we don't duplicate work that's already being done by the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission.

MS. KENNER: Thank you. Through the Chair. Ms. Pitka. We're confirming that we know that on Page 24, we're referring to the project number 20-352 improving communication. This was not a formal partnership with another organization although there would be communication probably with the InterTribal Fish Commission and agencies, and definitely with communities. This was primarily led by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Subsistence Division.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With regard to 20-352, if I recall one of the slides out there, one of the key terms we had was outreach, it was part of your FRMP presentation, you had those areas we do not fund; one of those was outreach, and this proposal talks about communication and outreach so there's kind of a conflict there.

And with regard to, it seems like part -- a lot of the discussion is 20-351, it sounds to me like Board Member Pitka's comments -- and I might be reading between the lines, is that, she might be stipulating that -- and correct me if I'm putting words in your mouth.....

MS. PITKA: I will.
MR. PELTOLA: ....but it seems like leave the decision up to the ARD and not have Board direct the decision; and I'm fine with that as well, as long as it's a process we can articulate and justify those actions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: So I think what I was pointing out was having clarity, I suppose, between the Board's role and the ARD's role, because the ARD is ultimately the decisionmaker in this process, right? Am I correct in that? I mean it goes through this whole process, but ultimately the ARD makes the decision.

MS. KENNER: (Nods affirmatively)

MR. DOOLITTLE: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, and thank you, Rhonda, for that, and, again, as that comment -- because, again, the five-legged stool. The Board comments are part of that for the ARD's, you know, final decision, and then in looking at that project and then also from Mr. Peltola's position, all are digested, along with RAC comments as well, and why we go through this process, exactly, is that it becomes a more formed [sic] and objective way for the decisionmaker. So that's what I like to see.

And then also in the -- in the working group, because I've been out in Bethel, is that, again, InterTribal Fishery Commission does participate as a member, along with other stakeholders and are invitees to those kinds of meetings, at least they have in the past.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: One general comment is that Staff had presented to me concerns about 20-351, in general, and the thing that raised it to a different
level for me, when I look at 351 versus the others, it was the only proposal line that had a 50 percent reduction. And would it bring this much attention if we had two differing figures between 19 and Page 39, maybe not, but since that did occur, the yellow flag became a really bright chartreuse flag, so to speak. And my comments are not about the project itself, it may be a very good project, we have very good principal investigators, but since we had a 50 percent reduction then my question became how applicable is it to Federal management then if one, the proposal came in and we considered it, oh, but then we cut it in half, so that's why it raised the amount of concern from the ISC Staff and myself.

MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Charlie.

MR. BROWER: So let me get this right. We're thinking of pulling 351 out, is that right?

MR. SIEKANIEC: It's an option.

MR. PELTOLA: It's an option, yeah.

MR. BROWER: Then if that's an option, how many unrated other proposals -- are you coming back to fill it at that amount or it's just lesser amount of funding?

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Pippa Kenner to Mr. Brower.

So 20-351 was the next fundable project and so given the comments that we're receiving from the Board, which we appreciate, we would have left 351 off the list. It takes us over our estimated budget. I looked at previous years and Staff did try to hit close to what our estimated budget was so we have 1.8 million, this puts us to 1.875. This project would not -- if we were to do what you're asking us to do we'd just remove it from the list. And I think that it sounds like several people on the Board have a concern about that.

Because it would be the next fundable project, it was the last one.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you, Pippa.

And I guess Charlie was getting at we would just move down to the next priority pointed project on the list.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that question. This is Pippa Kenner. So what I'm saying is this would be the next fundable project and so we would stop at just under 1.8 million, we'd stop there, that's our funding estimate for now, we can't reach the next project, so this project would not be on the list. And if funding were reduced, it would be the first one to go because it's the last ranked project.

Not in -- it's not the last ranked project in the pool of projects -- we got you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are you ready for a motion.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I am.

MR. SIEKANIEC: You've been ready for one for quite some time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

(Laughter)

MR. SIEKANIEC: At this point in time, after all of the discussion and comment, and having heard concerns from both Gene and Staff on, you know, the 20-351, I would like to move to approve the 2020 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan with modification of removing Project 20-351 for consideration at this time.

MR. BROWER: Second.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion's been made and second. Any further discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, call for the question.
MR. SIEKANIEC: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Roll call.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Alrighty. So.....

REPORTER: Tom, your microphone.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, hold on one second.

REPORTER: I just want Tom to turn his microphone on.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Alright.

Everybody's heard the motion and we'll start with the vote on accepting the projects for proposed funding by the Federal Subsistence Board.

We'll start with Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Yes. I support.


MR. BROWER: Yes.

MR. DOOLITTLE: BIA, Eugene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes.


MR. SCHMID: Yes, I support.


MR. SIEKANIEC: Yes.

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

MR. PADGETT: Yes.
MR. DOOLITTLE: National Park Service,
Donald Striker.

MR. STRIKER: Yes.

MR. DOOLITTLE: And last, but not
least, Chairman Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. That passes with
everybody unanimous.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Let's take a
break, five minutes.

MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, one second,
Chad.

MR. PADGETT: Sorry. Just really quick
before we take a break. I just have an important
announcement, do you mind if I make it.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead.

MR. PADGETT: I'm sorry, something I
failed to do this morning when we were talking about
information exchange. I just want to make everybody
aware of a couple of things.

One, yesterday in the building we had
an incident with an IED, or an incident -- an explosive
device, sorry, I can never say it, here. It made the
news last night but I just want to make everybody
aware, we did have that, it was contained at the
courthouse. So for safety purposes in case we have any
further incidents, just so everybody's aware, do not
use the elevator, and there will be a notification, but
do not use the elevator, we'll leave through the
stairwell to the right, there's also another stairwell,
you'll see exit signs down the left, so you can use
either of those two ways. Our muster point is behind
the museum on the Fifth Avenue side by the bus stop.
So I just want to make sure in case we have another incident, that everybody knows where to go. Unfortunately we were not notified yesterday of the incident, at least BLM wasn't, it was just a few agencies. I believe it was contained in the courthouse. So we're working through that now, so.....

(Laughter)

MR. PADGETT: So I would hope that we would notified this time. So I apologize, I should have mentioned that this morning.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll be looking around the corners differently now, thank you. Be back in 15 minutes.

Thank you.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead and get back to the meeting here.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That brings us to the RFR, request for reconsideration for Unit 2 deer.

Terry.

MR. SUMINSKI: Good afternoon. I'm Terry Suminski with the United States Forest Service. I manage the -- oh, I'm sorry, it's actually morning still, isn't it.

(Laughter)

MR. SIEKANIEC: It may not feel that
MR. SUMINSKI: I guess I was getting ahead of ourselves. I manage the subsistence program for the Tongass National Forest.

The threshold analysis for request for reconsideration RFR18-01 begins on Page 41 of your work session books.

In response to Wildlife Proposal, WP18-01, submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Federal Subsistence Board reduced the deer harvest limit for non-Federally-qualified users hunting under State of Alaska hunting regulations on Federal public lands in Unit 2 from four male deer, to two male deer.

The proposal also asked for a reduction in the State managed deer hunting season in Unit 2 but that portion of the proposal was not supported by the Council or the Board.

The Council submitted this proposal after public testimony during their winter 2017 meeting in Craig where Federally-qualified subsistence users testified that they had a harder time harvesting deer in Unit 2 during the 2016 season. In supporting its proposal, the Council felt that subsistence needs were not being met and a reduction in the harvest limit for non-Federally-qualified users would provide a rural resident priority. The Council also believed that non-Federally-qualified users would not be adversely affected since the average -- since they averaged two deer per hunter and a reduction from four to two male deer would not make a huge difference in the overall harvest. The Council voiced concerns that if the Alaska Department of Fish and Game harvest objectives continued to be exceeded there could be an imminent conservation shortage if the Council did not take preemptive action to provide for a rural subsistence preference.

Subsequently the Board received six requests for reconsideration. One from the State of Alaska and five from residents of Ketchikan, specifically Matt Allen, Chas Edwardson, Jeff
Hendrickson, Andy Mathews, and William Meck. The full text of those requests can be found in Appendix 1, which begins on Page 55 of your books.

The Federal Subsistence regulations outline the guidelines for submitting a request that the Board reconsider regulatory decisions. The Board will accept a request for reconsideration only if the request meets one or more of the following criteria.

1. Provides information not previously considered by the Board.

2. Demonstrates that existing information used by the Board is incorrect.

3. Demonstrates that the Board's interpretation of information, applicable law, or regulation is in error or contrary to existing law.

Each request was carefully reviewed, consolidated and organized by criterion by the OSM and Forest Service Staff. A total of 12 claims were identified.

I will now go through each claim.

Under Criterion No. 1, which is the information previously not considered by the Board. Claim 1.1 was from the State of Alaska. The Board did not consider the impacts of creating more regulatory confusion where State and private lands are found throughout the game management unit. The preliminary assessment of Claim 1.1 is that the extent of Federal public lands was described on Page 4 of the Staff analysis by stating that Federal public lands compromised approximately 72 percent of Unit 2 and consist of 72 percent U.S. Forest Service managed lands. The Staff analysis also specifies that the regulation would not -- would only apply to Federal public lands, and the issue of differing regulations on Federal and non-Federal lands was specifically discussed during the Board meeting on April 11th, 2018.

In the motion to adopt the harvest limit portion of Proposal 18-01, Board Member Pendleton mentioned the effects of having different regulations on both Federal and non-Federal lands in her justification for supporting the proposal.
Based on the information, the Staff analysis and the discussion of the issue in the April 11, 2018 Board meeting, it appears that the Board considered the effects of having differing regulations on Federal and non-Federal lands in Unit 2. In any event, while reduction in the potential for confusion over differing regulations is desirable, the Solicitor's Office has advised that it is not a legally justifiable reason to reverse a prior Board decision. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

For Claim 1.2. This is from the State of Alaska, Mathews and Meck. The Board should have considered other alternatives within its authority, such as not allowing the harvest of one doe as currently allowed in the five deer bag limit or designated -- or limiting designated hunting or closing Federal lands to hunting. The preliminary assessment of Claim 1.2, is the failure of the Board to consider every possible alternative does not compel reconsideration of its decision. Nevertheless, the alternative of restricting the take of does was discussed in the Board meeting of April 11, 2018 by Board Member Greg Siekaniec, raised the issue during discussion and the effectiveness of reducing doe harvest was addressed in a response by Council Chair Don Hernandez. Over the years the Board has received numerous proposals to limit designated hunting and generally the Board has not restricted designated hunting to reduce harvest. Harvest has typically been reduced using changes of methods, means and open and closed areas. The importance of the Federal designated hunting provisions was described in Proposal WP18-09, which was considered at the same meeting as WP18-01. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

Under Claim 1.3, from Edwardson, Hendrickson and Meck, the Board did not consider the negative impacts on the economy of Prince of Wales. The preliminary assessment of Claim 1.3 is although the economies of the communities in Unit 2 are very important, the Board is under no legal obligation to consider the economic impact of complying with its statutory obligation under Title VIII of ANILCA, which is to provide a meaningful priority for rural users. For that reason, economic impacts do not constitute relevant information that the Board failed to consider. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.
Under Claim 1.4, from Hendrickson and Mathews. Increases in wolf and black bear populations in Unit 2 have had an effect on deer populations and should be addressed. Under preliminary assessment of Claim 1.4, regulations are in effect to regulate the sustainable harvest of wolves and black bears in Unit 2. The OSM analysis presented information about the effect of wolves and black bears on deer populations to the Board. Wolves and black bears are the primary predators present in Unit 2 and may reduce deer populations or decrease recover times after severe winters. Additionally, to the extent that the requestors may be suggesting that the Board should engage in predator management for the purposes of increasing deer populations, the Board has a longstanding policy of deferring predator related actions to individual land management agencies to act in accordance with the specific mandates of those agencies. This is described in the Board's predator management policy in Appendix 3 starting on Page 73 in your books. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

Now, moving on to Criterion No. 2, which is the existing information used by the Board is incorrect.

Under Claim 2.1, from the State of Alaska. We have reason to believe the actual number of deer harvested in some Unit 2 communities is far higher than harvest estimated by ADF&G's Division of Wildlife Conservation. Under the preliminary assessment of Claim 2.1, the issue was described in comments from ADF&G in the Board meeting book. ADF&G compared 1997 household survey deer harvest information with the 1997 mail-out deer hunter survey for Hydaburg, Craig and Klawock and concluded that ADF&Gs mail-out hunter surveys, and more recently by harvest ticket reports, may greatly underestimate the actual number of deer harvested by residents of those communities. The Board understood that this was a possibility but rejected it as a relevant consideration after considering the scientific data available for deer in Unit 2 through the OSM analysis and information provided by ADF&G. In addition to biological data presented, the Board also considered substantial public testimony asserting that the subsistence needs were not being met and a long history of conflict regarding deer allocations in Unit 2. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.
Under Claim 2.2, which was submitted by Mr. Allen. This regulation does not take into account the amount of reasonably necessary for subsistence as defined by the State. Preliminary assessment of Claim 2.2, the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence is a measure used by the State and does not have a role in the Federal Subsistence Board's determination of whether or not the rural priority for subsistence uses is being properly implemented. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

So now for Criterion No. 3, which is the Board's interpretation of information, applicable law, or regulation is in error, or contrary to existing law.

Claim 3.1 from the State of Alaska, Edwardson, Hendrickson and Mathews. The biological data shared by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game was used incorrectly. A one year decline in estimated harvest is not justification for permanent regulatory decisionmaking to reduce bag limits. The preliminary assessment of Claim 3.1 is that the Board was clearly aware of the scientific data available for deer in Unit 2 through the OSM analysis and information presented by Alaska Department of Fish and Game at the Board meeting. In addition to biological data presented the Board also considered substantial public testimony asserting that subsistence needs were not being met and the long history of conflict regarding deer allocations in Unit 2. The Board weighed many sources of information to arrive at its decision, not just one year of biological data. Moreover, regulatory decisions are never permanent, they can be rescinded or modified by the Board, as appropriate, in response to changing circumstances or new information. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

Claim 3.2 which was submitted by the State of Alaska, Allen, Edwardson, Hendrickson and Mathews. The Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council is making recommendations based on public testimony and potentially personal bias, not on available science. So the preliminary assessment of Claim 3.2, as evidenced by the background section of this threshold analysis, the Council has a long history of listening to users of deer in Unit 2 and considering scientific information that has been provided by OSM Staff analysis and ADF&G in formulating their
recommendations. A fundamental function of the Council, under Title VIII, Section .805(a) of ANILCA is to incorporate local feedback into its process of developing recommendations to the Board. To this end, the Council submitted this proposal after public testimony during the winter 2017 meeting in Craig, where Federally-qualified subsistence users testified that they were having a harder time harvesting deer in Unit 2 during the 2016 season. In supporting its proposal, the Council felt that subsistence needs were not being met and a reduced harvest limit for non-Federally-qualified users would provide a rural resident priority. The Council also felt that non-Federally-qualified users would not be adversely affected since the average two deer per hunter and a reduction from four to two male deer would not make a huge difference in their overall harvest. The Council's consideration of scientific information for WP18-01 is evident in their deliberation. For instance, the Council voiced concerns that if the ADF&G harvest objective continues to be exceeded, there could be an imminent conservation shortage if the Council did not take preemptive action to provide for a rural subsistence preference. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

Under Claim 3.3, which was submitted by the State of Alaska, the Board does not have the authority to unnecessarily restrict State of Alaska subsistence or other uses. The preliminary assessment of Claim 3.3 is the Board adopted the proposal at issue based on a finding under Section .815(3) of ANILCA, that restricted the taking of deer on public lands was necessary for the continuation of subsistence uses as such population. The fact that the Board rarely exercises its authority in this manner does not diminish that authority. The claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

Claim 3.4 from the State of Alaska. Consultation is necessary to evaluate whether proposed Federal regulatory actions are consistent with management of fish and wildlife in accordance with recognized scientific principles and assure the continued viability of fish and wildlife population, which Congress recognized is the purview of the State. The preliminary assessment of Claim 3.4, ADF&G provided significant information related to Unit 2 deer and is always encouraged to participate at many points
throughout the regulatory process by submitting proposals, providing input to OSM analysis, and providing comments on proposals at InterAgency Staff Committee, Council and Board meetings. Although ADF&G's participation is integral to the process, ANILCA does not reserve to the right [sic] an oversight role to determine if Federal regulatory actions are consistent with management of fish and wildlife in accordance with recognized scientific principles and assure that continued viability of a fish or wildlife population, rather ANILCA requires the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to ensure that the Federal regulatory actions are consistent with management of fish and wildlife in accordance with recognized scientific principles and assure the continued viability of a fish or wildlife population. The Board has been delegated that authority and obligation by the Secretaries. Under ANILCA the Board also must consider the continuation of subsistence uses as stated in Section .815(3) of ANILCA and provide a meaningful priority for Federally-qualified users on Federal public lands as stated in Section .804 of ANILCA. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

Under Claim 3.5, from the State of Alaska, the Board's bag limit restriction is unnecessary and unjustified in these circumstances and this is the first known occurrence of Board -- of the Board reducing State of Alaska bag limits. Adoption of this proposal was arbitrary and contrary to the science and recommendations provided by Staff. So under the preliminary assessment of Claim 3.5. Title VIII, Section .815(3) of ANILCA addresses the restriction on the take of fish and wildlife for non-subsistence uses. The Council recommendation, the InterAgency Staff Committee comments support that the restriction was necessary. The Board was clearly aware of the recommendations of Staff and the scientific data available for deer in Unit 2 through the OSM analysis and information presented by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Board also heard substantial public testimony directly and through the Council and considered the long history of conflict regarding deer allocations in Unit 2. The Board weighed all sources of information and determined that the restriction of non-subsistence uses was necessary to continue subsistence uses of deer in Unit 2. The justification for the restriction was stated by Ms. Pendleton at the April Board meeting. This claim does not appear to
meet the criterion.

Under Claim 3.6 which is from the State of Alaska. Assuming the Board was authorized to change the bag limit, the Board did not clearly delineate the conditions under which State management would resume. This lack of consideration and clear criteria make it almost impossible for the State of Alaska to regain management once the Board has superseded State of Alaska regulations. The preliminary assessment of Claim 3.6 is the Board provides the opportunity for anyone to submit proposals to change the wildlife regulations every other year. The Board also provides opportunity for anyone to submit a special action request at any time. The Board accepts requests to reconsider an action. And through any of these avenues the Board may determine that the situation has changed to the point that the restriction is no longer needed or should be modified. This claim does not appear to meet the criterion.

So in summary, the claims submitted by the State of Alaska, Matt Allen, Chas Edwardson, Jeff Hendrickson, Andy Mathews, and William Meck do not appear to meet the criteria.

No new relevant information was presented for the Board's consideration. None of the information the Board relied on was shown to be factually incorrect. There was no demonstration that the Board's interpretation of information, applicable law, or regulation was in error or contrary to existing law. The OSM conclusion is to oppose the request to reconsider WP18-01, with the justification that the proponents claims individually and collectively failed to reach the threshold for reconsideration as required under Federal Subsistence regulations 36 CFR 242.20 and 50 CFR 100.20.

Thank you.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

OPERATOR: We will now begin the
question and answer session. If you would like to ask
a question, please press star-one, unmute your phone
and record your name clearly. If you need to withdraw
your question, press star-two.

One moment, please.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing nobody
on line.

OPERATOR: Showing no questions in cue
at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. No
Board questions for Staff on the presentation, okay,
we'll move on to the Board discretion on public
comment, but I would always want to hear from the
public if there's anybody here who wants to speak to
the proposal, request for reconsideration on the Unit 2
deer.

I would open the floor at this time for
the public.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That also
includes anybody on line from the public who may want
to speak to the request for reconsideration, this would
be your opportunity to speak up.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no one,
or seeing nobody, we'll go ahead and call on the Alaska
Department of Fish and Game.

Mark.

MR. BURCH: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
Board members.

REPORTER: So, Mark, can you turn your
microphone on.

MR. BURCH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
Alaska Department of Fish and Game still contends the
action of the Board was contrary to existing law.

The argument against reconsideration based on Claim 3.5 appears to be a real stretch. The Staff analysis cited by the InterAgency Staff Committee as being thorough and accurate and sufficient to base decisions concluded, and all I'm doing is going back through and taking a couple of quotes from that original analysis; so reducing the harvest limit for non-Federally-qualified users in Unit 2 as allowed under ANILCA is not necessary at this time for conservation or to meet subsistence needs. It further concluded, the data do not support the perception that needs of Federal-qualified subsistence users are not being met. Further, the analysis stated, that current harvest data suggest these priorities are benefiting Federally-qualified subsistence users, a reduction to non-qualified subsistence users is not necessary at this time.

Based on the justification put forward by Ms. Pendleton at the time during the Board meeting, it appears the Board adopted the proposal in deference to the Regional Advisory Council.

Section .805 of ANILCA requires the Board to consider recommendations of the Regional Advisory Councils except when the recommendations are not supported by substantial evidence, violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs.

Based on the effort and harvest data presented by OSM and by the Department of Fish and Game, it is questionable whether the difficulty that some subsistence users experienced as they sought to harvest deer makes the case for this restriction as necessary to provide for subsistence as required in ANILCA.

The Department of Fish and Game continues to urge the Federal Subsistence Board to reconsider this decision.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions for the State or Mark.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or seeing none, thank you for your presentation, Mark.

InterAgency Staff Committee recommendation. Suzanne.

Oh, Gene, go ahead.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Mark, if I may, I have one question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We have a question for you Mark, thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: Sorry about that. I was trying to formulate it in my mind.

When you got your citations, if I understand correctly, your citations you presented came directly out of the analysis for the original proposal, correct?

MR. BURCH: Yes, through the Chair. That is correct.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay. Thank you.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate it, Mark, thank you.

Suzanne.

MS. WORKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good morning everyone. My name is Suzanne Worker. I am the Acting Policy Coordinator for the Office of Subsistence Management, and in that capacity I am serving as the Chair of the InterAgency Staff Committee.

The InterAgency Staff Committee or the ISC recommends that the Board does not support Request for Reconsideration RFR 18-01.
The ISC found the threshold analysis for RFR18-01 to be a thorough evaluation of the request and that it provided sufficient information for Federal Subsistence Board action on this request. According to regulations under Subpart B 36 CFR, Part 242.20 and 50 CFR Part 100.20, the Board will accept a request for reconsideration only if it is based upon information not previously considered by the Board, demonstrates that existing information used by the Board is incorrect, or demonstrates that the Board's interpretation of information, applicable law, or regulation is in error or contrary to existing law.

The ISC concurs with the following conclusions presented in the RFR 18-01 threshold analysis. No new relevant information was presented for the Board's consideration. None of the information the Board relied on was shown to be factually incorrect. There was no demonstration that the Board's interpretation of information, applicable law, or regulation was in error or contrary to existing law. And, finally, there are sufficient conservation concerns to warrant restriction for non-subsistence use as outlined in Section .815 of ANILCA, while Section .804 of ANILCA establishes that subsistence is the priority consumptive use on Federal public lands. The claims of the State of Alaska, Matt Allen, Chas Edwardson, Jeff Hendrickson, Andy Mathews and William Meck do not appear to meet these criteria.

None of the claims in RFR 18-01 meet the threshold for reconsideration of the Board's decision on Wildlife Proposal WP18-01.

That concludes the ISC comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Suzanne. Any questions for the InterAgency Staff Committee recommendation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or seeing none, thank you for your presentation.

That opens up the floor for Board discussion.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Board action.

Dave.

MR. SCHMID: Yes, Mr. Chair. I'd like to -- I would move to accept the six requests to reconsider WP18-01 through RFR18-01 which were submitted by the State of Alaska and the following five residents of Ketchikan, Matt Allen, Chas Edwardson, Jeff Hendrickson, Andy Mathews and William Meck. The threshold analysis for RFR18-01 is included on Pages 41 to 75 of the Board book.

Following a second, I will explain why I intend to oppose my motion.

MR. BROWER: Second.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair. I oppose the request to reconsider WP18-01 for the reasons clearly outlined in the OSM threshold analysis and by the InterAgency Staff Committee recommendation.

Again, no new relevant information was presented by requesters for the Board's consideration. None of the information the Board relied on was shown to be factually correct [sic] -- there was no demonstration that the Board's interpretation of information, applicable law or regulation was in error or contrary to existing law. The requesters claims individually and collectively fail to reach the threshold for reconsideration as required under Federal Subsistence regulations 36 CFR 242.20 and 50 CFR 100.20.

And also I guess I would add on here that the Southeast RAC supported the Board's regulatory decision for WP18-01. The existing Unit 2 deer regulations will continue to provide opportunity for non-Federally-qualified deer hunters on Prince of Wales Island while providing for a subsistence priority and conservation of deer. And, again, 72 percent of Prince of Wales is Federal public lands.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Thank you, Dave, for your justification there. And
just for a matter of the record, when you restated the second bullet there you said factually correct and I think you intended to say, incorrect?

   MR. SCHMID: Factually incorrect -- yes, thank you for correcting -- factually incorrect.

   CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank you. Just for the record just to make sure that that says, incorrect.

   MR. SCHMID: Reading a bit too fast there.

   CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you. Just so you know I'm paying attention.

   (Laughter)

   CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Or somebody is.

   (Laughter)

   CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. Any further Board discussion.

   (No comments)

   CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

   MR. SIEKANIEC: Question.

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

   MR. DOOLITTLE: Alrighty. This is for the -- whether the threshold.....

   REPORTER: Tom. Tom.

   MR. DOOLITTLE: .....analysis has.....

   REPORTER: Tom. I need you to turn the microphone on for the record.

   MR. DOOLITTLE: .....been met.....
REPORTER: Tom, no one can hear you on the phone if the mic is not on.

MR. DOOLITTLE: .....for the request for reconsider.....

MR. SIEKANIEC: Microphone Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Whoops, yep. The thresh -- again, we'll start all over.

REPORTER: Thank you.

MR. DOOLITTLE: This will be -- a motion has been made to support that the threshold has been met for reconsideration by the Federal Subsistence Board for Unit 2 deer.

We'll start with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg Siekaniec.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Oppose. Oppose, thank you, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: That's a no vote. U.S. Forest Service, David Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Oppose.

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

MR. PADGETT: I'm going to support based on the Claim 3.1 that the -- a one year decline in estimated harvest is not a justification for a permanent regulatory change.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Chad Padgett.

National Park Service, Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: Oppose.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Eugene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Oppose for the justification provided by OSM and ISC in the
reconsideration analysis.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Public Member, Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Oppose for the justification listed on Page 54 of the book.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Public Member, Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: Oppose as stated through the justification.

MR. DOOLITTLE: And, last, but not least, Anthony Christianson, Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I oppose as recommended by ISC.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Alright, motion fails.

MR. BURCH: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Mark.

MR. BURCH: I think we could do this just informally.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Come on up, yeah, let's have a discussion.

MR. BURCH: It doesn't really make any difference to the outcome but I thought I heard BLM [sic] say that they supported it for the reasons stated by OSM -- I don't know if I misheard that -- I'm sorry, I heard BIA say that, not -- BLM I understood, BIA, I think I misunderstood.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, I said I voted to oppose accepting the RFR based on the justification provided by OSM and the ISC and the analysis.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Does that clarify that for you.

MR. BURCH: (Nods affirmatively)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. All
right, it looks like we'll take a lunch break.

MR. BROWER: Come back at 3:00.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: What time is it now here.

MR. BROWER: Quarter to.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: 1:15, hour and a half.

MR. DOOLITTLE: That's a long time.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair. I have a question, Mary, do you have a conflict this afternoon?

MS. COLLIGAN: No, I can come back.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: For.....

MR. SIEKANIEC: Well, I was going to ask, do you have a conflict where we need to move the budget presentation up in the agenda, if that would.....

MS. COLLIGAN: I can rearrange my schedule. It would be useful if the budget presentation could be after lunch but if it's not then I can rearrange my schedule.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Well, if there's no objection here we can have her on the agenda following lunch.

MR. SIEKANIEC: So budget presentation up first after lunch.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Up first prior.....

MR. SIEKANIEC: And then put the other agenda back in order.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep. And then
we can do fisheries, partner monitoring after that if
there's no objection from the Board.

(No objections)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. So,
Mary, you'll be first up after lunch.

MS. COLLIGAN: Thank you, Greg.

MR. STRIKER: So is that an agenda
change?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yep, that's an agenda
change.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Do we have to
make a motion on that when we get back?

MR. DOOLITTLE: No.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, lunch.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, it's
1:16, we'll go ahead and come back from lunch.

And before the break we said we would
do a change to the agenda and have a budget discussion
so we'll welcome up Mary Colligan and Brian and Tom.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Maybe we could give
Brian just a bit.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Are we waiting
for Brian?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Well.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We could wait a
minute if we need to.

(Pause)

MR. SIEKANIEC: I say start it.

MR. DOOLITTLE: We'll start, Mr. Chair,
if that's okay with you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Yep, you have the floor Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Okay. Thank you, Board, for entertaining this. And we'll -- and this -- now this OSM budget update as a request from our last Board meeting. Really it was an internal decision to -- to really kind of combine efforts to explain the flow of funding that comes from the Department to the Fish and Wildlife Service headquarters and how it ends up as the OSM consumable budget. And I -- and I think that's an important process for us all to understand and digest because it's not just a one -- a straightforward deal. But it's also something that we felt that was really important for the Program area for -- whether a part of the appropriation of the Alaska Subsistence Line Item, that we understand how that flow of funding, you know, does occur, and how some of those funds are -- are spent.

So, Mary Colligan, from -- from Fisheries and Ecological Services and my colleague at Fish and Wildlife Service is going to talk about some of the fisheries program and she'll probably also talk to Brian Glaspell's part to -- how the wildlife parts of those monies are used as well. And now Mary won't do that but.....

(Laughter)

MR. DOOLITTLE: And Brian will speak to the Refuge's allocation of those monies and how Refuges uses that.

I can't tell you that -- how happy I am to be able to co-present with my colleagues at the Service on the -- the use of subsistence dollars to the Board and to the public, and that we went through many iterations of this to try to make it as clear as possible and not -- in not a very clear process, and so we're going to do our best that way.

If we look at the next slide, part of the ask from the Board was really a directive from three different items that regarded the Federal Subsistence budget that came from the last program review that we had from when Salazar was the Secretary
of Interior. And so this has been -- these directives
to the program have been in place for awhile and we've
met some of them well and some of them we've met
halfway and some of them we haven't done at all but
we've tried to, you know, to make sure we do our due
diligence and periodically we do kind of report on --
on where we've been at in this particular part of the
process. So these have been some guidance and there's
been interest by some of the Board members on adherence
to some of this guidance and where we're at.

In the first part, and that's the
direct the Federal Subsistence Board and to review and
submit recommendations for DOI and USDA consideration
in the annual budgets for the Federal Subsistence
Program, is that really there's not much that has been
done in this particular arena in a formal way where
there's something that's in a book that says this is
what the program's needs are for the budgets. But it's
been, you know, Energy and Natural Resources Committee
at the Senate level with Senator Murkowski as the Chair
of that group has, you know, kept the subsistence
program alive in that budget. It's also been in other,
in other administrations there hasn't been a line item
in the President's budget for -- for subsistence
management in Alaska. We're fortunate in the recent
history that it's been a line item, both for the Forest
Service and then as an appropriation that comes through
Interior for the program. Even though there hasn't
been an increase in those funds, the budget has been,
what I would say, like many budgets, has been static.
And so we've been, of course, in the world of
continuing resolutions and stable budgets and then
we've also -- but we've had -- at least it's been
fairly predictably there but, again, at decreasing
effectiveness because as we know, the longer you're
flatlined, the power of the dollar decreases.

The other aspect was establish an
Interior line item for the core subsistence program.
Again, there is a line item that comes to the
Department -- from the Department to Fish and Wildlife
Service, and then that is split up in two directions.
One through Fisheries and Ecological Services and the
other direction is through the Refuges program. And so
I always like to say, fish is on my right and my
wildlife is on my left, and so that's what Mary and
Brian will be talking to, is, their uses of the funds
that come down from their program areas, and then how
the lion's share of those funds come to OSM and then how we distribute those monies so you have that in front of you as well.

Direct and Interior InterAgency Task Force Evaluation of OSM and related subsistence budgets, organizational issues and diversity issues. This one I don't really think that we've developed one in a formal way. But, again, by providing this information, this is, I believe information to the Board on where we should kind of go from here to be more effective as a program and our budgets in the future. So we're just going to really, you know, provide in this presentation the foundations of the money that we have at hand, how we're using those funds and then, you know, how OSM sees a realized consumable budget.

And so at this particular time I will turn the presentation over to Mary and she'll start talking to the fisheries side of the equation and the flow of funds from Fisheries and Ecological Services.

MS. COLLIGAN: Thank you. And my apologies to -- I hate having my back to half the room, so my apologies to the folks behind me.

So I'm going to talk about the Alaska subsistence fisheries line, that one stream of flow of funding coming down and -- am I okay with this?

REPORTER: Yes, thanks.

MS. COLLIGAN: All right. So as Tom mentioned we have at the national level, funding that comes in through Alaska subsistence fisheries and Alaska subsistence wildlife, two separate lines, comes into our headquarters office and then branches out to the two programs, the Fisheries program on the left, the Subsistence Wildlife program on the right. I'm going to talk about the blue part on the left. We'll kind of walk through each of the pieces of this schematic through our presentation, so we'll come back to this multiple times to kind of orient you to where we are.

So, again, I'm going to walk down the Alaska subsistence fisheries funding portion of this graphic.
So, again, the purpose of this presentation is to lay out for you the funding that comes through Alaska subsistence fisheries part and how it has been spent over the past -- I'm going to show the past four years just to give you a few years of kind of the trend and how things have been moving.

So the annual allocation -- again, I've got 2016, '17, '18 and '19 here, so I'm going to -- I'll just use '19 numbers to walk down through so at the national level there's $9.554 million allocated to Alaska subsistence fisheries. Off the top of that comes service-wide enterprise costs, and you can see they've varied quite a bit over the years. I'll explain the difference between 2018 and 2019 in just a second. But those enterprise-wide costs cover such things as IT support, network security, emergency management, kind of some base functions provided throughout the Service to all the programs, so those dollars are taken off -- each program is charged per FTE, per body, to generate the funds to provide those functions.

MR. PELTOLA: So by this chart, you're referring to.....

REPORTER: Gene. Gene, turn on your mic.

MR. PELTOLA: .....1335 -- 1335.

MS. COLLIGAN: 1335, correct.

MR. PELTOLA: 1335, okay.

MS. COLLIGAN: Yeah. These are 13 -- the code is 1335 fisheries dollars, correct.

The big increase you see from 2018 to 2019 in the Service-enterprise cost, that is attributable to a move within the Service called Joint JAO, or Joint Administrative Office. So in the past some of these functions and charges related to them were taken at the regional level. In 2018 moving into 2019 those functions were consolidated at a national level to provide more efficient service to the Service. So we paid more at the headquarters level and less at the regional level for those functions. So that's why you see that increase there.
2017 was -- had an unusual adjustment back to us called Director deferred, more dollars came back to the program, so I won't go into that in detail. But from this graph or from this table you can see -- so we get the annual allocation coming in from Congress, that Service-wide enterprise cost comes off the top and then that leaves the balance available to the programs. So I'm going to take the bottom row from this table and that's now going to become the top row in the next table I'm going to move us into.

So diving a little bit deeper in the Alaska subsistence fisheries allocation, again, the top line in this table came from the previous table. So in 2019 there's 9.273 available to the programs and then that is allocated out to OSM. FES is Fisheries and Ecological Services, that's the program that I'm in. And NWRS is the Refuge program.

So this formula that's presented at the bottom of this table, that's the formula that we have used consistently throughout the years. Gene and I have had conversations about this, it's actually not -- I cannot trace back the exact origins of this formula, how it was originally negotiated, but it has been used consistently within our program. So whatever dollars come in in that top row, the balance available to the programs, 83 percent of that goes to OSM, 10 percent is retained by Fisheries and Ecological Services, and seven percent is passed through to Refuges.

And I'm now going to talk about what happens with -- how the 10 percent is spent within Fisheries and Ecological Services.

There we go.

Okay. So the bottom row in this table is that 10 percent. 10 percent of that total allocation, this is how much is retained by Fisheries and Ecological Services. And this is how we spread it across our program to provide support to the fisheries subsistence program. So we have an Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation office, we have a Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Conservation office and we have a Kenai Fish and Wildlife Conservation office. They provide similar functions to different geographies. So in those offices we have folks that are servicing as in-season managers, with delegated authority from the
Board, so these dollars are used to support those individuals. We share a subsistence liaison or coordinator with Refuges, Carol Damberg. Her position is supported by these dollars.

So now I'm going to show you one last slide that's going to dive a little bit deeper into these Fish and Wildlife Conservation offices and I wanted to just, again, reiterate what these offices do, what their geographic focus is and then you'll recognize some of these names on here as well.

So John Gerkin, who was here this morning, but may not be here now, is from our Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation office and serves as an in-season manager. I'll come back to genetics lab in just a second. Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Conservation office, Fred Bue, as was mentioned this morning by Greg, Fred has retired, but those in-season functions will still be performed by that office. And Jeff Anderson from our Kenai office serves as an in-season manager. Our conservation genetics lab within our Fisheries and Ecological Services program, we have a genetics lab right here in town in our regional office. They do a variety of genetics work to fisheries work as well as ecological services genetics work, and they do some of the mixed stock analysis, particularly for the Yukon that feeds into the in-season management decisions, working very closely with the State on those genetic analysis.

So with that I'm going to turn it over to Brian, and just to bring us back to this graphic again, I covered that 10 percent that goes off to the left from the fisheries. The 83 percent of that line that goes to OSM, Tom, will cover when the presentation goes to him. The seven percent of the fisheries line that goes over to Refuges, Brian's going to talk about that as well as the subsistence wildlife funding in the blue now, so now we're over on the right hand side of this graphic.

MR. GLASPELL: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and Board members. I apologize for nearly missing my cue earlier. It turns out the stairs on the other end of the building won't get you here from there.

(Laughter)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I don't blame you, I came in that door here and thought I was on that side.

(Laughter)

MR. GLASPELL: Well, as Mary indicated, I'm going to describe how the subsistence wildlife dollars flow from appropriators to the Fish and Wildlife Service to Refuges and then on to the Office of Subsistence Management. This is really a pretty simple story but there's an important context.

What I'm focusing on here is just the line item directed at wildlife subsistence but 15 of our 16 Refuge in Alaska have a Legislated purpose to provide subsistence opportunities as well. So separate from what you see here, there are 10s of millions of dollars spent on Refuges in support of biological work, research and monitoring, law enforcement, outreach, you name it, that arguably all, or certainly most of that work ultimately supports subsistence delivery. So this is kind of a narrow piece of that overall pie.

MR. PELTOLA: Brian.

MR. GLASPELL: Yes.

MR. PELTOLA: So when you talk about the Refuge, and the things you talked about, 1261 funding, correct?

MR. GLASPELL: Correct.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay.

MR. GLASPELL: And just to go a little further on that, Mary referred to the 1335 dollars, fisheries subsistence funds, in Refuges our sort of catch all fund is the 1261 and this is buried in that, so when we fund Refuge programs, it mostly comes out of that fund, there's this one line item that is essentially passed through OSM, there's a whole bunch of other activities funded from this same general pot of money.

So, again, what you see here is that line item, it's been flat, or nearly flat for a long time. We can go back to about 2006 and it's been at or
around the $3 million, it declined a little bit but in
the last four years that we're focused on here it's
been exactly the same. The only difference in what
ultimately goes to OSM is the changes in that
enterprise cost that Mary described previously.

So you see a big jump last year, but,
again, that doesn't necessarily tell you the whole
story because, again, we're sort of paying more for a
broad national program but less for some of the local
delivery, so there's a significant offset there. And
in 2018, we discussed this a little bit yesterday, for
folks that were there, but that was just a mistake, we
-- not, too surprisingly, big complicated budget
sometimes they forget to charge us or they over charge
us or what have you, and in this case we didn't pay
that assessment and we didn't charge that assessment,
the money just went straight through.

So this table shows you what we do with
that seven percent of the fisheries funds that comes
from Mary's shop. And in this case that money goes
directly to the field. It's allocated proportionately
based on the amount of subsistence related work that a
given Refuge has. You can see here that, far and away
the biggest chunk of the dollars go to Yukon Delta
Refuge, and that makes sense because that's our largest
and most active subsistence region in the state. Most
of these funds go directly to supporting Refuge
Information Technicians. And a few other incidental
things. But with the exception of Delta, really, you
can see there that it's not a big chunk of change when
you spread it across all of these Refuges.

And I think I'm passing it back if
there aren't any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Questions for
Brian.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Well, now it's back to
where the two lines converge on OSM. And so we'll look
at what aspects of the consumable budget and we'll do a
little bit of backtracking in the next slide.

One of the things that some Board
members noticed and then what Mary and Brian both
explained were the enterprise costs, and you can see in 2019 that those were about $490,000 and so in comparison to previous years, yes, that is considerably higher. Some of the things that you will notice later in this presentation is that our common services, kind of those budgets that the region shares for buying paper and doing other things that we all contribute to from all programs in the regional office also markedly decreased by almost $100,000, and so some of those things that are done at the regional level are now taken out at the headquarters level.

One of the big things that we used to pay for out of our core budget was IT services. Chris Santoros happens to be here and so I like to say that Chris is part of my -- the headquarters assessment and so.......

(Laughter)

MR. DOOLITTLE: And I'm very glad that he's here as that he's making sure that our technology is working, so what I'm getting at is IT costs have been absorbed at headquarters level rather than coming out at the regional office level.

Also we have a full-time database manager that is stationed in Lakewood, Colorado, and he manages our oracle database, and that database is what organized all the Federal registration permit, draw permits, all those sorts of permitting that we do on that database and he makes sure that it works, and our backup server that is based in Western Virginia, so we have a redundant system and a pretty complex oracle database system to manage our reporting and our permit systems coming out of the Federal program. So this is absorbed and those positions are absorbed as part of the headquarter -- the headquarter assessment rather than something that's coming out of the base budget or consumable budget as OSM to pay for that Staff member's funding.

So it's not as severe as it looks and I think that's the message to get across on that. It is more but not as severe as it looks.

When we look at total regional
subsistence budget by year, that regional assessment
becomes, you know, apparent in 2019 and likely to some
degree in 2020, and, again, we don't know what the
headquarters assessment will be for this fiscal year,
we'll find out soon. But you see that drop below the
12 million mark to about 11.9 million, that is what has
come down to the region after the headquarters's
assessment so that's why you see that drop below the
$12 million on this particular graph.

MR. PELTOLA: Tom, may I.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yep.

MR. PELTOLA: So if I understand this
graph correct, of the $12,380,000 allocated to the
Federal Subsistence Program in Alaska every year, those
dots represent what makes it to the region before you
do the split in 1335 and 1261, is that right?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Absolutely.

The other aspect that does assist OSM
and funds many of the Southeast projects and
Southcentral FMRP [sic] projects, plus activities
within the Forest Service as are the -- the Forest
Service funds. OSM does see this year, probably almost
$377,000 for support and for FRMP [sic] money, that's
at least a projection. But as you can see from the
Forest Service budget, that assists the annual
subsistence budget, is that what's coming to the Forest
Service is static also. I think that's the message
that you'll hear me and use that word fairly often
throughout this presentation is static.

So when we look at the budget that Mary
talked to, of the balance available to programs from
Fisheries and Ecological Services, and for Gene the
1335 monies, it starts off at 9. -- basically $9.3
million and after the 17 percent comes out of those
monies, what OSM's 83 percent allocation that you saw
in Mary's presentation is about $7.7 million coming to
OSM. So it's been relatively stable. My favorite word
again, static. And -- but one thing that becomes a
variable and the Board was just part of -- this part of
the discussion was -- was Fisheries Resources
Monitoring Program funding. And the government does
not write contracts to ourselves but, again, the
government, whether it's Fish and Wildlife Service or
other Federal agencies, have competed for these fundings. So in the case where this funding was
been competed for in our -- and the process that we just went over, if those happen to be Fish and Wildlife
Service dollars, it depended on that annual funding allocation, we do subtract some of those dollars, you
know, we do subtract those dollars from our budget and then the rest of those dollars are what are used to pay
our wages and partners program and our Resource Monitoring Program funds that we allocate through the
competitive process.

So when you look at these, you know, some years that the competition for these Federal funds
has been better, you know, such as in 2017, while in 2018 they were less, and in 2019 they were slightly
more. So this is always going to be a variable, you know, within the program that when I look at how much
money we really have to spend on other projects, that that's the bottom and end point for me, as managing the
budget for OSM that I -- that I take a look at. So for '19 that was about 7. -- 7.2 million.

When we look at the 1261 or the Refuge wildlife dollars that Brian talked to, remember when I talked about common services target in 2019, well, this is where our common services come out, remember like photocopying, paper and those sorts of things, and you can see there's almost $100,000 drop in that particular budget of common services because the headquarters assessment took over some of those. So when I was getting at that at the beginning, you can see that drop so, yes, that was an increase and affected our bottom line to the region, but it is being buffered by a decreased common services target, which many of my peers know I really watch that one tightly because I'd like to make sure that, you know, stays at a reasonable level.

Law enforcement. Without regulations, I mean, what OSM does is that we have grant -- you know, cooperative agreement process, such as our partners and our FRMP program, but also our main job is to set regulation, and so without regulation -- without law -- you know, you need law enforcement for regulation. So I work with the special agent in charge to negotiate an annual bases for funding for enforcement of subsistence regulations and so it's been based at about 135,000 a year for a law enforcement
MR. PELTOLA: So if I understand that correctly, the 135,000 for law enforcement within the Service does not come out of the 17 percent that goes to Refuges or FES, it comes from the 9 million and change that goes through OSM, it comes out of that pot, correct?

MR. DOOLITTLE: This is actually coming out of the, yeah, it does, from the tri -- from the FES portion that's going to Refuges that comes as wildlife dollars, you are correct about that, but the admin target is a negotiable item. It's something that we do talk about, you know, what's being done for those monies and the special agent in charge and myself, you know, talk about, you know, enforcement priorities for subsistence, and that's -- you know, again, one of the goals that we have for that.

MR. GLASPELL: If I could just add a little more clarification there. The law enforcement we're talking about here is the Office of Law Enforcement, so these are special agents that typically work off Refuge enforcing subsistence regs and things like the Marine Mammals Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act and so on. So on Refuges we have Federal wildlife officers, those are the uniformed officers you see in the field, that's funded through Refuges and is part of that larger budget that I was talking about. So there's a lot of law enforcement directed at subsistence going on on the ground, this is just a fraction of it.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, and then that's very good point from, you know, that Brian just made, is that, with many things, whether it's biological programs for support of subsistence programs that provides data for the Board to make decisions, and as part of our public process as far as law enforcement, not only does Fish and Wildlife Service, you know, contribute to that but so does the Forest Service, Park Service, BLM, all the land management agencies that...
have boots on the ground doing work, all contribute to
the subsistence to some degree, external to this
specific appropriated dollars for Alaska subsistence
that comes into the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Another big, you know, hurdle that
we've had since the government service agency -- when
we renegotiated our space cost, as you can see, that
started -- that renegotiation of the space cost, it
came into effect in 2016 and this will continue to
increase as part of this agreement, but, again, that
part of the budget has been a substantial hit to the
program. We discussed this with the rural Board members
and in our preparations for this presentation to the
Board, is that, there's an effort within the regional
office to consolidate space so our footprint is less to
try to decrease our space cost as well and it won't
defer that increase in entirety but it will make a
difference in the short-term. So we're looking at all
the creative solutions as a leadership team on how to,
you know, wrestle with the increased space cost that --
don't just affect OSM, but the entire -- all the
programs within the regional office.

So if we go back to the regional
subsistence budget and the big picture, my numbers are
a little bit different here. You know, Mary expressed
about 17 percent but it gives you the general idea of
that's the support of the monies that are taken out and
about 83 percent being retained by our program, the OSM
program. About 30 percent of those funds going into
the FMRP [sic], and then eight percent going into our
partners program, and the remainder, you know, is
paying Staff and to pretty well -- you know, quickly
use up that allocation.

As you can see the funding levels in
the FMRP [sic] was, you know, we're asking for about
$2.7 million in expenditure, that is, you know, less
than last year's expenditures but please keep in mind
that we also forward funded a fair bit. But also in
the previous years we've been in this 3.5 range, but in
2016 we had a more robust budget and the Board, at that
time, encouraged us to fund all the projects and that
was a $4.6 FMRP [sic] budget. I can tell you right now
we are nowhere near being able to do that in this day
and age at all, in a short period of time.

So the bottom line. So what's coming
from the department to headquarters is about 12.4
million. As I've -- to reiterate what comes to the
region is about 11.9 million. After Refuges and
Fisheries and common services and law enforcement are
funded, the consumable budget at OSM is about 9.5
million. And then if you add some of the support,
which we're very grateful for, for assisting Forest
Service with subsistence work, we see about $100,000
coming to the Service for assisting with Forest Service
projects and our projected FMRP [sic] support for
Southeast and Southcentral programs -- projects in 2020
is about $277,000. So, you know, we're in that $10
million for doing the whole shooting match for 2020 if
we have kind of the static budget, which is what we
think we'll have but we won't know for another month or
so what our actual budget will be.

Here's the bottom line again.
Increases to OSM -- and I -- there's my favorite word
again, static, consumable budget, is, again, a variable
increase of Fish and Wildlife Service headquarters
assessment and we saw the first impacts of that in
2019. And I mean variable is an important word, that
could go down, it could go up, but, again, that's
something that we work on as a team to make sure that
we're getting the services out of the new organization
to serve all of our programs in the best ability that
we can and provide that advice to headquarters, you
know, through, you know, Greg, as the Regional
Director.

Also an impact year starting in 2016
was the additional space cost. And, again, looking at
how we, you know, absorb those particular -- those
particular costs.

And then logical increases in annual
court reporting costs and increases in that. But,
again, that's just a cost of doing business and I'm
very thankful of having, you know, Tina, back here to
be able to assist with our program and somebody that's
willing to sleep in schools and has handled the program
for a number of years. But, again, we're -- we look at
that as, you know, an overall -- overall cost to the
program.

But the real biggest thing in the room
is annual inflationary costs. And if we look at, you
know, the average wage in -- you know, the wage
increase for Alaska Federal employees is about 3.2 percent, we look at inflationary rates which fortunately are low in the 1.5 percent range, we can average out that the dollar is going down, it's -- it's practical use is about 2 to 4 percent per year. And so that means within a decade we're losing half of our buying power in a program if we're on a static budget or on a flat budget. And so this is something the program has to wrestle with and we do that, you know, through all the conventional means, such as work force planning, you know, making sure that we operate in the leanest and meanest way possible. Also we're not going to do more with less, we're going to do less with less. We're realists about many things that we do. The priorities that make our program function are being able to have our RACs function and employees to do the job that they need to do. And I'm so proud of our employees that -- that really have make -- that really make it work, and as you'll see in the next presentation, about, you know, that we are down a number of employees but I can say the people that we have really know their job and do -- and do a great job.

And I think that we need to do -- put something together so, you know, hopefully that with a higher service end and these changes in inflationary costs that one day we do see, you know, an increase in funding for our programs and that we take into account of all the collective effort that all the agencies do, you know, from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, you know, right down to BLM and the Forest Service to all the tribes and private organizations and our public and the State, that all, in some way contribute to the Federal Subsistence Program. The volunteerism that we see out of our Regional Advisory Councils, they're paramount to what we do and treating our volunteers in the most respectful way for what they do is really part of this program as well.

So there's a lot more that goes into this and a lot more energy and human capital than what I'm reporting on today with my colleagues.

Would entertain any questions that you might have.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I almost think that would be a good thing, Tom.....
REPORTER: Tony.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: ...to show case all that additional support.

REPORTER: Tony.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, sorry. To showcase that additional support of what it actually takes to run this program because I know that 9 million isn't it and it's drastically less than what we operated on in the past, you know, and then we have unfunded projects as well as some real regional or statewide priorities that continue to miss the bus due to various issues, you know what I mean. But I think this program probably operates more at like 20 million if I had to throw a number of there, and could probably use a considerable amount more. And I don't know how strapped we are on the lobbying and all that other stuff, but how to get out there and try to do the fundraising, you know. I know at the local level that's what we have to do.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm thinking from a little guy here, you know, you got to get busy and I know it's just a different can of worms at the top.

MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. BROWER: Tom, the GSA seems to grow every year, the rationale for that is what, the increase of the rent or the building itself?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah. In fact when there's an entering into agreement, usually again they're building in the cost of doing business, you know, for a facility and what it'll cost them into the future when they negotiate agreement. And so the space costs of -- you know, are something that we've wrestled with a number of different options, and, again, we all contribute to, you know, one pool of money to, you know, to pay for the facilities that we have. And so I can say that our leadership team is active in looking
at ways to cut those costs. And I don't think, even
though we come up with short term and some long term
remedies, that we're going to continually bring up that
issue.

MR. BROWER: There's no other options
of looking for other places cheaper than where you're
at right now or is it just the space availability that
you need?

MR. DOOLITTLE: We have looked for
other spaces in an informal way and some of them have
been less expensive but, again, the process of breaking
greements and then looking, and being part of the team
effort relative to the solutions is really part of the
priority because we want to make sure that if we do any
move to save space cost, that we do it right. But
Charlie to answer your question, we have looked at
alternative sources but only in an informal way but
also we -- we address it as a team almost, routinely,
at least twice a year as part of a directorate team at
Fish and Wildlife Service.

MR. BROWER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Mary, Tom, Brian, thank you very much for the
presentation.

A couple of points. You know, I think,
Tony, you made a great one and that is it takes a heck
of a lot more than just the Office of Subsistence
Management to sort of manage and run a subsistence
perspective on behalf of the Department of Interior and
AG. You know, in thinking about that you would be also
incorporating Park Service, and BLM and Gene, your role
in BIA, it all comes together to really have a
subsistence program within the state of Alaska. You
know the budget picture that they painted, I can paint
in many areas within the Fish and Wildlife Service
itself here in Alaska as well, not just within OSM but
within Refuges and within the overall Fisheries and
Ecological Services, our law enforcement program,
aviation program, they all sort of have that same, you
know, scenario going on, you know, a two to four
percent per year over the course of -- I think the last
look I did, 17 years, we're operating between a third
and a half less on purchasing power than we were then.
And I'm guessing, as I look at Dave saying, yep, you
recognize that, and I'm betting Chad, you probably
recognize that -- now, Don, I don't know if I can speak
for Parks, you guys seem to do pretty well at times,

(Laughter)

MR. SIEKANIEC: But it is.....

MR. STRIKER: America's best idea.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah. Yeah.

(Laughter)

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah, we're trying to
figure out how the second best idea fits in there.

(Laughter)

MR. SIEKANIEC: You know, it is, it's a
pretty amazing story for one and it gets pretty
complicated as you kind of really get into it and tease
it apart. So I think for the -- from the Board's
standpoint, what I would like to maybe have a
discussion at some point in time, so what are we going
to about it, you know. I advocate for Fish and
Wildlife Service budgets and, Dave, I'm sure you're
asked, you know, on your annual basis of appropriations
how it looks in regards to what the Department's are
proposing and, Chad, I'm sure you're getting -- you
know, in the same kind of discussions and, you know,
and you're advocating, Don, you know, for what you need
for subsistence within National Parks, you know, are we
effectively doing the best we can for an overall
perspective on subsistence by staying within those kind
of silos; I don't know, but it's probably a discussion
at some point in time we ought to have. And, you know,
whether we collectively come together and, you know,
build a perspective on what it takes to run an Office
of Subsistence Management in relation to all of the
needs that we have, you know, I think that's where we
really need to sort of come together and have that
dialogue at some point. Otherwise we're going to look
an awful lot like this again next year and the year
after. There are no budget increases in our future
from what I can see coming out of the proposed -- I don't have the 2021 in my hands yet, but I'm certainly not hearing -- a lot of rumblings about, boy, does this look great.

So, you know, anyway, thank you.

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First off, I'd like to thank Brian, Tom and Mary for their presentation. And some may wonder how OSM got to where they're at within the Fish and Wildlife Service. That's contained within Subpart of the regulations, 50 CFR 110.D9, stipulates that the Office of Subsistence Management will be placed under the Fish and Wildlife Service so that the Service can provide administrative support.

Secondly, is that, I don't have any particular questions for Brian, Tom or Mary, do appreciate the effort of going through it. But I would like to make an amendment to our earlier motion, to add the Federal Subsistence Program budget, to our executive session discussion later on today or tomorrow, whenever that does occur.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, so he pulled it and now he wants it back in.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, I'm just trying to feed my mind.

MR. PELTOLA: I pulled the presentation from the.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, from the executive session.

MR. PELTOLA: .....from the executive session, and now I'd like to have a Board discussion about the budget based on the presentation.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. And it looks like we still have budget discussion under
executive session.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think we just pulled the presentation.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So I think it still would hold merit as is.

Concurrence.

(Board nods affirmatively)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, okay. Everybody's shaking their head. Okay. Did you have something Dave.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, again, thanks for the presentation it was very helpful for me, and I, like the Chairman, like to see the full pictures at times and things. Our in-season managers are funded differently, I think, thank others and places. But, you're right, Greg, I've been watching our budgets continue to decline two to four percent. Forest Service, we were held under for a long time, our fire funding was continuing to go up and the result of that is about 50 percent less non-fire positions in the agency than there was 10, 12 years ago. We thought that would come back with a fire funding fix, that hasn't taken place yet.

The Tongass has 30 percent of the employees it had on it when I left here, 10, 15 years ago.

And so something, we've got to look at these cost centers that Charlie referred to, it's the same thing, our leases across the country continue to go up and, you know, our solutions, at least within the Agency and regions I've worked in have been to try and own your own building at times and try and -- and I know, Greg and I, we've looked there, I've looked with BLM on here how we can co-locate and continue to reduce our footprint, and it's not for lack of trying but it's a tough nut to crack. Some of these leases have just gone up expeditiously. But, I agree if we don't do
anything other than complain about it, here in another
five or 10 years, or even in the next couple of years,
we'll be in a predicament, and there may be a way
better. I know within the Forest Service, for a period
of time there, depending which Administration, the
President's budget would take it out, and our
Delegation would put it back in and then it'd go out.
At least it's been flat and so I think it's -- it could
be worse than what it is. But if there's a way, maybe,
in executive session or hear others, that we can
collectively look at a way to ensure that we're being
good stewards here.

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I think
that's a good place to bring the discussion is maybe to
look at a joint statement about some of the things you
hear our Staff stating, you know, it's not sustainable
at this level, you know, and the buying power and all
that going down, they really need to take a hard look
at what funding it is and then maybe have to
reestablish even our priorities and what we can fund.

We definitely need to have the Regional
Advisory Councils and the Staff support to get the
information through the system, you know, and then that
information, I guess, is our FRMP projects but, you
know, I'd hate to see us dwindle too much of that down,
too, because that local -- that FRMP project --
process, is, I believe what brings the rural and
Alaskans to the table, you know, and engages them in
this process and so the less we engage with them, the
less this program's going to be successful so hopefully
we can find a solution.

Any other discussion or questions for
Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you very
much for your presentation. Appreciate your Staff and
all the hard work it takes to do this.

That brings us to the Partners for
Fisheries Monitoring and Alaska Native Science
Engineering Program, updates and introductions.
Karen Hyer.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, yeah, you have the floor.

MS. HYER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Board members. I'm Karen Hyer and I'm a fisheries biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. I also work with our partnership programs and so we're going to share a couple updates today before we start with our Partners Program.

I was just going to talk about our ANSEP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife partnership where we work with the ANSEP program, and the ANSEP program is a longitudinal educational program that is based out of the university system and they start with the middle school students and mentor them and guide them in STEM careers, basically. They're trying to increase the number of Alaska Natives and rural individuals in STEM careers, and they start with the middle school and they go through high school. And then we have internship programs through the University system and they work with students all the way through a graduate program, and so our Staff is involved all the way through every step. We teach at the high school and at the middle school and then we employ internships at the Bridge Program and then at the University Program. And so the Bridge Program are students that are graduating from high school and they're bridging to University. And those students spend about three weeks getting all of the training they need to work in the field, like Dunker training and bear safety and firearms and then after they complete that segment, they come and they work with us for about six weeks.

And when you enter in and you see the desk with Kayla, if you look to the right and kind of around the corner, I've put our Bridge student posters from last summer out there, so please take a moment to see the Bridge students. And this summer we had eight Bridge students total and they worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service and many of our partner organizations, and we were fortunate enough to have some positions where students could intern for three weeks with one organization and then move to another, just to get a feel for what those
organizations do. And then in addition to that we had
seven University students that worked with us for the
whole summer, and those students come in May and they
work through August and they're an integral part of our
work force. And this year is the first year that every
single University position was filled by a returning
student. So that was really exciting for us because
our goal is to continue to mentor these students
through grad school. And we have a few students now
that are actually entering the grad program who have
interned with us.

So that's what's happening with the
ANSEP program.

Now in addition to that we also have
our Partners For Fisheries Monitoring Program where we
-- it's a competitive grant process. We fund
biologists, anthropologist and educators and those
positions are placed in rural and Alaska Native
organizations throughout Alaska, and it's a four year
grant, and we just finished up at the end of 2019, a
four year segment, and in 2020 we're starting another
four year segment.

So I have a few partners in the
audience that I'd like to introduce you to. We have
Odin Miller. Odin, can you wave. And Odin is with the
Ahtna InterTribal Fisheries Resource Commission.

And we also have Jennifer Halin, and
Jennifer is a new partner with us and she's with the
Yakutat Tribal -- or the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe.

And then we have Janessa Esquible with
ONC.

And then in addition to those partners,
we have a partner with Bristol Bay Native Association.
We have one with the Native Village of Napaimute. We
have one with the Native Village of Eyak. And we have
one with the Tanana Chiefs Council. And we have one
with the Q Tribe in Unalaska.

And so Jennifer is going to -- excuse
me, Janessa is going to present a bit about what she
has been working with. But before I let Jennifer
present, we also have another partner from NVE on the
line, and I would request that the Chair ask that his
line be opened so he could answer any questions after
the presentation. Tina, can you do that, or you'll let
the operator know, that's what Tina said we could do to
let him on.

REPORTER: Yes, let the operator know.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator could
you please open, did you say James' line?

REPORTER: Dan Gillikin.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Native
Village.....

REPORTER: Dan Gillikin.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Dan -- Dan Gillikin.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Dan
Gillikin should be on line, right, Tina.

REPORTER: Yes, he's on, just have her
open his line.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Could you
please open his line so he can comment. Thank you.

MS. HYER: Thanks. And with that, I'll
turn it over to Janessa.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Hi, everyone, my name is
Janessa Esquible. And before I begin, I just wanted to
share, I do have some materials, should I pass them out
now or after.

MS. HYER: I can do that.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Okay. So I've been
working with ONC for just a few months shy of four
years in Bethel as the Partners biologist, and I
believe ONC has had support from the OSM to have a
partners biologist working for them since like 2008.

Next slide.

Oh, and I should highlight some of
these youths. So these are youth that we employed this
past summer, and Karen has asked me to give you all an
overview of some of our project involvement in 2019.

So I'm really grateful to be here today. I'm not sure
if any of you are aware of what's been happening with
ONC and what projects we're involved with so that's the
goal for my presentation today. And these youth here
are all from within the Kuskokwim but they're all at
different stages in their life. We have high school
students there, college students, students that are
pretty close to graduating, some involved in ANSEP but
others not.

So one of the first programs that I'll
speak to is the in-season harvest monitoring program.
This is the longest standing project that the tribe has
been working with the Alaska Department of Fish and
Game on since 2001. And it's allowed us to build
strong standing relationships with locals. Throughout
the months of June and July, we go out to Bethel area
fish camps and in more recent years out to the Bethel
boat harbor. We ask them about their harvest, we
document catch composition, gear type that was used,
fishing progress, so how close are folks to meeting
their subsistence needs for the season for chum,
chinook and sockeye. And another important component
of this program is documenting their concerns. So
maybe this -- this past summer we had several concerns
mentioned about the flesh of the salmon being kind of
soft, some of the salmon flesh looked discolored, so we
sent some of those samples in to a pathologist, we're
still waiting to get back the results on that. But,
yeah, the fisheers will express just a variety of
concerns, whether it be in regard to the fish
themselves or management of the fishery. And then
throughout the months of June and July, we compile the
information that the fisheers have shared with us and we
present an overview to the Kuskokwim River Salmon
Management Working Group entailing harvest information
and then some of that's in the -- the overview of our
results is in this in-season harvest monitoring program
pamphlet, if you want to learn more about that.

Another component of this project is
the chinook salmon age, sex, length sampling program.
Again, these projects are supported through the FRMP
process. And this year we were really successful in
recruitment so we trained -- we recruit and train local
fisheers to sample their subsistence chinook salmon and
this past season we recruited 25 local samplers, most
of them were from Bethel, and we haven't seen
recruitment this high since 2011. That was really exciting. And we were able to pay out about $7,000 to community members because they each get paid for sampling their catch and we received about 1,500 samples and 80 percent of them are ageable.

We also started helping out with the otolith sampling. And an otolith, just shown here, just the ear stone of the salmon. You can learn lots from the otolith, where the fish was born, the age of the salmon. And this is part of a larger effort in coordination with the University of Washington, who's really the lead on this project, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game. So this past summer, our technicians sampled the chinook salmon that were caught in the Bethel test fishery and it's part of a larger effort to understand the relative abundance of chinook salmon in the tributaries in the Kuskokwim watershed, the Nushagak and I also have an outline of some of that work and kind of how these hot spots of salmon and relative abundance are shifting year to year. And so if you all want to read more on that, the document was produced by Daniel Schindler and Sean Brennan. And then once we're done removing the otoliths, our crew will distribute fish to local elders, disabled and widows. Many years ago they used to just have the fish -- the Bethel test fishery would put the bin out to the community, but as maybe some of you may or may not agree with, there's some issues of equity there and access of, you know, who can get the fish and who can't. So my old boss, Greg Roczicka, designed this fish distribution program and that's been really well received in the community. There's Carry Nels on the left, Barbara in the middle and then Esther Greene on the right.

MR. BROWER: She looks happy.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Yeah. And we were really fortunate enough to receive funding from the BIA Tribal Youth Initiative program this past summer and we'll continue the work into this next summer. We have many, many partners who helped out with this and some of you may have heard it referred to as a science and culture camp. A couple years ago we worked with ANSEP on a natural resource career exploration program, where ANSEP students all came to Bethel, so it's kind of evolved over the years. This will be the -- this upcoming summer will be the fourth year that we're
going to be doing the program. And in 2019 we had 15
students that were engaged throughout the program from
six different communities, most of them were from
coastal communities, Kong, Kipnuk, Newtok, so that was
awesome because we hadn't really worked with that many
students from the coast before. And we had Fish and
Game in the top and middle, he led a small game
session. Students were learning about small game in
the area, any concerns about the population and life
history. They were also sharing their knowledge with
these wildlife biologists. And then on the top right,
that's Aaron Moses, he and Gary DeCossas were teaching
the students about the fish preservation project that
they ran last summer. And then on the bottom left
there's Patrick Snow with the Yukon Delta National
Wildlife Refuge, he's one of our biggest partners and
has really helped out a lot over the past few years in
supporting the science and culture camp. He led
lessons on mark/recapture, he took the kids out
birding, took the kids up to the Kwethluk weir, so he
really does a lot for the program.

The students also spent a lot of time
with local elders. So there was a strong cultural
component. They overnighted and spent a couple of days
at fish camp learning about guskeg, Yup'ik cultural
values, and they had the opportunity to go fishing.
They also spent a lot of time doing ethnobotony
activities, so learning about traditional medicinal
uses of local plants with the elders. As you can see
down here there's Amy Obrien, Gloria Semien, and then
there's Doctor Sara Murray who's been helping us out as
the ethnobotonist. So they were making medicinal salve
on the bottom left that they then distributed to
instructors and elders who helped with the program at
the final ceremony. And then on the bottom right,
that's the students out at the sonar site just above
Church Slough, so Keegan Birchfield and his team, they
led the students through about a half day tour, really
hands on, and so they -- they got to learn more about
the assessment projects going on in the Kuskokwim.

And then on the top left, we have Mary
Peltola, she came with Robert Lekander and they also
worked with the Refuge in talking to them about the
complex co-management structure that they have but
there's been success over the past couple of years, and
the elders shared with the students, you know, what do
they use to make decisions and the importance of local
involvement in the management process.

And they also had the chance, on the bottom left, to participate in a mock RAC meeting that Karen Hyer and Alissa Rogers led. And in the RAC meeting they identified the concerns in regards to fish and wildlife, and a few of those students then followed up on deliberated to the actual YK RAC last fall on those concerns that they gathered at the mock meeting.

Spencer Reardon did moose radiotelemetry with the students. They did an oil spill simulation. They went on YKUK, spoke about some of the program highlights and then they did some salmon aging as well.

Another project that we're involved with is the post-season subsistence harvest survey project, and this is another FRMP funded effort we work with Fish and Game on, and have been for many, many years. This past season we hired seven locals, we just about achieved our sample size goal, completing 518 surveys. And then one new addition to this past season was that we had this one page summary, which I think you all should have in front of you. So in prior years, they've been -- you know, we work on this huge report that most members of the public aren't really going to read and we decided it'd be good to come up with a deliverable that's more digestible. So this past season all of the interviews, we distributed this one page summary and it's in English and Yup'ik, and so that was a highlight of this past season.

And -- I should back up, sorry, the goal of this project is just to get an estimate of how many chinook, chum, sockeye, coho salmon are harvested, whether people met their needs or not, identifying, you know, sharing, receiving, any fish that were lost, concerns that the fishers may have about the prior season.

This is another newer project that we're working with the University of Alaska Fairbanks on, so they had a team that came out in the fall of 2018, they met with the ONC Council and the subsistence committee about the project, and this is a statewide effort. I'll speak some to the goals and objectives here soon. And we're going to be continuing the project this year and next year. So there's a few objectives
that ONC has decided they want to focus on. One, being identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the salmon management system through a Yup'ik and Athabascan perspective, and this is going to be done through ethnographic interviews with multi-generational fishing families, and then the other objectives were to document Yup'ik and Athabascan values, knowledge, governing mechanisms that they use for salmon systems and how those can be better incorporated into the current salmon management system. And so we'll continue doing this work and conducting interviews in communities all along the Kuskokwim.

One of my last couple of slides here, so these students here participated in a monitoring project of some sort of another. On the left we have Calvin Samson from Bethel, top is Nikoli Chase, and then the bottom students from left to right, Winni Lee, Isabella Valcarce and Dylan Dementieff. So these students, to the right, they went on the Aniak and Salmon River math science expedition so all the students utilized local data. We work with them and the teachers at Bethel Regional High School to come up with science fair projects. And on the far left, he won first place last year at the LKSD science fair, Nikoli won second. They both went on to state where they also placed. And then these students at the bottom won first and second place for the middle school category. So it's been really great in working with the students. They're utilizing local data that they, themselves collected and, yeah, coming up with science fair projects. And all of these students are planning to work on projects these next couple months.

So for 2020, we're planning, like I said to do a fourth annual science and culture camp. We're hoping to continue all of our other projects. We also are looking forward to the potential of working on the Bethel sonar project, which was on the list of recommended projects for funding with the State. The tribal council has really been wanting to get more involved with assessment projects so we're looking forward to that potential and the possibility of the sonar getting -- operations getting extended into August.

So at this point we can either have Dan go or if anyone has any questions, thank you for your time. And, hopefully Dan's on the line?
REPORTER: Yes, he is.

MR. GILLIKIN: Yes, I am, can everybody hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

REPORTER: Tony, turn the mic on or he can't hear you.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Yes, you're good.

MR. GILLIKIN: Okay. Was there any questions for Janessa or would you like me to begin my presentation?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead and if we have questions we'll just hold them until the end.

Thank you.

MR. GILLIKIN: Okay. Thank you. Well, good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Board Members. Appreciate you spending your time to listen to our programs here. Apologize for not being able to be there in person. We're having some pretty cold weather around here and I have livestock to tend and a homestead to take care of so it makes it a little bit difficult.

But, anyway, my name is Dan Gillikin, and I'm the environmental director, and partners biologist for the Native Village of Napaimute. I've been with Napaimute now for about five years. I want to apologize for my first slide, I already see an error on it. I'm presenting my projects and outreach activities for 2019, not 2018. That's what I get for recycling slides I guess.

So next slide, please, Janessa.

So a little bit about the Native Village of Napaimute for those who aren't familiar with it. One interpretation of the word, Napaimute, means people of the forest. It's a small seasonal village in the middle of the Kuskokwim River, about 45 miles up river from Aniak and we currently have a little over 100 enrolled members. It's a seasonally occupied village with only one permanent resident in it right
now in the wintertime, but in the summer time it's used
as a fish camp, hunting camp, things like that and it's
pretty active in the summer time. We have several
program areas, which include the Indian General
Assistance Program, or the IGAP program through the
EPA. The Brownfield program and things like the Tribal
Transportation Program, for which we mostly spend our
funding on that related to putting in and maintaining
the ice road that is in place on the Kuskokwim River in
the wintertime. Right now we've got a road -- an ice
road, I believe all the way from Crooked Creek down to
Atmautluak, past Bethel, and there are plans to extend
it all the way up to Sleetmute this year, which will
make it, I believe, the longest road in Alaska, and on
the Kuskokwim forever.

We also have an enterprise side, where
it's a -- it's a non-profit, for business operation,
and it focuses on firewood and fuel sales, logistic
support up and down the river. We recently purchased a
landing craft that will be expanding our support
operations for and then we offer rough cut lumber and
cabin packages to local purchasers.

So next slide please.

So the Partners Program is a big part
of what I do. And it's obviously funded through OSM,
and we have received funding until 2023. And the
general areas that we try to help folks out with are,
interacting with agencies on monitoring projects, and
researchers out here, representing our tribal members
and the council, providing advice on fisheries related
concerns and getting stakeholders opportunities to
interact with managers and administrators related to
management of the fishery. We place a huge emphasis on
trying to build a local work force out here and
providing capacity to local stakeholders to be more
involved and earn a living, start a career in these
natural resource management areas. We've taken on
several ANSEP interns over the years and other interns
and much to my delight we are starting to see some of
the fruits of that labor. That lower picture on the
left hand side of the screen is Alex Nicori, and one of
the Hutlett twins, I believe it's Carlton, recent
graduates from UAF with fisheries degrees, both going
on to work on fisheries projects and I believe Carlton
is even going to start working on his Masters. So
we're slowly starting to build that local work force,
which hopefully will come back and help me out in time
before I finally retire from real from this work and
can take over for me. But then the other aspect is you
got to start young, and that's where we do a lot of the
outreach and education with local youths. And I'll
talk about that in more detail, but we have a couple of
projects that focus in that area as well.

So related to the fisheries monitoring.
We've been operating the Salmon River weir for four
years now. We did not receive funding last year for
it. We've been relying on year to year funding through
tribal wildlife grants, through Pacific States Marine
Fisheries Commission funding, pretty much whoever we
could find funding for to continue the operation of it,
and this year we do have funding from the Tribal
Wildlife Grant Program, but I also submitted an FRMP
proposal so hopefully it'll fund it for the next four
years so that we can focus more on our work out there
and less on chasing funding for that year to year to
year. The crew consists of four locals typically.
Usually a couple of them are interns and they're
usually local or ANSEP interns. The objective of the
weir operation is to just index abundance of chinook
and chum salmon. And we get about 90 percent of the
chinook salmon and about 85 percent of the chum salmon.
And this is one of the main tributaries of the Aniak
River, which has quite a bit of sportfishing activity
on it, a lot of subsistence rod and reeling activity
that occurs on it, and so it's really important that we
kind of keep close tabs on escapement within that
system.

Next slide please.

So we should be on 17, I believe
Janessa. And the Aniak test fishery is another
monitoring project that we've been funding annually
either with, you know, Tribal Wildlife Grant funds,
other funding sources, and we submitted an FRMP
proposal to also get that funded for the next four
years. Now, this information is being used by managers
in season, to look at the relative abundance and
ratios, chinook to chum and sockeye to inform them
about management decisions in the lower river and
determine whether or not we want to have an opening, or
not have an opening, whether it looks like we are
escaping enough fish to the middle river for fishermen
to have a reasonable opportunity to harvest up here
because that's been an issue in the past. And it's a new project, but we've been operating it since 2015 and we're starting to collect some fairly interesting information from it. It's operated much like the Bethel test fishery, follows a very similar protocol and those fish get distributed, at least the ones that -- or mortalities get distributed to the local Aniak community and to neighboring villages.

Next slide please.

So fisheries outreach. Our big role in outreach in-season, is to share information with stakeholders on management actions, on how they can participate in those decisionmaking processes, how they can submit regulatory proposals. So we provide some technical advice in those areas and assist them with that if they request it. We interact with the different advisory groups and the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission. We attend Board of Fish meetings. And Federal Subsistence Board meetings, if we -- if the Council decides that they want to submit a regulatory proposal for any matter, and like I said we provide technical assistance. One of our main recent additions to social media is our Facebook page and I've got the address up there. You can just Google Kuskokwim River Fish Report, and that was posted by Rebecca Wilmar from Red Devil, and she maintains it. She's one of our fisheries resource information technicians and she tries to keep that all up to date with the most recent information and has proved to be very popular. One of our tribal members, Megan Leary, is on the Fish Commission, InterTribal Fish Commission as one of the in-season managers, and so she also talks with many people in the middle river here and brings their ideas, their concerns to those in-season meetings for the Commission to then act on if it's necessary.

Next slide please.

So these outreach projects, we have two main projects there. And one is the George River internship, which is actually indirectly funded by the Fish and Wildlife Service and OSM through the George River weir funding. We have a cooperative agreement with ADF&G, where we take about a dozen high school and a little bit older, actually, sometimes, interns up to the George River for a week to 10 days, and up on the George River we have a suite of sites that we are
sampling annually, and we have an established protocol where we collect water quality parameters, hydrology measurements, geomorphic measurements, basically going over all -- and teaching them all the basic habitat assessment techniques that you learn when you're, you know, a technician with the Forest Service or with the Fish and Wildlife Service assessing habitat. So those are real skills that they can use to apply for jobs in the future, but we're also starting to collect a very interesting dataset in the same process. So that is funded for the next four years also.

The math/science expedition is a cooperative project. It's geared towards younger students. It's a 10 day float on the Salmon and Aniak Rivers where they learn some basic principles of biology and fisheries. They do a lot of trapping and they collect the data associated with their catch efforts. And then they use that information, actually, in post-project kind of assessment work.

Next slide, please, Janessa.

Where they, much like Janessa's group does there, they use that actual data for their science projects. And we've been very successful out here in Aniak sending several competitors to the statewide competition taking first and second place. And I can't talk about this project without mentioning Doug Molineaux, he's been so instrumental in the followup, and the follow through with these young people and encouraging them to continue participating in these science activities.

These outreach projects couldn't happen without partnerships. ExCel Alaska, ADF&G, the Kuspuk School District, Janessa and her Staff, and then previous interns. I have previous interns who come to me all the time who want to go and participate and act as, you know, mentors, to the younger students, and I always highly encourage that.

So, with that, the last slide.

Any questions, for me or Janessa, I'd be happy to answer.

(Pause)
MR. GILLIKIN: Hello.

MS. ESQUIBLE: We're still here.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sorry, I was sitting away from my microphone. Thank you for that presentation. Always encouraging to see all the youth involvement and getting ready for the next people to take over this work load and always positive to see that local engagement. So thank you guys for your good work and wonderful presentation.

Is there any questions here for Dan and Janessa from the Board here.

Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: I don't have any questions, but a comment.

I really appreciate your use of language and culture in all of your documents. And I really -- it's really nice to see this in Yup'ik and in language that people can understand. Normally we get, you know, 17 pages faxed to our tribal offices and, you're right, nobody reads them.

(Laughter)

MS. PITKA: Thank you for making that readable.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, I just wanted to make one additional comment, is that, back at home in Bethel, is Janessa's running around all summer long and it would be 1:00 o'clock, 2:00 o'clock in the morning and she'll be at the boat harbor, or it'll be 1:00, 2:00 or 3:00 o'clock in the morning and she'll be in the boat with some of those students doing fish camp visits because during the summer there is no sense of time, you got to do what you got to do.

And in addition to, Dan, when he said
he'd been with NVN for five years, he kind of cut
himself a little bit short there. Yeah, he has been
with the Native Village of Napaimute for five years,
but also he was with KNA in Aniak for several years
prior to that. In addition to, prior to him retiring
to his little piece of paradise across the slough in
Aniak, he was the lead fisheries biologist for Yukon
Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
other Board members have questions or discussion.

Greg.

MR. SIEKANIEC: I would just followup
with, again, thank you very much. I think Rhonda
started to get at it with a question of, like, so what
we can we do better, you know, I see the engagement
with ANSEP, the engagement with youth, is there
anything that jumps out at you as recommendations to,
you know, me, as the Regional Director of the Fish and
Wildlife Service, or others engaged, perhaps, in, you
know, future generations of conservation leadership;
anything we should be doing or thinking differently?

MS. ESQUIBLE: Well, we're really
grateful for all of the funding and support that OSM
has provided to us. It funds the partners position,
you know, I'm a tribal biologist, Dan's a tribal
biologist, they have Kevin with the Fish Commission.
And we've been like continuing to grow and build our
programs to the point that we can sustain them, but
there's also limitations in the fact that I am the only
biologist for the tribe, Dan is also the only biologist
for Native Village of Napaimute, and we have really
incredible partnerships with the State, U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service, the University, there's -- you know,
the list goes on, but we really need to look into how
we can support another bio -- more tribal biologists
to do this work. Because if we don't get funded for
another Partners Program, beyond four years, which in
our sustainability plan, we've kind of said that, you
know, we need to seek permanent funding, like the tribe
needs to seek permanent funding to secure a biologist
position in the future. Because otherwise who will
help facilitate and lead some of these projects. I'm
not sure what would happen at that point.

So we're trying our best to continue to
bring in funds wherever we can, applying for grants all the time.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you.

MR. GILLIKIN: And this is Dan.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Dan.

MR. GILLIKIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just hope that at every opportunity, that the Board members would come out and visit with the stakeholders. Just interact with the folks out here, I mean I think that's -- that sends such a strong message of support to, you know, their lifestyle and what's important to them and I think it also benefits the Board members. I know you're all very busy but it's a -- as Gene can tell you it's a very beautiful place.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dan. And I agree. I know that my two visits to the Kuskokwim were very eye opening and we were well received at the fish camps and gave us -- me, personally, a more clear understanding of basically the sacrifice the rural Alaskans have to make as they buy into these conservation measures that we have to take as a Board, which is hard to do, but when we went down there to see that the rural residents have taken initiative and they're doing the steps necessary to be involved and engaged and to pull all the stakeholders together is, just, something, I think, you should take a big pride in and commend you and whatever we could continue to do to support that, I'm fully behind.

MR. BROWER: Thank you.

MS. ESQUIBLE: Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, appreciate it.

MR. GILLIKIN: Have a good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You too. And your pamphlet made me very hungry for Eskimo style smoked fish strips here, I have to tell you that.

(Laughter)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I thought you were going to pull out a sample.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: George does that.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That was wonderful elk.

We are at Staffing issues with OSM, I think it has to do with the short Staff we have, many positions to fill. And so we'll get an update from Tom.

MR. DOOLITTLE: I'm Tom Doolittle. And Acting Assistant Regional Director for the record. And, again, this is kind of one of the more somber parts of leadership, is -- and -- and I'm only going to go on my soap box a little bit and -- about what are the woes within, you know, many groups.

But one of the -- you know, the biggest, you know, biggest challenges, you know, for the agency has been hiring, especially when you're going through a new centralized process and -- and to be honest it's a slow process. And, OSM, as you know, and our program is specific to Alaska, and it's small. We are the headquarters, regional office, and field office all wrapped into one with our purpose being advisors to this Board. And -- but I really do want to make, you know, what's going on apparent to everybody and be transparent about the process. And as you can see, a number of positions are open, as of date, about 17. And they start from the top of the food chain -- after, you know, Gene had left, and over a year now, seven months ago, to -- for a promotion to BIA, and you'll see that, you know, many people have gone to -- for promotions, which is entirely -- which is entirely normal. And -- but we've had an ability that's, you know, quite slow to hire. And we feel the effects, a little bit more acutely, because we're kind of that canary in a coal mine, and as Greg knows, every time he sees me, it's like, oh, here Tom comes again because the first thing out of his mouth is going to be, so what are we going to do about the hiring part and so
he's pretty used to that.

And so when we look at all these positions that we have vacant, we're lean and mean, but I -- and -- and the risk that we have to the program is that we don't have a lot of depth yet, but the people that we do have are seasoned and they excel at what they do, so we're operating as business as usual. But, again, but it -- it adds unnecessary stress to our Staff, and so that's part of my soap box.

And -- but it's real.

As we go down and I look at a summary is that in normal staffing of permanent positions from our org chart there's about -- there's 41 positions there, and with the 17 vacated positions, that means we're about 41 percent down, and -- but if I add part of Chris and part of Serene Dornisway, the -- our IT folks that are supporting us, we're at about 25.5 people, I think, Chris, you're one of the -- it's half of you sometimes, right.

(Laughter)

MR. DOOLITTLE: And -- but we're -- we're happy to have that. This -- we were at a similar level back in 2013, late 2013 and we built back up and -- and, again, the aspect of hiring has been slow.

But, however, when we look at the 17 positions that are down right now, we will be bringing on three admin positions, some starting as early as next week and we'll have, by the end of February, three admin people. What I've learned without admin Staff, is we all chip in as Tony and Rhonda and Charlie know, is that, I sat and reorganized financial disclosure and ethics training to handling timesheets to -- and I can answer a phone pretty darn well, and transfer it, I'm pretty proud of that.

(Laughter)

MR. DOOLITTLE: But the -- but we all -- we all fill in to make sure to get it done and we function. And -- but I'll be looking forward to seeing those admin positions, you know, come on board.

We're also looking that -- we had a
person today that was -- that confirmed that they were interested in a direct lateral into a budget analyst and so we're working kind of every quick venue and ways to fill -- to fill positions, so we'll be adding a budget analyst within the next month as well.

The other thing is that we've got on the docket as a priority for -- is a fishery biologist 7, 9, 11 to be hired within the next few months. That's one of the regional priorities. And so that is another step forward. So suddenly we're going from four to five positions in 2020 that will come in so that means that we're 12 down.

And then the remaining goal for 2020, I'm being a realist with this, is to -- is to try to get on board an anthropology lead position that if you looked at the first page, that has been in wait for almost three years now. And that's really, you know, half of our program as far as analysis go, it's just not a biological program, we're also a social science program as well and we meld those worlds together, and they've been without leadership for way, way too long. And that is our organizational priority and not just go after the low hanging fruit because it's an easy job to fill.

And the other one is the Council coordination lead that's been vacant for over a year too. And I just got notice today that that position was classified so that one would be ready to go as a priority as well.

And if all goes well I'd like to see the second fish biologist go through because as we see the proposed rule is in for the fish regulatory cycle and I'd like to make sure we have a compliment of fish biologists on board to handle the analysis as well.

So it's a strange goal, but I'd like to get down to that 20 percent range by the end of 2020, you know, by the end of the fiscal year, is my personal goal.

We are also looking at alternative hiring means through the Directorate Fellows Program, through the Presidential Fellows Program as well to add wildlife biologists at, you know, first level performance sorts, professional performance grades at
the GS9 level. What's unique is many of our positions, we've created ladder positions such as GS9, 11 and 12s so somebody coming in at a 9, we feel, early in their career it's a great -- it's a great step and a great way to start your Federal career.

So we are looking at all the alternative venues that the agency has as well to be able to fill this void. But it has been stressful on the OSM Staff. And, again, as I said before in our budget presentation on how proud I am of them and how they step up with an ever changing environment, because the pressures of a deadline-based agency don't change, and it's very unforgiving.

The other thing that we have to consider and the way I look at the future vision of the program as well, is, you know, what's going to happen in the next few years relative to retirements and I would guess there'd be three to five retirements of the existing Staff that we have as well that we're going to have to plan for. So I don't want to see us hang in that 30 to 40 percent range, I'd like to see us, you know, really start to Staff up and have that goal of being Staffed up by 2022, is what I think is going to be the realistic parts of this.

And, again, the stress is, is that, since we're all in one and we're a smaller outfit within the Federal government, and within the agency, that our susceptibility is higher. There has been nothing malicious or anything that any agency has really done, we just are caught up in the spin of the bigger bureaucracy and a change in our hiring process, and that's where we're at.

So I guess I'd leave it right there, that's fairly short and simple and -- and if folks have any questions or any aspects for a solution, I'm -- I'm all open to that and answer any questions that you might have.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that, Tom. Is there any questions for Tom. I think it was thorough, we can look at what we're missing, and, again, I think you guys do a good job so keep it up.
Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: Not so much a question, just a comment. So like the inability to hire people, is that because the positions are not being advertised, is it pay, is it -- I mean, we have a certain amount of budget every year for Staff, right, and it doesn't seem to change much, I don't -- I don't really understand. I'm not really familiar with Federal process. I'm sure everybody else in the room is like, yeah, whatever, Rhonda, but.....

(Laughter)

MS. PITKA: .....I mean you know you put an ad in the paper, you get some applicants, I don't know.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Rhonda, you're trying to make sense of the not sensible.

MS. PITKA: Yeah, simple.

(Laughter)

MR. DOOLITTLE: To say the least.

MS. PITKA: Yes, please enlighten me.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Yeah, in that reality, I mean many times there's certain series where in the national picture there may be a whole lot of positions and so they want to regroup. A good example was a freeze that went for over a year on admin positions, so even though we were losing people, there was an inability at our office to hire admin people. Now, that went on for over an entire year after, you know, people had left. That wasn't something that was directed at the Alaska region, or directed at OSM, that was a national -- that was a national push and we got caught up in that part, you know, when people moved on. So that was a reality of, for instance, in the national positions.

When there's any reorganization, too, of a process, such as hiring, human resources, and those sorts of things, again, it takes a while, sometimes for government to catch up. Before we were -- there was a joining human resources department
between BLM and the Fish and Wildlife Service, but the Fish and Wildlife Service, as an agency, on a national level, decided to go separate and so did the Alaska region at that particular time. And so those positions and that process is at its formative stages but that means it's slow. And if you think that I'm knocking on Greg's door about it, every program lead is knocking on his door about it and every program lead in every region is knocking on their supervisor's door about it. And it's trying to get this process caught up so we can deal with the realistic work load.

So the long and short of it is that we're into a new process that hasn't caught up with need. Right now for OSM it's not a budgetary issue but it's still a work force issue, it makes us plan around -- when we do add positions that we're doing it in a frugal way so we are sustainable to be able to provide the services such as the Partners Program that's providing aspiring biologists that are becoming part of local work forces that are really the essence of capacity building, which those programs were developed for. That's the same for, as we went through the day, with the funding of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, and those sorts of things.

So it is, in part, a budget process, but it's more synergistic than that. It's that -- when you do add a position, it's really the decision of, you know, what do you really need and what don't you need and that's always going to be a continuing, you know, conversation in a fairly flat budget environment, and it should be in any budget environment for that matter.

Ms. Pitka: Thank you.

Chairman Christianson: Any other questions. Comments.

Don.

Mr. Striker: You know I guess I would just like to say, I'm sort of cautiously optimistic that this is another area where we have some leverage ability by working together across our bureaus and agencies, because what might be a barrier for Fish and Wildlife may not be a barrier for Park Service, and if we could work a little bit more creatively.
I also wanted to just congratulate you for prioritizing that supervisory anthropologist. This is my first exposure to your organization but it seems to me like that's a really key position for ensuring the inter-disciplinary nature of the organization so I'm really happy to see that.

And I would challenge us to think about if there are other creative ways when we're talking about filling positions too, and that may have to do with the location that they work, but trying to work in local hire priority or leveraging, some of the other youth engagement opportunities that we have with the positions that we have in the office and trying to figure out how to overcome some of those challenges. So that's my two cents.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Don, I'll always take Josh back.

(Laughter)

MR. SIEKANIEC: Is that what you meant by creative Don.

(Laughter)

MR. STRIKER: You notice I didn't point that out at the beginning of the day.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other questions or comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you for that insight then, Tom, on Staffing. I think that brings us to the end of the public agenda.

We're going to go into an executive here in a few minutes, so what we'll do is take a 10 minute break here so we can clear the room and we'll be going into an executive session and give Tina time to get her things, and that will conclude the public session. We're not going to come back after, usually what we do is come back and have a general discussion about what executive is and we will do that at the
front end of our next meeting in April. So for process
that's what we're going to do today.

So I'd just like to thank everyone here
first, before you go, for coming in and engaging in the
Federal process and the State and the Partners and all
of the people who came and added input, or just came
for information.

Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, if I may, Mr.
Chair. There's one thing I wanted to potentially
address before our April meeting. Is when our body met
in April and addressed the -- that would be -- there's
one deferred proposal that we addressed, which was 17-
05, which the Board voted down, there's some caveats
when that proposal was voted down.

One is that in discussion with the in-
season manager for the Kuskokwim, he committed to, and
I asked for an explanation of why the in-season manager
did not take any action on the Kuskokwim this summer
when we did a transition.

Two, is that the basis of 17-05 was to
establish a management plan for the Kuskokwim. At the
time the in-season manager had stipulated that he did
not need a regulation, a direction from the Board could
be done at any time, and he offered up that it would be
initiated in October and potentially present to the
Board in April for consideration. And our next meeting
is April and so I would look forward to something
coming out of Fish and Wildlife Service on that.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you
for that.

MR. BROWER: Thanks for the jerky.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, thank you
for the jerky.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Well done, George.

Well done.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, that was
very good.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Gene, just as a --
Board Member Peltola, so for clarification, you would
like that added to the April agenda?

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, because that's
commitments made by the Kusko in-season manager to this
body.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
We'll take a 10 minute recess and go into executive
session when we return.

Again, thank you all, drive safe and
have a wonderful day.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)
CERTIFICATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
STATE OF ALASKA

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

THAT the foregoing, contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING, WORK SESSION taken electronically by our firm on the 28th day of January 2020 in Anchorage, Alaska;

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

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

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Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22