SOUTHEAST ALASKA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

Cape Fox Lodge
Ketchikan, Alaska
November 6, 2019
8:30 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:
Donald Hernandez, Chair
Larry Bemis
Michael Douville
Harvey Kitka
Ronald Leighton
Cathy Needham
Patricia Phillips
Harold Robbins
Robert Schroeder
Elijah Winrod
Frank Wright
John Yeager

Regional Council Coordinator, DeAnna Perry

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, it looks like the Council is all here, the audience is filling up so we'll get started very shortly with public testimony.

(On record)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So, yeah, good morning everybody. As is the standard procedure here, we will begin the morning session with public testimony, public comments on anything related to subsistence, and I got a stack of blue cards here. I'll remind anybody that just showed up that if you do want to give a public comment, please fill out one of the blue cards in the back of the room and it'll be brought forward so I got an idea who's interested.

Okay, I see we have our student visitors interested in commenting this morning. Maybe we'll get them up here first as well as their instructor, Heather Bauscher. So I think that would be Tava Guillory, Darby Osborne, Adelaide Poulson, and Cora Dow; is that everybody.

Okay, good morning. I don't think I missed anybody, we've got the whole crew so very good. Whoever cares to go first.

MS. BAUSCHER: Good morning. Thank you, Don. Thank you to the Council so much for helping provide this opportunity for these students. It's always a pleasure to bring youth to these meetings and watch them as they navigate this. I think yesterday was very inspiring and exciting for everyone and even in the dull moments, I've never had a student at the end of one of these things not appreciate this experience and this opportunity.

So thank you so much for helping provide that to us. I want to do another shout out to the U.S. Forest Service and the Alaska Conservation Foundation for helping provide funding. I also brought SCS calendars if anybody would like one, I have one for...
every person on the Council if they'd like, and if you notice on May, there's a picture of us at the Federal Subsistence Board meeting. So thanks for helping to make that happen.

And then I'm going to turn it over to the students because one of the things that I try to encourage them to do is practice public testimony, even if it's just an introduction and similar to the reports and this was all inspired originally by Frank Wright, Jr., from Hoonah, when you asked the students a couple of meetings ago what they thought and what they were experiencing. So that's now become a part of this whole curriculum, and so thank you for inspiring that and I will turn it over to them.

MS. OSBORNE: First of all I would just like to say thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to speak and share my perspective on these current issues.

My name is Darby Osborne. I'm a sophomore currently attending Sitka High School. I was born in Sitka and I've lived there my entire life.

Growing up in Southeast Alaska. I've lived in surroundings far different than most other kids my age and have received an education catered to learning about the environment that, we, as a community have grown so dependent upon. From dissecting salmon in fourth grade, to finding phytoplanktons in sixth, and testing our local water PH in seventh. I have been able to learn more about the intricate web that our entire Southeast ecosystem is intertwined in. Throughout all the classes that I've taken, the one thing that was stressed above all others was the importance of maintaining balance in this web. We are always taught to look at our surroundings as a big picture and not just singular elements. Every tree is dependent upon our salmon cycle, every salmon is dependent upon zooplankton that are only there because the water is just the right PH for phytoplankton to thrive.

As we move forward in these meetings, what I ask of you is to think about that big picture.

I realize there is no perfect solution to any problem but I stress the importance of putting...
our environment and sustainable future where we can all
prosper before anything else.

We, as humans, have had the luxury to
inhabit this land but, in turn, we must also respect
it. We've been able to use these resources to our
advantage but as the changes that we see in our
environment become more drastic, we need to act
accordingly. We are truly lucky to live in such a
beautiful place that has so much to offer and I urge
you all to make decisions that will help keep it that
way.

Regardless of what the outcomes of this
meeting are, however, I would just like to say thank
you for doing what you are and caring enough to deal
with these types of issues.

I sit here as someone concerned, yet,
hopeful about the future, and all of you are
demonstrating that you care about our region and want
it to prosper. So, once, again, thank you, both for
being here and for allowing voices like mine to be
heard.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you very
much Darby. I don't know if anybody on the Council
would like to ask any questions or make any comments on
what you just said.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I just want to
thank you for taking the interest to be here and take
part in this. That's very encouraging to all of us.

So next up.

MS. POULSON: Hi. My name is Adelaide
Poulson and I'm a sophomore at Sitka High.

I'm so thankful to have the opportunity
to be here because I believe that because us youth are
the future it's important that we understand the issues
and events in the world around us. After just one day
I've already learned so much and it's crazy.

In Sitka, examples of people gathering
and hunting food for themselves and their family are very common. For example, at this point, I've stopped being surprised when I come home to see a skinned deer dangling from our neighbor's porch. My own family also enjoys picking berries to can and eat. And it's hard to find a person that lives in our town that hasn't eaten fish, that either they or a friend has caught.

Of course, other places around the country likely have somewhat similar practices, but the importance of subsistence in communities all over Alaska is hard to match.

I believe that both the environment and the ability of the people to provide for their families through hunting and gathering needs to be protected in order to ensure that the future of Alaska can be secured for future generations. Everyone should be able to have access to the natural resources of our state, but for this to happen, these resources need to be sustainable. It is important that animals such as the herring in my own town of Sitka, whose numbers have been steadily declining since 2009 have regulations about how many could be caught so that they can still be alive in the future, especially for people who need them to be able to live off the land as they have always done.

Thank you, again, for caring so much about the future of our state and having the privilege to be here is an honor.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Adelaide. Any questions, comments for Adelaide.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: I just have a question -- well, thank you guys for coming and paying attention because sometimes sitting in a long meeting you kind of feel like you're getting callouses, and you really prefer to be out walking, but I'll have two questions for each student, or maybe you'll include it in your testimony.

One is after hearing a lot about roadlessness, if you formed an opinion and support an alternative, if you could state that.
And then we haven't talked about the climate emergency, but I'd be interested to see if our students really believe we're in a climate emergency.

Thank you.

MS. BAUSCHER: What would please the Council, do you want them to finish doing their testimonies or answer the questions first. Up to you guys -- oh, up to us -- all right, if you want to answer, then do that.

MS. OSBORNE: So I'm just going to start off with the climate emergency question that's been a big issue and I've just been starting to get into this. Cora and I here actually helped to organize the Sitka High climate strike that happened on September 24th for us. So we've been trying to get more involved. We actually tried to start an AYEA chapter, that's Alaska Youth for Environmental Action Chapter here in Sitka, and we're trying to get that off the ground. So getting more involved with the climate crises is something that we're all definitely very interested in. And it's something that we all definitely see as a large issue. Especially from this youth perspective. It feels like we're too young to be able to create new laws and policies, but what we're not too young to do is just project our voices and make sure that the people who are making these rules understand that this is something that we care about and our futures are something that we want to be protected.

And then as far as roadless goes. I already knew very minimal information and had formed an opinion based off that just because I tend to go to whatever solution will protect the environment the best, but being able to sit in on these meetings has kind of solidified that opinion and I think that no action is definitely the best route, especially when we're talking about our futures and subsistence usage in the Southeast.

MS. POULSON: So, yeah, I'll talk about it a bit in my testimony. But, yeah, as teenagers, we've definitely seen the environment change around us. As I told some of the Council members, earlier, our environment is changing faster now than it was after the astroid hit the earth that caused the dinosaurs to
go extinct. And so, yeah, we definitely care about our environment and we're seeing it change around us as well as you guys. And you have lived for much longer than us and we haven't even seen the effects.

As far as roadless goes, what I heard a lot last night was, at what cost. People do want roads for subsistence, however, there are so many things that make the no action better than any other option. And those include, like, someone was talking about invasive species along highways and roads. Those would not happen if there weren't any roads in those areas. And, additionally, there are many exemptions that were brought to my attention and yours the other day about mining and energy and things such as those. So I definitely think that no action is the best option.

MS. : All right. In terms of like the climate and the climate strike that they organized, it seems like a lot of the time, like adults and stuff say that kids don't know what they're talking about, and they're only doing what adults tell them to and, even when they were talking about it on FaceBook there were like comments from a few people that were like, adults are telling you to do this, you don't know what you're talking about, and stuff like that, but obviously they did and they replied and the climate strike was amazing. And me and Tava didn't organize it like them, which was amazing, but we helped make the signs, and we participated and it was really cool. So I definitely believe in climate change.

And the Roadless Rule, definitely Alternative 1.

MS. GUILLORY: I'm first going to talk about the climate crises, which I absolutely believe is a dire issue that we need to address now if we want to preserve our future. Especially as the youth, the people who are going to experience this for the rest of our lives, I feel like it's especially important and more and more people are caring about it.

In our climate strike that Darby and Cora organized, we probably had maybe two-thirds of the school walk out, which is absolutely incredible, and it didn't matter exactly where you stood politically, it didn't matter that, it mattered that this is our future and this is something we care about and it was amazing.
to see a student-base activated like that without such strict party lines because this issue is more than that for many people who are our age because, again, it's our future. This is what we get to live with. And I feel like that's especially applicable for Alaska because we are seeing change so quickly, we are seeing it twice as fast as the Lower 48 and everyone is seeing this, whether you fish, there's students who fish who are seeing this, there are students who just like looking around who see this, and I feel like it's really applicable for everyone our age.

And then I believe that Alternative 1 is the best option for no action because, again, the environment is something we need to preserve at all costs and it's something that if we want our future generations to experience, if we want our future generations to subsist we need to protect it with the most we can.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

Somebody else have a comment, a public comment or testimony they want to make, go ahead.

MS. GUILLORY: Okay. I would first like to say thank you, everyone, for welcoming me and allowing me to speak here. I am very grateful that young people like myself can have this opportunity.

My name is Tava Guillory and I have lived in Alaska since I was two years old, I am not a junior at Sitka High School. My family hunts, picks berries and fishes. We can our own sockeye salmon, make our own jam, eat our own venison, and caribou. I have grown up learning how to sustain myself and frankly it is upsetting to watch how the world around me is changing. Each winter I see less snow. For weeks on end no rainfall, bringing the river levels too low and all the once vibrant green vegetation down to tinted brown. I fear for the sustainability of our resources. I fear that one day the people of Southeast Alaska will not be able to thrive off the land.

To me, the special part about Alaska, is the life that prospers every way you look. It's the trees, the fish and the wilderness in every direction. My hope is that all of the amazing benefits
of subsistence that I have enjoyed as a youth will still be there after me. But the only way to achieve this is by protecting our environment. We must cherish the source of Alaska's wealth, taking care of it for our future generations. As numbers of fish decrease, we fight over who gets them, we must ask the question, how do we stop that number from decreasing, how do we get to the root of the problem so that every group can have their share.

As Alaskans, we love our home, we love our food that our environment gives us, but we must take care of it before we are too late.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And thank you.
One more, right, go ahead.

MS. DOW: Before I start I would like to thank all of you for the opportunity to speak.

My name is Cora Dow and I am a senior at Sitka High School. I was born and raised in Sitka and my family heavily relies on subsistence for much of our food. Subsistence is a big part of our community and a big part of our identity.

Recently we've started to see changes in our ecosystem and climate. In my 17 years I have seen the environment change. Last spring the herring fishery didn't happen for the first time in my lifetime. I went from catching herring with my hands from the shore when I was little to barely seeing the telltale signs of herring spawn in the water at all. This is especially dangerous with herring because they are the basis of the food chain. Although the State doesn't classify them as forage fish, that's what they are, and we need to consider that when taking steps to recover this fishery.

As we look into the future, much is uncertain.

Global warming is starting to affect many aspects of our rural lifestyle and there are, understandably, a lot of feelings surrounding it. Many people don't know what to do with those feelings or who to direct them toward. I encourage everyone in this
room to speak to people in your communities and educate
them about what you are doing here and what they can do
to voice their experiences and opinions.

If the citizens of our state are more
engaged in the policymaking process everyone will
benefit.

So far this experience, for me, has
been pretty amazing. I've learned far more than I
thought I ever could in a day. It's also incredibly
rewarding to learn so much from people who care so much
about these issues. Seeing this process and witnessing
people standing up and trying to change things is so
inspiring and I thank all of you and the people who
testified yesterday for showing our government and
people like me that people really care.

Thank you again for this opportunity to
introduce myself and some of my concerns to you.
Thanks for serving on this Council and I wish you luck
in your deliberations.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And that applause
is for all of you, that was very well done. And I
think maybe we have some other questions or comments.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Just a comment. You
know, I really appreciate the work that you guys are
doing and Heather's effort to keep you involved in our
process. As part of the educational experience, I
think some of us may be meeting tonight, we haven't
figured it out, to hash out our comments on the
Roadless Rule, and if we do that, please standby, you
could be in on that meeting as observers, and it could
be a good opportunity to see how sausage is made.

(Laughter)

MR. SCHROEDER: So we'll just standby
and contact, touch in later today when we figure out
what we're doing.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Mike.
MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
I'd like to thank Mr. Schroeder for those questions.
And listening to you is really inspiring for me to hear your views. I share the same ones and the concerns and it really is encouraging to me to see your concerns are the same so we have a younger generation that really cares. I've had the opportunity to watch this for many, many years, and tremendous change, like where I live on Prince of Wales Island. When I was a young lad all the trees were standing, there was no roads. And now we have over 3,000 miles of roads and just a portion of the trees are there. So it's been a lot of change.

When I was a kid you had to wade around in snow waist-deep all winter, everything used to freeze, the water lines, we had to pack water, but now we don't even see snow most of the time in the lower levels so it's not changing, it has changed.

I'm really encouraged to, you know, and I hope you continue with what you're doing.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Harvey.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Harvey Kitka here. I really appreciate hearing the young people. Thank you, Heather, for inspiring so many. I really didn't realize that some of the talk about herring kind of made it through to some of these young people.

The climate change is, like Mike says, it has changed already. We're just holding our breath to see what happens because it has a great deal to do with zooplankton and where they happen, where they bloom. I know that it's changed an awful lot in Sitka Sound. It has moved further west and as we see it change we don't know what's going to happen, whether the herring are going to have to learn to eat something else and all the other fish have to learn to eat something else. As the population decreases on herring we just hold our breath and hope it doesn't completely go away. Because herring and salmon and halibut and all the things that live off of this are so important to our people.
And thank you so much for being here and talking to us, it just really gives me a warm feeling.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Frank, go ahead.

MR. WRIGHT: First off, Gunalcheesh, for being here. You know, I was wondering about the young people and wondered how they felt about the way this world is changing. You know as a person who lives in Hoonah, it's pretty scary. You know for the short time I've been on this world and seen the change has been it's pretty scary. I mean it's chang -- I mean if you look at the world in world years and how it is it's not too much longer before we're really in dire straits. You know a lot of the leaders around the world don't really care. I know the Paris Agreement, they do agree that there is a change but there are other people in this world that, like I said, yesterday, think it's none of our business. But I'm glad the young people think it's your business to do something.

I'm hoping that, you know, listening to you guys, you young ladies speak, made me feel good because you're doing something that elders aren't doing, or older people, adults aren't doing, we're here because of taking care of this world, subsistence. You think about the salmon that are not coming back, you think about the herring that is decreasing, last year they didn't fish, salmon do depend on herring, so less herring means less salmon. And then the rivers drying up and can't get up the river and it's just unbelievable how this world is changing.

Gunalcheesh.

Gunalcheesh for being here.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Yeager, John.

MR. YEAGER: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank all of you for coming up here as well. I've never felt more inadequate than I do now.

(Laughter)
MR. YEAGER: You guys have said more in your introductions and testimony than I've said my entire tenure on the RAC so I've got to step up my game here and I'd gladly hand you over my seat as well.

(Laughter)

MR. YEAGER: They'd probably get more out of it than me. But the thing that impressed me the most is you did this without looking at your phones and that shows me that you're looking at the outside and you're looking at the environment. I spend well over 100 days on the water each year and I get asked all the time do I ever get tired of what I see or do I ever get tired of doing this and I say, nope, because every day is never the same. And you could be in the same location but all it would take is an eagle to fly over that day or a whale to show up or to see a king salmon jump out of the water or something; that's different than the day before. You guys are seeing that and you're taking it in and you're remembering it and you're seeing how the environment is changing and you're doing it with your eyes and you're not doing it with your phone and that impresses me tremendously.

You're very well spoken.

Your thoughts are very well put together, very directed, and I encourage you to keep your eyes open and be there for when we're not in these seats anymore and you'll do well. And good job, Heather, and good job to you guys.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. Thank you, Heather, for bringing your team of students to testify to us.

I would make one recommendation and that would be to incorporate your observations, on the ground observations into your testimony. You know I grew up in Sitka, too, I was born there in 1958 and I grew up on the seasons of harvest, subsistence harvest over the years. And, you know, in Sitka it would often times start with the smelt, move to the herring, on to the seaweed, on to the salmon, the berries. So,
you know, how is that seasonal fluctuation changing, make note of it over your years as you grow up and become who you are. I take a lot of notes and then years later I'll go back and I'll read that note and say, oh, yeah, I forgot all about that, but it just helps to sink into who I am as a person of where I came from and where I'm going.

But one thing -- so here's an observation. I noticed that timber harvest in Canada and in other parts of the Tongass are affecting bird migration. I'm seeing a lot of birds that I didn't see before because they've lost their habitat and I live in a wilderness LUD2 area, and those birds are coming to my area, so I'm seeing a lot of them. It's pretty neat, actually, to see birds that you hadn't seen before but then I think there's some areas that aren't seeing these birds anymore.

And then one thing that -- I spend a lot of time on the water, too, and when the salmon start migrating and coming in close to shore you can smell them, you can smell the fish in the water, and then you have all the bird proliferation, you know, you know they're getting ready to move in, those are the sort of observations that I didn't really fully understand until I started, you know, started to become a scarcity, you know, so anyways -- but I pack my phone with me all the time because I document with my camera, you know, like if I see something that's of nature that I want to document then I take pictures so phones are okay.

(Laughter)

MS. PHILLIPS: So thank you very much.

That's all, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty.

Let's see, anybody else.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I just also wanted to say that, you know, we really appreciate your interest and your dedication and you inspire us and all of those things but, you know, it also kind of saddens
me a little bit because, you know, you shouldn't have
to be doing this. It's quite often, you know, noted
by people of our generation that you know things aren't
looking too good but, you know, by golly this younger
generation is, you know, they get it, they're going to
make a difference. And, you know, it shouldn't be that
way, we failed you, you know, our generation has kind
of failed you so it's kind of sad really but we still
do, you know, now it's up to you, I guess, and you're
doing a great job.

So thank you very much.

From my generation to your generation
thank you very much.

MS. BAUSCHER: Thank you so very much
for helping to make this possible for these young folks
and this is really all them and thanks to you girls for
pulling it together. So we kind of threw this together
in two weeks because we weren't sure if this was
actually going to happen because I feel like every time
I find some way to replace the funding for this work, a
different piece disappears, so I had found the Alaska
Conservation Foundation funding but because of the
State budget cuts we lost the travel funding through
the University that we usually relied on so big thanks
to the Forest Service for coming through to help make
it so that this could actually happen. And we're in
negotiations to see about making this continue to
happen. We're always kind of like hanging on a thread.

So thank you so much for helping making
this opportunity possible and thank you to everyone on
the Council for being so welcoming to all of us, to
myself as well as all the students every time and being
so accessible to them because that is also a thing that
they always are really appreciative of, just how
accessible all of you are. So thank you for being so
welcoming and supportive.

MS. OSBORNE: Thank you all so much for
being able to listen and be understanding of the youth
voices on this issue. It's really good to see that
there is a general consensus that what is happening is
clearly not right and I think we all here agree that we
need to make a change and I think that you guys are
trying to accomplish that and we're trying to show you
what we want to have accomplished and I think that, you
know, hopefully the future's heading in a good
direction. I think it's meetings like this and
discussions like that are going to give the final
result that we would like to see.

So, once, again, just thank you all so
much for caring enough and being able to partake in
these processes.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. It kind of
reminded me, Heather, that I think we should -- maybe
we have in the past, I'm not sure I'd have to check,
but I think we've made in our annual reports, you know,
aide and getting student involvement at these Council
meetings, you know, one of the things that we request
that -- you know we can request funding for, you know,
worthwhile projects, so we have to remember to put that
in our annual report again that we want to see this
continue and any help that, you know, our agencies can
provide, you know, that message will get to the proper
people.

So thanks for reminding me about that.

Okay, that's the end, thank you.

And we have one other blue card up here
from Dan Cannon.

MR. CANNON: Hello. My name is Dan
Cannon. I'm the Tongass Forest Program Manager at
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, also known as
SEACC.

SEACC would first like to recognize
that the Tongass is the traditional homelands of the
Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples who have been
stewards of the land since time and memorial. Thank
you to all the members of the Southeast Alaska
Subsistence Regional Advisory Council for holding this
important space for public testimony.

Today I'd like to discuss the Roadless
Rulemaking process. To be clear, I'm not a policy
expert, a lawyer, or a scientist, I'm an organizer
whose job it is to help Southeast Alaskans engage in
the process to protect places they love.

I recognize and appreciate the fact
that many of the members on the Council have been fighting to protect the Tongass and the many resources it provides longer than I've been alive, so thank you.

I also want to acknowledge the expertise of the Council and I hope that my comments today will be useful.

SEACCS grassroots attorney, Buck Lindekugel, helped prepare my comments and I will do my best to answer questions. As I'm new to Alaska I'd also like to apologize in advance if I misspronounce any place names.

SEACC would like to thank the Council for its comments provided during the scoping period and commitment to ensure subsistence hearings be provided according to ANILCA, .810. Your contributions are very much seen, very much appreciated and have already helped create a better Roadless Rulemaking process. So thank you for your tough and important questions yesterday while the U.S. Forest Service was here and thank you for continuing to hold the U.S. Forest Service accountable to this process, we really appreciate it.

SEACC strongly opposes action Alternative 2 through 6 proposed in the DEIS, particularly Alternative 6, the preferred alternative. SEACC was disappointed to see that none of the alternatives considered an option to protect all eligible roadless areas on the Tongass making the existing rule stronger. At risk are valuable community use areas like Little Seal Creek, Saltry Bay, Upper Crab Bay, all in Tenakee Inlet, Broad Finger Creek, Broad Creek, Ushk Bay, Poison Cove, and Sauet Bay in Peril Straits in the Sitka use area. No Name, Alvin and Reed Bays, Seclusion Harbor, and Three Mile Arm in Kake's traditional use area on Kuiu Island. And, lastly, Neka Bay near Hoonah.

SEACC works not only to protect places we love but also to work hard to act as a megaphone for Southeast Alaskan's voices. We'd like to encourage the Council to review Page 3-229 in the DEIS, which offers only a general discussion about the environmental justice impacts the decision may have. Specifically, we are disappointed to see that the DEIS generally ignores the disproportionate effect of the preferred
alternative which will have on rural communities that
depend on customary and traditional harvest of Tongass
deer and salmon to fill their freezers.

As the Council's well aware, the
Tongass is one of the world's largest remaining in tact
temperate Rain Forest. The Tongass provides spawning
grounds for roughly a quarter of the West Coast's
salmon fishery and provides important habitat for deer,
bears and wolves. These species and others rely on
healthy connected old growth Forest for habitat. And
according to the DEIS at Page 3-67 there's a study
 referenced that reported that old growth Forests were
mentioned as most reliable by 90 percent of households
harvesting deer. The DEIS discloses no data to
contradict that report. And Alternative 6 adds 185,000
acres of suitable timber land, 165,000 of which are
considered old growth and nearly 36 percent of those
165 [sic] acres are considered big tree old growth.

So as the Council participates in the
Roadless Rulemaking process, SEACC feels it would be
beneficial for the Council to also look at Alternative
2, roaded roadless and Alternative 3, logical
extensions.

We'd like the Council members to go
back and ask your community members to name the
important watersheds and hunting grounds near these
areas and reference them in your comments on the DEIS.
These are the areas that will be targeted by industrial
scale clear-cut logging operations first. Specifically
Prince of Wales Island is the most heavily roaded
island on the Tongass. The emphasis in the DEIS of
targeting logical extensions will exacerbate impacts of
Prince of Wales by targeting valuable roadless lands at
Kogish, Thorne River, Kosciusko (I can't say that one)
Caulder, ElCapitan and Salmon Bay.

I appreciated hearing concerns and
local observations yesterday regarding impacts from the
climate crises from several Council members. We know
the Tongass is the champion climate mitigation Forest
in the United States as it stores eight percent of all
carbon in U.S. Forests. SEACC feels the DEIS is
misleading as it says; carbon emitted during the
initial implementation of the management actions,
logging, would have a temporary influence on
atmospheric carbon concentrations because carbon would
be removed from the atmosphere over time following
management as the Forest regrows. And that's Page 3-
127 of the DEIS. Beverly Law, an Oregon State
University Professor whose Forestry research is cited
in the DEIS describes this statement as misinformation.
In a recent interview, Professor Law said, some old
growth trees in the Tongass are more than a thousand
years old so it would take a very long time for those
Forests to regain such a huge amount of carbon. She
said, we call it, slow in, fast out, explaining that
emissions from milling and transporting the lumber
along with the decomposition of the waste wood outweigh
carbon sequestration.

Lastly, SEACC would like to ask the
Council to notify members of the appropriate
Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's whose regions
include parts of the Chugach National Forest, as a
provision is included in Alternative 6 that would give
the Regional Forester, that's David Schmid, unilateral
authority, at the stroke of a pen, to modify or even
eliminate roadless areas on the Chugach National Forest
with minimal public notice and comment. You can find
this in the DEIS at Appendix G, specifically G-19.
SEACC feels that inclusion of this provision to
eliminate across the board protection for roadless
areas on the Chugach National Forest drastically
exceeds the scope of this rulemaking, and EIS.

In conclusion, for nearly 20 years the
existing Roadless Rule has successfully protected
subsistence resources and users by limiting further
degradation of the Tongass National Forest resources
upon which subsistence users in Southeast Alaska
depend. SEACC feels the Forest Service is trying to
hide behind the programmatic nature of this rulemaking
process to avoid taking a hard look at the harm from
removing roadless protections. SEACC will continue to
advocate for the no action alternative and, if
necessary, we'll be ready to litigate when the time
comes.

Thank you, again, for your time and
giving me the opportunity to speak.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Dan.
Questions for Mr. Cannon, anybody.

Mr. Schroeder.
MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dan, thank you for your presentation.

You mentioned something that the Council hasn't considered directly and obviously the DEIS doesn't cover, and you were talking about an alternative that would modify the existing Roadless Rule to expand roadless areas. Can you give us a little bit more to hold on to there because clearly we have a lot of roads in the Tongass, and many of them are not functioning, they're not providing any economic benefit at this time, we have major controversy's over use of roads for hunting, it's -- fill us in a little bit more on what your thinking is there.

MR. CANNON: Yeah. Since 2003 the Forest Service has acknowledged that the Roadless inventory used to support the 2001 Roadless Rule excluded about 350,000 acres of eligible roadless lands. These eligible lands were left unprotected because the agency assumed that logging approved under the Alaska Pulp Company on portions of Chichagof, Baranof and Kuiu Islands would occur following the Alaska Pulp Company's unilateral decision to close the Sitka Pulp Mill in 1994, and the Forest Service's subsequent termination of Alaska Pulp's 50 year contract, these lands remain roadless, uncut and should be protected under the Roadless Rule.

So during the fall 2018 scoping process SEACC asked the Forest Service to consider such an alternative in the DEIS, and the Forest Service refused because "those inventories contain unmanageable polygons." That's in the DEIS at 2-17.

Such a conclusionary statement is arbitrary in our opinion. As a result, even if Secretary Perdue ultimately chose the no action alternative the Roadless Rule wouldn't protect these areas.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead, Bob.

MR. SCHROEDER: Just a followup to kind of put that in -- maybe to repeat so that maybe I understand it.

So what you're saying is that -- like I
assume that roadless meant roadless, that there weren't any roads there, kind of that's why it's called roadless, but what you're saying is that there are 350,000 acres of land where there are no roads but these are not included in the roadless inventory; is that my understanding, correct?

MR. CANNON: Yeah, and I can get more information. Buck Lindekugel, this is his rallying cry and he could give you pages and pages of information and I'm happy to followup with the Council with more detail. But, yes, how I understand it is the inventory used in 2001 excludes certain areas that were assumed would be logged eventually, but those meet the characteristics of roadless areas, but they're not currently being added to the inventory for this Roadless Rulemaking process.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else.

Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. You mentioned logical extensions, could you elaborate on that please.

MR. CANNON: Yeah, so it's -- I believe logical extensions is Alternative 3, is really the focus of Alternative 3. And essentially you have places like Prince of Wales, right, with a lot of existing roads and existing logging roads and where those roads end is where generally the cutting stopped, right, but in terms of economical timber sales, which the Forest Service has implement, they have to be economically satisfied, those are going to be the areas that they target first because those are going to require less roadbuilding. It's only going to be, you know, they only have to extend that road, let's say a mile, to access additional acreage. So it just makes the sales that much more economical.

So that's why I was suggesting is those are the areas that would be targeted first if these Roadless Rule protections are lifted, so it would be good to talk to your membership, or to the community members -- sorry -- to the community members and ask them to name those areas specifically, to name how they use those areas, to name the importance those areas have in their subsistence to ensure the Forest Service
knows that these areas that are easily accessible are actually very important to subsistence users.

**CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:** Go ahead, Patty.

**MS. PHILLIPS:** Thank you. Followup.

So if the -- I mean like the Hoonah Ranger District went through an extensive road closure program and I'm assuming other Ranger Districts have too, so if a road's been closed, permanently closed, is it still eligible for a logical extension?

**MR. CANNON:** I don't have the answer to that. I can look that up and follow up with you. I do know that there are significant miles of roads that are not open to the public and I actually think even the roads that would be added, I think this is an important part -- let me find it in my notes -- even the roads that would be added, the DEIS essentially references -- and I can get you the page number -- references that the added roads in this Roadless Rulemaking process probably wouldn't be open to the public past -- they'd be used for logging operations and then they would be closed. And the DEIS mentions that.

But, yeah, in terms of answering your questions I can follow up with you but I don't have the answer.

**MS. PHILLIPS:** Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:** Mr. Schroeder.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** Just continuing the thread on roadless areas that are not in the inventory, Dan, do you have a map of those areas or should we request a map of those areas through our coordinator.

What would you suggest?

**MR. CANNON:** I would suggest requesting a map. I don't have a map with me but I can follow up. I'm sure Buck has a map somewhere in his giant library. So, yes, I can follow up with the Council, but I'd also just a request a map. The Forest Service should have those areas mapped.

**CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:** Go ahead, Bob.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** Could we request that,
DeAnna, because I think this is important for our deliberations on how we act on the Roadless Rule?

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Schroeder.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Harvey.

MR. KITKA: Thank you for your testimony. Just listening to you and hearing about Chichagof, and this is going to affect, not only Sitka, but it's going to affect Hoonah and Tenakee and Angoon, and probably Petersburg and probably some of the people from Juneau too. But it's going to have far reaching effects on some of these subsistence areas that a lot of them come in to hunt and maybe even get some shellfish in that area as well as the salmon.

Thank you for your testimony.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Frank.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know our corporations had devastated our area pretty much, you know, when you said Neka Bay, and I said, holy crap, I mean that's just right up the bay. I mean the corporation's had cut down all the trees across the bay all the way, almost up to Neka Bay, and then on our side, the Hoonah side, they've cut all the way up to Spasky. So if there's going to be cutting in Neka Bay, that's just an extension of the devastation that's happened in that area. I mean that's where a lot of people, just run up the bay to get out of the weather, you know, and then if that Neka Bay area is cut, then they'd probably just extend it further, further up into Salchuck (ph) and that area.

Anyway, is there any kind of anything that shows what the cutting would be, what kind of acreage or anything like that in that area yet?

MR. CANNON: In terms of -- I think you'd have to go to the Forest Service to look at that and then I don't know if the Forest Service has maps for the private lands. I would assume that they have a strong understanding but SEACC doesn't have that resource, no.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead,

Frank.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, that's not private lands, see the corporation already cut all the timber off their land so it's just past Neka Bay comes the Forest Service.

MR. CANNON: Apologies, misunderstood your question. Yeah, so SEACC can't say whether Neka Bay will be cut or it will not be cut, we just know that that area wasn't -- could be classified as a roadless area and is currently not being considered a roadless area. So even if the no action alternative is, you know, selected, that area is still kind of in this limbo state of not having roadless protections.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, Harvey, go ahead.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Along with Bob Schroeder's request for maps for the Council, I really think these communities that might be affected by that area need these maps too and maybe to let them know that this might affect their subsistence in their areas. Which would mean most of the communities on Chichagof, Admiralty, Sitka, if we could have those maps, and I know some of the subsistence meetings already took place but I'm sure there must be some follow-ups and ways that they can get more information out there to the Forest Service.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I have a question. Don't know if you know the answer or not, but one of the topics that came forward in our discussion on putting together comments was kind of the lack of analysis on cumulative effects and this discussion that Frank brought up about corporation lands leads me to the question, like I say, I don't know if you know the answer but we might have to find out, when the Forest Service inventoried their roadless areas, it seems to me there probably are some areas that could have been heavily impacted by corporation logging and associated road building. But if those areas are, you know, some of them likely are, directly adjacent to National Forest lands, which may not have been roaded yet, do you know if the, you know, Forest...
Service inventoried those as roadless areas even though they could have some significant roading that's not National Forest roading but it's still roaded, you know, by corporations. You know we'll have to kind of take a sharper look at that and these cumulative effect analysis, which I think our initial view of that is they didn't do a very good job at. So I don't know if you have any insights or information as to areas like that.

MR. CANNON: I can't speak specifically to it. I would suggest definitely looking at the roaded roadless that Alternative 2 discusses. I think some of those lands that you're mentioning might be included in that. And then I would just encourage the Council to speak with the Forest Service specifically and ask those tough questions and include those in your comments -- those concerns in your comments.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Anybody else with questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Don't see any. Yeah, thank you, Dan. We appreciate you, you know, mentioning a lot of specific things for us to look at, that's very helpful because you have professional Staff that analyzes these things. We are not professionals, it's been a real challenge for us going through this so that is very helpful in the course of our trying to put together comments. Hopefully if we have technical questions that your people can answer, we, hopefully can reach out to you and get some of those answers as well as reaching out to agency people.

MR. CANNON: Yep, happy to be here, and absolutely don't hesitate to reach out SEACC and we're here to help as best as we can.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you very much. One more question from Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Thank you, Mr. President. Dan, I would like to thank you for coming up and giving your testimony.

And as I'm listening to what you're saying and understanding that you've done extra work on
mapping areas out and I like the idea to be able to see what you see that we don't see or is not listed, and maybe each one of the communities that are not listed, like this map that we're talking about, that you have access to, maybe it would be nice for maybe each community kind of be -- instead of us getting, the Board here, the Council I mean, getting the information on a map, it might be nice to have each area that is not being shown on the Roadless Rule, that each community might get a chance to see what you have that they don't have. And this might be a little better understanding of the oversee that we don't have access to.

MR. CANNON: Yeah, I -- the Audubon, we work closely with the Audubon Society of Alaska and they have a map maker named Dave Albert and I'll request that Dave pull together a map for you of these acres that aren't considered roadless that have the roadless characteristics, and I'll see if he can zoom in of the communities for you all.

MR. BEMIS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: One more from Patty Phillips, go ahead Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. Following up on Mr. Bemis' comment is so it's my understanding that there are six cooperating agencies, tribal agencies, and I think it would be especially important for those six cooperating agencies to have that mapping detail because they already have that status that allows them to participate in this Roadless Rule process.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, Cathy has a comment there.

MS. NEEDHAM: Yeah, I just wanted let Ms. Phillips know that the cooperating agencies actually already have some of that map for the areas around their communities, there's six of them like you mentioned, and it was actually the Hoonah Indian Association that provided that through their mapping, their GIS person, but it was not done for communities outside of the communities that were looking at
alternatives associated with the cooperating agencies. But they do have that resource and they've been utilizing it since they've been engaged in the process.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead, Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Cathy. So they've identified areas that are available for timber harvest that are actually roadless areas because their timber contract went away so are those areas identified in their mapping?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Cathy.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. They did overlay that and some of the original comments that they provided during the cooperating agency process actually got into specific areas. But just because they're cooperating agency that had localized and specialized knowledge in their areas doesn't necessarily mean that that information made it into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, but they do have that resource and they most likely will be using that information for the next round of public comments that they can actually put in on the Draft EIS at this point.

But, again, those are just the communities that are cooperating agencies, so there's only six when you have 32 across the Tongass.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead, Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. So that being said, one thing that I, you know, read in the press was that some of these tribal governments, they don't have the luxury of excess funds to assist them with their -- with trying to get their concerns and comments into the record and perhaps could use some assistance.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Bob.

MR. SCHROEDER: Just following on Mr. Phillips comment, Dan, could you describe SEACC's interactions with tribes and communities and what support SEACC may be giving to tribes and communities
on these issues?

MR. CANNON: Yeah, first I'll acknowledge that there is a lot of groups that are working really hard to support anyone that's asking for support so it's not just SEACC, it's Sitka Conservation Society, Cathy's been a huge help, you know, even members of Audubon, members of NRTC, so there's a lot of groups that are working in different ways, PEW has helped out as well. But some of the things that SEACC has done when the preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement came out for the cooperating agents [sic] to review, Buck and I traveled to Kake, and reviewed it with the Organized Village of Kake after they asked us for support, so we helped them prepare comments. I think that was difficult because they asked for an extension on that period and it was denied so it was not a very long period of time, I think it was two weeks, or maybe that was the amount of extension time they got, but I know they asked for an extension and they didn't get as much time. We also helped with just advocacy efforts, whether it be, you know, bringing tribal leaders to Washington, D.C., and helping financially support those efforts. We also helped draft letters to Congressional Delegations asking them for meeting requests or we may connect the tribal communities with reporters who want to speak to tribal communities.

So it's a variety of ways but it's not just SEACC it's definitely a lot of different groups that are working really hard to give as many resources as we can, whether it be time or financial resources because we know that these communities already have a lot on their plate and the USDA is not giving them a $2 million check like they gave the State, so it's a different dynamic.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any other questions so I think we're done, thank you very much Dan.

MR. CANNON: Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. One item of business that we didn't get to yesterday because one of our Council members wasn't present but I think Mr. Whitford has a presentation to make.
MR. WHITFORD: This is for Patty Phillips. It's great to see you in person finally, it's been a little while, I think maybe a year or so. We meant to give this award to you, it's a service award, we meant to give it to you last years. It's for -- was for 25 years of service and now it's 26 years of service. So I'd like to read your bio into the record.

Patricia Phillips from Pelican has been a member of the Southeast Regional Advisory Council since August of 1993, that was actually the inception of this Council, which is pretty amazing. I'm not -- I think Patty might be the only Council member that's been here from the beginning, I'm not quite sure.

MS. PHILLIPS: On the RAC.

MR. WHITFORD: On the RAC.

MS. PHILLIPS: I'm the longest on the RAC.

MR. WHITFORD: Okay. So 26 years. Patty's knowledge of subsistence and commercial uses of resources and her understanding of ANILCA has made her an invaluable member of this Regional Advisory Council.

She and her family enjoy hunting and gathering, harvesting and preparing subsistence foods and making of handicraft items from resources from the land and sea. Patty's love for the Southeast and her desire to make positive contributions to others is obvious and impressive.

Not only as a RAC member, but Patty has held positions in her community as the Mayor of the City of Pelican, Chair person of the Pelican ADF&G Advisory Committee. And has served as the president and board member of the Southeast Conference.

Today we honor Patty for her quarter of a century of service to the Southeast Regional Advisory Council. Thank you for all of the work that you have done over the years and we hope to see you for many years to come.

So thank you Patty.

(Appause)
MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I'm speechless.

Thank you everybody for the recognition, I'm honored.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, congratulations Patty. Tom mentioned, I think at one of the previous Board meetings that I attended, they did have a recognition of some of the people that, you know, had been on the Advisory Committee since the inception there and I believe, you know, your name was mentioned, and it was a pretty small group, pretty elite group that's for sure, there's not very many. So you might be the last one now, I'm not sure.

Very elite group so congratulations.

And my apologies, I forgot to check to see if there was anybody on the teleconference line that wanted to give some public comment this morning.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I'm not hearing anybody so let's take a short break and when we come back we begin the new business portion of the meeting, which is proposals.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I believe we have all our Council members back in the room so if we could take our seats again we'll start.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Like I said we were going to start new business here next but it's been pointed out there's still just a little bit of old business to take care of and we'll do that but we also have one of our fellow Federal agencies here with us with a very short request and somebody from the U.S. Census Bureau and he's taking the opportunity of having this gathering of so many people from the villages in
MR. STANTON: Thank you, very much. My name is Loren Stanton and I reside here in Ketchikan. I've been employed as a recruiting assistant for the United States Census. I'm the only census employee south of Yakutat at the present time. There's a couple of people in Juneau with different titles but what we're doing now is planning on how to reach the villages and how to get out to the villages to hire census takers, actually enumerators and supervisors at 31 and $28 an hour for the census in February to May, so these would be flexible hours, flexible jobs. I've given you each, people in the villages, sorry Juneau and Wrangell, but I've given people in the villages a packet of join the team, we need people from every village so basically your residents can count you and counting you is very important for the amount of Federal funds that you're going to get in your area. So we need some people to apply on line. It only takes about 30 minutes to apply on line, post the big poster $28 an hour, $31 an hour somewhere in your village or town where people are going to see it and then hand these out to people. There is a possibility a recruiting assistant might make it to your village, given weather and other conditions but we might not. So we are asking a special request to all the people who are here from smaller places, to take these, try to get people who need a job or people who need a flexible job around their other job, to be a census taker or be a supervisor of census takers.

Thank you, very much.

Any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you -- oh, one more, Mr. Leighton.

MR. LEIGHTON: Yeah, my name is Ron Leighton. And what would qualify a person to be a supervisor of a census, I mean they'd have to have prior service under your program or what?
MR. STANTON: Thanks for the question.
No, sir, no prior service is necessary to be a
supervisor. What happens, on the application is you go
down the application on line, you get to a point where
it says, do you want to be a supervisor, if you click
the X on supervisor, it gives you 30 more questions,
and you have to answer 30 additional questions and if
you make it through there and you're in the pool then
you can be selected and selection starts on December
28th for selecting the actual enumerators and
supervisors for each individual area.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Anybody
else.

Yeah, Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Yes, thank you for coming in
today. I just was at the National Congress American
Indians Conference in Albuquerque and spent a pretty
extensive time in the census meeting that we had there
and it was pretty informal and it was pushing towards
all Native entities to be involved in this and I
thought they did a real good job with this and I'm glad
you're here today because this is coming upon us and
you don't realize how important this is. The reason
why I'm bringing this up and speaking right now is I
would like to share a little incident that happened 10
years that could very well happen to any one of our
communities.

They had a census representative for
the Yakutat area, which came in and he wasn't a local
person, he'd just been volunteered to go and do that
area. And back 10 years ago not everybody was aware
of how important this is. He went out and started
taking surveys and stuff and he counted all the
dwellings in Yakutat as putting in as housing. He went
to our fish camps and did 15 to 18 caps because there's
a road that takes you out to the river where we fish,
the locals reside. And the other thing he did, did not
distinguish between the summer homes that had been
purchased by out of towners for their sportfishing or
vacationing, these homes were also put into the pool.
So when this all came together, we lost about 1.5 or
1.7 million dollars in housing funds because it looked
like Yakutat had adequate housing, which is exactly the
opposite. We've got more people without housing there
that has grown tremendously and this is where it was
brought to our attention by Tlingit and Haida Council that it was coming up on the census in Juneau and we brought that to their attention.

So I feel any of the communities that are not too aware of how the process works needs to get in and be a part of making sure that the analysis of what they're doing is correct. Because you can't go back and correct that once it's in. I mean we'll do with that in 10 more years. So in 2020, we'll see you in 2030, so getting it right the first time is really important.

Thank you.

MR. STANTON: That brings up a couple of issues and that is, Southeast Alaska has an enormous seasonal population and we are endeavoring to not count the seasonal population. The count for the census is supposed to be where you live on April the 1st, 2020. So if you're not in that community on April the 1st you're not to be counted there. So that pretty much outs most of the seasonal population. So I understand your problem and your grievance from 10 years ago and that is why we are desperately trying to get local people to apply in every village and town. We want local people to apply as soon as possible. Get into the pool, get through the application process, and then by December 28th we'll start selecting people to be the enumerators. We believe it's as important as you just said and that's very true, both the seasonal issues and counting issues. We want local people to do this. We want local people to have the jobs. We want local people to supervise. And we want local people to do the actual counting.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you very much for informing us on that. Very good.

Next item of old business. We have a report from Mr. Robbins, the subsistence testimonies occurred in Yakutat last night as well as here in Ketchikan and he got some first hand accounts of what happened up there and he wants to share.

Go ahead, Harold.

MR. ROBBINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I visited with my son that attended the meetings in
Yakutat last night. And he was most frustrated after the meeting. They came in, they made their presentation about that first hour and a half. And then they immediately started the hearings for the subsistence, not giving the community any time to put together the information that they just received and be able to respond accordingly. And his feeling was basically was that they were trying to jam down our throat that a one size fits all situation. Which everybody knows what fits in Yakutat doesn't necessarily work in Ketchikan or vice versa. And this needs to be adapted to the communities that it affects.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Any questions for Harold.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any, one more short item of business and before we get to that, do we have everybody on the phone lines that is going to be presenting analysis on proposals -- on the phone lines yet.

MS. MAAS: Through the Chair. This is Lisa Maas, wildlife biologist with OSM and I'm on line for Wildlife Proposal WP20-16/17.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Good morning, Lisa. I believe you're up first so, yeah, anybody else available now.

MR. REEVES: Yeah, good morning, Mr. Chair. It's Jeff Reeves. I'm available for mine.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Good morning, Jeff. Anybody else.

MS. OEHLERS: Good morning. This is Susan Oehlers and I'll be speaking to 20-09.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Was that Susan from Yakutat.

MS. OEHLERS: Yes. Yes, I'll be speaking for 20-09. Thank you.

MR. SCOTT: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. This is Ryan Scott with Fish and Game in Juneau and I'll be presenting the State's comments.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Good morning Ryan.

Anybody else.

MR. CROSS: Good morning, Mr. Chair. This is Rob Cross in Petersburg and I'll be presenting WP20-12.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Good morning, Rob.

Anybody else.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Sounds like we got a full crew. I believe Lisa is up first. But first there's one item of old business and it involves our .805(c) report from actions that took place at the Board. I gave kind of a brief overview in my Chair's report but our Council coordinator, DeAnna, has the official word here.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, it's just a required item, but you gave an excellent review yesterday and I'll just kind of regurgitate that.

In your meeting books starting on Page 17 is the letter and enclosure from the Federal Subsistence Board, and, again, that's known as the .805(c) report. That provides the action taken by the Board on all the proposals affecting residents in the Southeast.

As Don mentioned yesterday, at the Board meeting, FP19-17, that's the proposal changing the customary and traditional use determinations for the Yakutat and Southeast Alaska region so that all residents of Southeast and Yakutat would have a positive C&T determination for all fish.
Also Fish Proposal 19-18 changing the 5.5 stretch mesh gillnet restriction to six and a quarter inch stretch mesh in the sockeye salmon and coho salmon fisheries on the Stikine River, both of those were adopted by the Board.

You'll also see on Fish Proposal 19-19, that was the proposal to close Federal public waters of Neva Lake, Neva Creek and South Creek to the harvest of sockeye salmon by non-Federally-qualified users, that appeared on the non-consensus agenda, but for this proposal the Board also took action consistent with the Council's recommendations.

So, again, it's just a formal opportunity on our agenda to bring that to your attention, the Board's actions, again, starting on Page 17.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, DeAnna. Any Council members have any questions about what the Board did.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Don't see any. Okay. We're going to begin out of order here as I guess we have some people available to present at this time, and we're going to go right to Wildlife Proposal 20-16/17. The analysis begins on Page 352 of your Council books. And I see Terry Suminski coming forward. Do you want to introduce the proposal Terry.

MR. SUMINSKI: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Council members. I'm Terry Suminski with the Forest Service. Lisa Maas from OSM will be presenting this proposal, but I was going to be up here to assist with any questions, if needed.

So, thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you, Terry. Lisa, I guess you're up.

MS. MAAS: All right, thank you. Can you guys hear me okay?
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: You're coming in loud and clear, yep.

MS. MAAS: Okay. Great. So thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. My name is Lisa Maas and I'm a wildlife biologist in the Office of Subsistence Management. I'll be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP20-16/17, which, again, begins on Page 350 of your meeting books.

Both proposals WP20-16 and 20-17 were submitted by this Council, the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. WP20-16 requests extending the sealing period for wolf trapping from within 14 days of harvest to within 30 days of the end of the season and removing language referencing a combined Federal/State harvest quota for wolves in Unit 2.

WP20-17 requests the same sealing period extension and removal of harvest quotas for wolf hunting in Unit 2, as well as increasing the hunting harvest limit from five wolves to no limit.

The Alaska Board of Game adopted a new harvest management strategy for wolves in Unit 2 in January 2019 resulting in misalignment of State and Federal regulations. The proponent states that their intent is to align State and Federal regulations to implement the new harvest management strategy under Federal regulations and to increase harvest opportunity. Of note, Unit 2 wolves are part of the Alexander Archipelago sub-species, which occupies Southeastern Alaska and Coastal British Columbia. In 1993 and 2011 the Alexander Archipelago wolf was petitioned to be lifted under the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found the listing not to be warranted on both occasions as the range-wide population appeared stable. In 1997 the Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board adopted harvest guidelines levels to manage the Unit 2 wolf population which established annual harvest quotas based on wolf population estimates. Seasons would close early if quotas were expected to be met.

Between 2013 and 2018 seasons closed early with reported harvest well exceeding quotas in some years. In 2018 ADF&G submitted Proposal 43 to the Board of Game to change the harvest management strategy
from using harvest management guidelines to meeting population objectives. The Board of Game adopted Proposal 43 in January 2019 establishing the Unit 2 population objective range as 150 to 200 wolves. The Board of Game also extended the State trapping season aligning Federal and State seasons.

The Southeast Council also submitted Wildlife Special Action WSA19-02 which requested the same changes to the sealing period and harvest management as these proposals for 2019/2020 regulatory year. The Board approved WSA19-02 in August stating that the new management strategy should help ensure a sustainable population and encourage better harvest reporting. The Board also stated that announcing predetermined season lengths provides predictability to users and renders the in-season sealing requirement unnecessary.

Before 2013 Unit 2 wolf abundance was uncertain. Since 2013 a method using DNA from fur samples has been used to generate population estimates. Between 2013 and 2018 wolf population estimates have ranged from a low of 89 wolves in 2014 to a high of 231 in 2017. Human harvest accounts for the vast majority of wolf mortality in Unit 2, however, wolves are very resilient to high harvest levels due to their high reproductive potential and ability to disperse long distances. In Unit 2 wolf abundance is closely linked with deer abundance, their primary prey. Deer are primarily limited by habitat, which is being negatively affected by logging of old growth Forest in Unit 2. Logging operations also construct roads providing easy hunter and trapper access into previously remote areas.

The new harvest management strategy consists of four zones as depicted in Figure 2 on Page 364 of your meeting books. Different zones correspond to different population levels and season lengths. Zone 3 is the desirable zone where the wolf population is within the objective range of 150 to 200 wolves and a season of up to two months would be announced. The 2019 wolf population estimate is 170 wolves, placing it in Zone 3, and resulting in the 2019/2020 season opening for two months from November 15th to January 15th.

Between 1997 and 2018, total trapper numbers in Unit 2 average 14.5 trappers per year, with
Unit 2 residents primarily from Klawock and Craig harvesting 89 percent of the wolves on average. Over this time period catch per trapper averaged 3.4 wolves, however, usually just two to three skilled trappers harvest most of the wolves. Harvest primarily occurs on non-Federal lands under a combination hunting/trapping license and little harvest occurs before mid-November when only the Federal hunting season is open. Since 1997 when the harvest guideline level was initiated, annual reported harvest has ranged from 7 to 76 wolves, averaging 50 wolves and the annual harvest quota has been exceeded five times. High unreported harvest rates of 38 to 47 percent have likely resulted in unsustainable harvest in some years.

Adopting WP20-16/17 would extend the sealing requirements, eliminate the Federal/State harvest quota and increase the hunting harvest limit. Extending the sealing requirement would align Federal requirements with sealing requirements for the State trapping season and decreases the burden on users by allowing them to seal all of their wolf pelts at one time. Eliminating the harvest quota and managing for a population objective provides managers with a quantitative benchmark to gauge success and mitigate disagreements between stakeholders over what is a sustainable wolf population. Additionally, harvest quotas discouraged harvest reporting because of the threat of seasons closing early. Announcing season lengths ahead of time provide predictability and allowing trappers to plan for the season and importantly does not discourage harvest reporting. Changing the hunting harvest limit to no limit increases harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users from September 1st to November 14th and prevents little conservation concerns due to low wolf harvest during this time period.

However, as the Southeast Council did not provide a specific justification for why the increased hunting harvest limit was necessary in their proposal OSM hopes the Council will provide justification on the record at this meeting.

The new management strategy also alleviates concerns about illegal or unreported harvest by basing management on population estimates and objectives rather than on harvest quotas and reported harvest. While the new management strategy depends on
year old population estimates to determine season lengths, the harvest guideline level strategy also depended on year old estimates to announce quotas. One reason a species can be listed under the Endangered Species Act is inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanism. In response to the 2011 petition the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found wolf harvest regulations in Unit 2 to be inadequate in ensuring sustainable harvest, especially since reported harvest well exceeded quotas in 2016 and 2017. The Wolf Technical Committee stated that establishing population objectives through a public process reduces the likelihood of future litigation. While managing through season lengths may initially result in more or less wolves harvested than expected, State and Federal managers can fine-tune season lengths over time as patterns are established. However, past experiences suggest harvest is more a function of abundance, rather than season lengths.

The Craig District Ranger currently has delegated authority to open, to close, reopen or adjust the Federal hunting and trapping season for wolves in Unit 2. This individual would announce season lengths in coordination with State managers after the population estimate is available.

Effective wolf management in Unit 2 depends upon coordination between State and Federal regulations, managers and users. Adopting WP20-16/17 facilitates management and reduces user confusion.

The OSM preliminary conclusion is to support WP20-16/17.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That concludes my presentation and I'd be happy to answer any questions.


(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I'm not seeing any questions so thank you very much.
Next part of the procedure is do we have any -- do we have a report on consultation with the tribes that took place with regard to these proposals.

MR. LIND: Camai. (In Native) Chairman and Council members. Hello and good morning. My name's Orville Lind, I'm the Native Liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management.

And during the consultation on September 30th in the morning for tribes, and ANCSA in the afternoon, there were no questions or comments on the proposal.

Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you, Orville.

Agency comments.

We'll start with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record this Ryan Scott. I'm the Assistant Director with the Division of Wildlife Conservation in Juneau. And I apologize I can't be with you today, hopefully in the near future I'll get to see you guys again.

The State supports both 16 and 17 as it does clarify and align State and Federal regulations and reduces confusion between various user groups.

The one portion of the proposal that we did not comment on, or have a recommendation for is the change in bag limit for Federally-qualified hunters.

But in general the State is in support of both 16 and 17.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you, Ryan. Any questions for Ryan Scott, Department of Fish and Game.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I'm not seeing any, thank you, Ryan.

Any comments from other Federal agencies.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any comments from any of the tribal entities.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I'll be looking to our coordinator here to see if there's any written comments. How about Advisory Group comments, do we have any of those, DeAnna.

MS. PERRY: Although this was a statewide proposals, no other Regional Advisory Councils commented on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Subsistence Resource Commission.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about a summary of written public comments.

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair. One written public comment in opposition was received on this proposal. It can be found in your meeting books on Page 375. A summary of that comment from Jim Kowalski, Chair for Alaskans for Wildlife states:

This proposal leads to spreading unrestricted wolf take everywhere. Given especially the substantial science on the value of apex predators a high interest in sustaining wolf populations on America public lands, including here in Alaska, and its place in the American culture, must have bearing upon
this consideration. Wolves are essential to maintenance of ecosystem bio-diversity. Enactment of this proposal would result in another chapter in the unscientific overall continued war on wolves. The proposal is not scientifically justified, nor justified as a public matter and no National or even Alaskan public cultural norms can possibly support this permissively reckless proposal to expand wolf take without bounds.

That was the only written public comment received on this proposal.

Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, DeAnna. Is there anybody present in the room who would like to give public testimony on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I don't see anybody. And for future reference, if there is a specific -- if you're in the room and there is a specific proposal that you do want to testify about, please give us a blue card indicating that so, you know, I might know in advance that there's people interested.

Okay.

Time for the Regional Council's recommendation on this proposal.

So we'll be looking for a motion.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Okay. I'll move to adopt WP20-16/17.

MR. YEAGER: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. We have a motion and a second so it's open for Council discussion. And on this first proposal, I'll kind of remind the Council members that we're looking for justifications on all of these proposals to be included in our record and those justifications should:
Address whether or not there is a conservation concern and how will the proposal address that conservation concern.

Is the proposal supported by substantial evidence, such as biological and traditional ecological knowledge.

Will the recommendation be beneficial or detrimental to subsistence needs and users.

And will the recommendation unnecessarily restrict other users.

And those points are on the back of your name cards if you need to refer to them while we justify our action on this proposal.

So we have a motion to support, any discussion.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Well, just to help the procedure move along, I note that these two proposals, these joint proposals are an outgrowth of really many years of discussion between the Council, ADF&G and to the extent possible with the users on Prince of Wales Island. I would obviously be supporting this proposal because it comes from that great source.

I think that our acceptance and support for this proposal has a little bit of a caveat because we really want to see how this is going and how this will be implemented over the next years. As all of us know, wolf trapping and hunting on Prince of Wales Island has been extremely controversial and a divisive issue in our region for literally decades and this appears to be a really good move forward into rationalizing harvest, providing subsistence opportunity for users on Prince of Wales, and protecting the wolf resource.

Perhaps the one caveat is I don't think that we're as close to including traditional ecological knowledge and hunter reports in actually putting this new management plan on the ground. As we've noted in other discussions, while the DNA sampling does produce an estimate, which is defensible, the estimate is
always one year -- at least one year late and one year out of date by the time trappers are actually putting their traps on the ground. What I had hoped for would be that local input would serve to modify the estimate of wolf population, which then sets the trapping regulations. Apparently this year that didn't happen in any formal way. I hope that in future years, that the Department and the Federal program would examine the DNA results and probably adjust them up or down or keep them the same, based on reports from active hunters and local experts on Prince of Wales Island.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Bob. Anybody else have anything to say on this proposal.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I support the proposal. There's no conservation concern that I can see, and the recommendation, as far as biological information, is well supported. And I believe that it will be beneficial to subsistence users, and non-users as it clarifies the rules that we have to hunt and trap by. It doesn't unnecessarily restrict anybody.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike. Anybody else to speak to this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question.

MS. MAAS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Go ahead.

MS. MAAS: Thanks. This is Lisa Maas for the record. And I mentioned this in my report but the Council did not provide specific justification on why an increase in the hunting harvest limit was necessary and so OSM hoped that the Council could provides more justification on why that increase in harvest limit is necessary, and I think that would really help the Board in their decision.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thanks for reminding us of that Lisa.
I think Mr. Douville will handle that justification.

MR. DOUVILLE: I will make a small attempt at it.

The limit on five, I believe, came from the State, but we do have some people that are not particularly trappers and they put a lot of effort into hunting wolves and it seems to me that it's a bit lopsided to allow somebody to go catch 20 or more with a trap and you're restricting somebody that's a hunter that should have the same opportunity. It's a different method but I believe that the limit is unnecessary. It is just is uneven for rural users to have to deal with that. So if you get five you're on your honor to stop, you know, and it's -- some people choose to hunt instead of trap when it comes to the wolf season.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Do you think that a no limit would create any conservation concern?

MR. DOUVILLE: I do not because it's only a very small amount of people that do this and it's a difficult thing to do. They're not super successful although some can do better than others. But I think it's, as far as getting too many, no, they're not going to because it's just logistically is too difficult.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And I concur with what Mr. Douville has said with my own experience.

Anybody else want to address this proposal.

Patty Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. Based on the Staff analysis on the bottom of Page 359. It states that the wolf populations range from 89 to 231 between 2013 and 2018, and then they switched to a hair board population estimate and they added more hair boards and the wolf population estimates increased significantly between 2016 and 2017, and this is a 95 percent confidence interval. But as the final sentence says that local hunters and
trappers have expressed seeing more wolves in recent years and that's been public comment presented to the RAC over the years. So the science is finally catching up with the traditional ecological knowledge that the local hunters and trappers have expressed to us.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty. I don't know if anybody wants to respond to what Patty said. Staff or Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Any other comments on this proposal.

Mr. Winrod.

MR. WINROD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a comment that I think I agree with this proposal. But in the future, I would -- just as a trapper, this is just my opinion, when Fish and Game goes to set the annual season, if it's not going to be a full season then I think that -- like this year it's going to be two months, I would kind of like to see -- because all the trappers are focused in these two months, they're going to start on day one, there's a lot of wolves right now and they're ready to go, but that starts out kind of right in the deer rut, so if they were going to have a two month season it might be better to postpone that to exclude the deer rut to help not catch as much deer in the bycatch.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Interesting point, Elijah. Anybody want to respond to what Elijah has proposed. I don't know if it's something we just want to keep in mind for the future.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I respectfully don't agree with Mr. Winrod. It's up to the trapper himself to use good common sense when it comes to setting snares, which is primarily you'd have bycatch. In those areas where there is deer population, certainly the bucks are moving more, but the does live there, they're always there. And I think you can avoid that
by -- in fact we have been avoiding it by using common
sense when you set these things. So you just pure and
simple don't use them if there's significant deer
population around because you will get bycatch, some.
And I don't think you need to change anything at this
point. I don't support any type of a change, you just
have to be responsible.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.

Elijah, any response.

MR. WINROD: Yes, I agree with what Mr.
Douville just said but kind of what precipitated that
is I've heard of people in the past, they were all
gung-ho, and, you know, I heard they caught like 20
deer on their first set and they obviously didn't know
what they were doing but, yeah, especially for people
that they don't really know what they're doing it can
be a problem.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Go ahead, Mike.

MR. DOUVILLE: I'll add one more thing.
As you progress down towards winter, the conditions get
colder, the snow, more adverse conditions and I would
rather start now than I would waiting until -- I use a
boat and it's -- a lot of times it's iffy, you know,
it's not the best of conditions, you know, and it
doesn't improve through January, February and March,
the storms are bigger and so on. But that's the reason
that I, or part of the reason I would not want to
change the dates at this time.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

It seems like those are the kind of issues that need to
be worked out within the trapping community with a
little education. There are opportunities, you know,
when the managers get together and set these seasons,
to discuss those kind of things as well, possibly.

Okay.

So any other issues with this proposal.

(NO comments)

MS. NEEDHAM: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any,
question's been called for. So we'll be voting on
these as a combined group, Proposal 16 and 17. Let's
see I'm supposed to reread the motion, and the motion
was to support Wildlife Proposal WP20-16/17. So the
motion is to support all in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Is there anybody
opposed, say no.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Motion passes
unanimously, DeAnna.

And now I think we can move back to our
order which the proposals are written up in the book,
and I think the first proposal -- I got to go back to
it -- Wildlife Proposal 20-01 is on Page 21.

Okay. This one involves a moose hunt
in Berners Bay. Who do we have presenting on this one,
Terry.

MR. SUMINSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Justin Koller is presenting this one for you today.

Thank you.

MR. KOLLER: Chairman Hernandez and
members of the Council. Good morning, my name is
Justin Koller, I'm a subsistence fish and wildlife
biologist for the Tongass National Forest, United
States Forest Service.

As you said the executive summary on
your Wildlife Proposal 20-01 is on Page 21 of your
Council books and the analysis begins on Page 22.

The proposal was submitted by the
Alaska Department of Fish and Game and it requests that
the Federal season for moose in Unit 1C Berners Bay be
rescinded.

The proponent states that the Federal
Subsistence moose hunt in Berners Bay amounts to a
partial closure to non-Federally-qualified users which
conflicts with the Board closure policy. The proponent
requests that the Board rescind the Federal moose hunt in Berners Bay because there is no demonstrated conservation concern.

Prior to this season, Federally-qualified subsistence users had not been provided a meaningful priority to hunt moose on the primarily Federal public lands of Berners Bay. There was no Federal season prior to 2019 even though the demand for State draw hunt by Federally-qualified subsistence users has been consistently higher than the number of available State permits. The Federal Subsistence Board adopted the Federal Berners Bay draw hunt last wildlife cycle based on a compromise on Proposal WP18-11 as recommended by this Council.

There were nine applicants for two Federal moose tags this season and one of the two tags has been filled.

The OSM preliminary conclusion is to oppose this proposal.

Rescinding the Federal season for moose in Berners Bay drainage in Unit 1C would remove the priority for Federally-qualified subsistence users to harvest moose there. The priority harvest of Berners Bay moose on Federal public lands by Federally-qualified subsistence users is consistent with Title VIII of ANILCA. The Berners Bay moose population would not be impacted by this proposal because the number of permits available would not be affected.

That concludes my proposal.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Short and to the point, thank you very much, Justin.

Questions for Mr. Koller from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. I'm not seeing -- oh, wait a minute, there's Patty Phillips, go ahead, Patty.
MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Hernandez.

On Page 23 under existing State regs it says one bull by permit. And so -- and the Federal -- so the Federal harvest falls under that one bull by permit?

MR. KOLLER: Through the Chair. Ms. Phillips. Thank you for the question.

At present there is a State draw for a certain number of permits and there's also a Federal draw. Each permit, under State and Federal regulations allows the harvest of one moose.

MS. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: Does that mean of the combined permits, State and Federal there's only one moose to harvest?

MR. KOLLER: Ms. Phillips, through the Chair. I understand. That does not mean there is only one moose, it just means that whoever draws a permit is only allowed to get one moose. But there are a predefined number of permits available at the beginning of the season -- or prior to the season.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And, Justin, what was that total harvest set at this year?

MR. KOLLER: I believe there were seven permits available. Two of those permits went under the Federal draw and five went to the State draw.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you. Just a second, Bob. And you said that one Federal permit was not filled, I see the season's closed now, how about the State permits, were all of those filled?

MR. SCHUMACHER: Hi, this is Tom Schumacher with the Department of Fish and Game. I believe only four of five State permits were filled but I'm not absolutely certain of that.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

It sounds like possibly of the seven moose allotted, it sounds like five were taken altogether?

MR. SCHUMACHER: Yes. The State permit has a reporting requirement and a requirement to turn in the lower jaw for aging, the Federal permit, this year, I don't believe had that reporting requirement, however, hunters, I think were encouraged to turn in a jaw and report. I think there's been some confusion in how to do that. But I have heard that there's a jaw out there and should be delivered to our office in Douglas.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Justin, just a question on how the permits were administered. Could someone from a subsistence community apply for both a Federal permit and a State permit, or are they restricted to one or the other?

MR. KOLLER: Thank you, Mr. Schroeder. A Federally-qualified subsistence can apply for the State and Federal permits, however, if they are drawn for a State permit they cannot be eligible for a Federal permit, so one or the other.

MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Yeah, I follow that, thank you. Anybody else.

Patty Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. So are you saying that the Federal harvest has gone unharvested?

MR. KOLLER: Ms. Phillips, there were two permits drawn by Federally-qualified users, one of those permits was filled, and one was unfilled this year.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Go ahead, Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: Comment, Chair
Hernandez. So under the State system, harvest was generally filled, is that a right assumption?

MR. KOLLER: The success rate for this hunt is generally very high. It has been historically as we've heard from the State, four out of five this year were filled. And on the Federal side, one out of two. So there are times, for various reasons where permits do go unfilled.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Let’s see I have a question. Seven moose harvest quota this year, how does that compare to harvest quotas in the recent past?

MR. SCHUMACHER: This is Tom Schumacher with the Department of Fish and Game.

I think we’ve been at seven bulls for the harvest objective for the last maybe three years. Before that it was lower, it was 5 in 2013 through, I think 2015, mainly because of the difficult winters we had in 2006, '07 through around 2012 and the population declined due to those hard winters. So we have been increasing the number of permits consistent with our population surveys.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you. It sounds like a relatively stable population but maybe slowly increasing, would that be a good summary?

MR. SCHUMACHER: Yeah, the Berners Bay population was always -- it's an introduced population, it's a limited amount of habitat so it was always recognized that the population would be constrained by habitat and therefore always remain at a small size with a limited harvest. So at this point, you know, we have had, you know, higher harvests in the past, but at this point in time the population appears to be fairly stable and maybe slowly increasing still at this point, we haven't done surveys yet this year but we'll find out.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Any other questions from the Council.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Justin, I realize this is the first year for their being a Federal hunt on
this moose population, can you tell me how the Forest Service is participating in the management activities, particularly doing yearly counts and if there's an intention to -- for Forest Service to take on some of that responsibility in conjunction with the Department of Fish and Game.

MR. KOLLER: Thank you, Mr. Schroeder. At present the Department of Fish and Game exclusively monitors this moose population and I am uncertain as to what would happen in the future with Forest Service involvement.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Patty Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So what is the percentage of the current harvest by rural versus non-rural for the season that we just had?

MR. SCHUMACHER: I don't know the answer to that off the top of my head, you know, we only had five or maybe six moose harvested and I don't know the residency of the people who won the permits.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else with questions. Something to add, Justin.

MR. KOLLER: Yeah, thank you. Ms. Phillips, there's historical numbers of residency of people applying for permits and people getting permits in your Council book if you'd care to take a look at it.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Any other questions from the Council.

Mr. Wright.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Since they didn't get their quota this year, so will that affect the quota for next year, on the hunt?

MR. SCHUMACHER: Annual harvest quotas are generally set based on the most recent survey so we'll have to look on what we find on our next survey and then probably incorporate some sort of estimate of winter survival. We have radio collared moose in the population so we are able to gauge survival over the winter. And, you know, we'll see what happens by
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
Anybody else, any questions from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, I'm not seeing any. Orville Lind, any tribal consultation in regards to this proposal.

MR. LIND: Mr. Chair. Council members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management. During that time of consultation there were no questions on Wildlife Proposal 20-01.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Orville.

Department of Fish and Game, your comments, please.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is Ryan Scott with the Department of Fish and Game in Juneau. The Department submitted and supports this proposal because we believe reserving a proportion of the harvest from the Berners Bay moose population, which is small, isolated and introduced for strictly Federally-qualified users exceeds the intent of ANILCA. Section .18 in ANILCA states nothing in this title shall be construed as -- paraphrasing -- authorizing a restriction of the taking of fish and wildlife for non-subsistence uses on public lands, other than National Parks and Park Monuments unless necessary for the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife for reasons set forth in Section .16.

For Berners Bay, none of these apply. It's a small population. It's always, since the day that the moose were put there, the population developed from two transplants of moose from the Mat-Su Valley in 1958 and 1960. As Mr. Schumacher indicated, habitat is limiting, movement of moose is constricted by ice and water essentially, so it's always been recognized that this population will remain small. There was a fairly large harvest as the population erupted in the mid- and
late 1960s, but since that time we've ratcheted down the number of animals that can be harvested out of there to a fairly small number, and even smaller now based on winter severity in 2006 and 2007.

This hunt opportunity is available to everybody. It is a lottery draw system. But that system is available to anybody who wishes to apply.

In addition to that, this small moose population represents a fraction of a percentage of the moose that are harvested across Southeast Alaska, and as I've talked with the Council before, I believe roughly, you know, 75, 76 percent of the moose harvested in the entire region are harvested by Federally-qualified users. Part of the thing that I think about often is people who are going to Berners Bay are often passing up other opportunities, a lot of other opportunities, to hunt and harvest moose. I'd also point to Unit 3, Central Southeast Alaska, where, this year, we saw a record harvest, I believe 127 bulls were taken. That area of the region continues to out perform everywhere else in the state -- or excuse me, everywhere else in Southeast Alaska. And the majority of those animals are taken by the residents of Petersburg, Wrangell and Kake, and all three of those communities and people who reside there are Federally-qualified.

Again, Berners Bay is a small isolated population, we don't anticipate it to get very large. Likely we wouldn't let it get very large because of habitat concerns. And as I mentioned, we submitted this and we support eliminating the Federal season in Berners Bay.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ryan. Any questions for Ryan Scott from the Department of Fish and Game.

We've got one from Patty Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: I'm not sure if it's for Mr. Scott or the biologist, but on Page 27 it shows population estimates for Berners Bay moose and also the analysis says they want to maintain a 80 to 90 population of moose, and for 2019 it shows a population estimate of 137 moose plus or minus 23. And if you plus or minus 23 that puts the population of 114 to 160
moose, and if you're maintaining a 90 population of
mOOSE then you have a harvestable amount of 24 to 70
mOOSE, so I would say that that population is with the
wINTERS being less severe, we have an expanding
POpULATION of moose.

And while I would admit that is
originally an introduced species, I would say that we
have migrating moose into many areas of Southeast where
there wasn't moose before and to say that this is only
an introduced species is a bit of a not correct
statement.

So, anyway, but about this harvestable
MOOSE being 24 to 70 possibly for 2019, based on this
table?

MR. SCHUMACHER: This is Tom
Schumacher. The population or the post-hunt population
of 80 to 90 moose is an old figure. I think it's maybe
a result of not having updated the management plan.
Subsequent to that initial objective, habitat surveys
suggested the area could support more moose and we've
increased -- allowed the population to increase above
that and are trying to maintain a higher population as
long as it doesn't damage the habitat available. And
the current harvest quota is based on that higher
POpULATION.

It's a bulls only hunt. It's not
antlered restricted. But, you know, we want to just
take the harvestable portion of the bull population
without -- and still maintain our bull/cow ratio
objectives, which are 25 bulls to 100 cows.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any other
questions from the Council for the Department of Fish
and Game on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Not seeing
any, how about other Federal agencies.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any comments from
tribal groups on this.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about any other Regional Advisory Council comments on this, DeAnna.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Local Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair. I'm sorry, let me take that back. We did have one comment from the Ketchikan Advisory Committee stating a biological concern does not currently exist necessitating a subsistence priority. A majority of traditional use comes from the Juneau area. A fair system is currently in place to provide for opportunity.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you.

Subsistence Resource Commissions.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I do believe we have some written public comments on this.

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair. In addition to the Ketchikan AC's comment, there was another comment in support. And, again, these comments can be found on Page 39 of your book.

The comment comes from Ted Spraker, Chairman of the Alaska Board of Game, State of Alaska. Summary of this comment: Asking the Board to reject the proposal creating the Federal moose hunting regulation in April 2018 is for the following reasons:

Moose were transplanted to Berners Bay primarily for the benefit of Juneau hunters with substantial support from Territorial Sportsmen, Inc., a Juneau based hunting and sportfishing organizations.

Historically Juneau hunters have accounted for the overwhelming majority of hunter effort and harvest in Berners Bay, including the moose.
Hunters from Federally-qualified communities in northern Southeast have virtually no record of hunting or harvesting game in Berners Bay.

Adopting the proposal establishing Federal priorities would disenfranchise Juneau hunters.

And the Department of Fish and Game currently devote considerable effort to monitoring the Berners Bay moose population and determining sustainable harvest levels, and this work is accomplished through using funds from State license sales and Federal aide and wildlife restoration grants. And all Alaskan hunters contribute to those funding sources and have a right to benefit from their expenditure.

That was the only additional written comment received on this proposal.

Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you. Anybody with public testimony here in the room.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Don't see any.

Okay, time for the Regional Advisory Council's recommendation on this proposal, and I'll just remind the Council we make all of our motions in the affirmative and vote otherwise if we disagree, but Council members.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Move to adopt Wildlife Proposal WP20-01.

MR. KITKA: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. I have a motion and a second to adopt.

Time for Council discussion on this proposal. So it's open to the floor.
Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: I noticed that there was no surveys done previous years, 2017 and 2018 and there was a gap of 141 to 137, so we decreased in that 2016, in that three period to 2019. What is the reason for no survey?

MR. SCHUMACHER: This is Tom Schumacher with the Department of Fish and Game. If surveys weren't done it's generally because there was no snow and we didn't have survey conditions.

MR. BEMIS: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Other Council discussion on this in the way of deliberation on the proposal.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The RAC spent considerable time on this proposal originally. However, unpopular it may be the original proposal was submitted by a rural user asking for a rural priority. It was also pointed out by, I can't remember the lady's name that was at our meeting, that explained that even though it is an introduced species, it falls under -- I can't think of any rule, but it doesn't matter if it's an introduced species, it can still be looked at as a rural priority species, if you will. And the Council voted in favor of it, even though it is unpopular. We would not be doing our job if we did not consider all and move it forward.

So I do not support this proposal because we have already gone through it very carefully. And I guess I'll stop with that right now.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.

Anybody else.


MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would agree with Mr. Douville. I, too, will oppose the proposal.
I feel like the sort of argument or justification for the change is based on the fact that there isn't a population concern and so the argument is if there's no population concern that we shouldn't be unnecessarily restricting other users. However, I feel like that would be at the detriment of maintaining what has now been created a subsistence priority, which any population should have that subsistence priority put on it from both the State and Federal management systems. And so I don't think that that last point of recommendation for restricting unnecessarily users, if that's the case then maybe more permits should be issued if -- I don't think that 25 percent actually unnecessarily restricts that and the 25 percent is what's allotted towards the Federally-qualified subsistence users.

So I guess I'm rejecting the argument of why the proposal would be necessary and that would e why I oppose the proposal in addition to what Mr. Douville stated as the reasons why we put this Federal subsistence priority on the books in the first place.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't believe that we've -- well, let's see, back up. As Mr. Douville said we spent a good deal of time discussing this proposal, it was a difficult proposal for the Council to decide. And I believe our transcript shows the care that we took in coming up with the recommendation for the 25 percent. I consider that to be basically settled business unless there's some new information that would be presented that would lead us to change or reconsider our previous discussion.

So I'll be opposed to this proposal. I would ask -- suggest that the Council may wish to include a transcript of -- definitely to include our previous justification and to have available, the transcripts of our two Council meeting discussions when we decided this proposal, the discussions happened at two different Council meetings because scheduling allowed us to revisit the proposal and make the recommendation that we did make, which was adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Bob.

And I think I need to make a bit of a correction here on previous Council actions regarding this proposal. I'm looking through the book here but if anybody sees on Page 25, where it says what our actions were, please bring that to my attention while I talk here.

But as I recall, this was a very contentious proposal as noted. The Council gave it a lot of consideration, heard a lot of public testimony. And I believe our Council's recommendation after that was to not support. Is that reflected in the record?

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: But when it went before the Board there was -- and the Council kind of wrestled with this, and like I say, we might have to go back in the record to see what our Council action was on that, but it came before the Board and after our meeting, you know, we -- you know, the Council requested that there be, you know, some investigation made of alternatives to what the proposal originally stated. And the original proposal was kind of worded interestingly because they didn't ask for a specific action, they didn't ask for like a closure, they just asked for a rural preference in that hunt.

So we -- I mean it made it a little difficult to deal with and so what we ended up doing was kind of requesting some research into what options might be available to provide a rural preference and it was discovered that there were such precedents for a draw hunt like this, I can't remember which unit it is in the state and I believe it was in the Southcentral though, where they had a divided drawing permit like this, between State and Federal with an allotted quota.

So when it actually went before the Board we had that new information. And the Council itself never made the recommendation to institute this divided draw system. That I'm clear on. I remember that distinctly.

The Board reviewed this new information that was provided on options for providing a rural
preference and the Board adopted the proposal that we now have before us, instituting this divided draw system.

So like I say, our Council action was not on this, actually, what came out, that was a Board decision. That's the way it went down.

So now we have the, you know, the precedent that the Board did adopt that management strategy, the Department of Fish and Game put in a request for a reconsideration on that decision to the Board, the Board denied that request, so now the Department of Fish and Game is coming back to the Council to ask us to rescind the regulation, go back to the way it was.

So that kind of sets it in a different light to me.

And I think, you know, given what's occurred and the precedent, we had a pretty difficult time, very difficult time dealing with the original proposal, but we went through this research process, we went through the Board process, these decisions were made, I think that puts a much higher standard on us to recommend that this be rescinded at this point.

So I mean that's my feelings on the whole situation before us.

And I also very much agree with Cathy, that I look at what -- you know, how our system works and we already have established that introduced species are irrelevant to the discussion. These moose don't belong to people in Juneau just because they funded the original transplant, that's kind of been settled. The idea of the claim being made that subsistence users have not utilized this in the past, we have kind of discredited that because of the whole -- the way the draw process works, when you have hundreds and hundreds of applications and there are a good number of subsistence users that apply for those permits every year, just the odds of getting drawn are very small, so you can't judge the participation by a lottery; that doesn't really reflect the people's desire to participate in the hunt. If they make an attempt to and just don't get lucky. The Federal system, we also have a customary and traditional use determination for
that area. There is no specific customary and
traditional use designation for Berners Bay. Berners
Bay is part of Unit 1C, and when you look at the whole
unit together and the customary and traditional use
says that all residents, rural residents of Units 1
through 5 have a customary and traditional use in Unit
1C, which includes Berners Bay. We have to look at it
in total. And we have to consider whether or not all
the hunters that utilize Unit 1C as a whole, are their
needs being met throughout the area. And if there were
enough moose available so that everybody in Southeast
Alaska who has a customary and traditional use
determination got the moose they needed to meet their
needs then maybe we wouldn't even think about
instituting a priority for rural users, but I don't
believe that's the case. As long as there are people
who are still looking for opportunity to harvest moose
and there are moose available in Berners Bay, which is
part of Unit 1C, I think it's perfectly legitimate that
we afford them a priority in some form to have access
to those moose.

So that's the way I see it.

And like I say I'll be opposed to this
proposal on those grounds.

Ms. Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
Hernandez. So the Bristol Bay -- or not Bristol Bay,
Berners Bay proper and Berners Bay drainages are all
Federal public lands that fall under the jurisdiction
of ANILCA. On Page 31 it shows the number of
applicants for Berners Bay Berners Bay drawing permit
from 1993 to 2007, based on this data out of the 17,939
draw permits 4,464 were permits drawn by rural
residents of Alaska. And then based on the residency
of successful hunters on Page 34, from 1990 to 2018
there has been harvest by rural residents of Alaska.
But the non-rural residents take a predominate share of
the harvest.

For the seven bull harvest quota, two
are rural draw permits, so that's 29 percent of the
harvest is two draw permits by rural residents and that
leaves 71 percent for the State draw and it was a fair
compromise on a very controversial issue.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty. Any other comments from the Council.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I just wanted to thank you for your clarification. I remember sitting there it seemed like for hours struggling with this issue more than once and it really has been a tough one. But I appreciate you explaining it.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike. Anybody else.

(No comments)

MR. KITKA: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question's been called for. The last time we had this before us we had a roll call vote, I'm just going to ask for a voice vote at this time.

All in favor of the proposal say aye.

(No aye votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All opposed to the proposal say no.

IN UNISON: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: It sounds unanimous in opposition, DeAnna. Thank you. I think we'll continue on here, we're in the groove. It might take a little bit earlier, possibly longer lunch, depending on how this next proposal goes, so let's go to Wildlife Proposal WP20-02.

MR. SUMINSKI: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is Terry Suminski. Jeff Reeves will be presenting the next six proposals.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Good morning, Jeff.

MR. REEVES: Good morning, Mr. Chair. For the record my name is Jeff Reeves. I'm also, as Justin, I'm one of the subsistence biologists with the Forest Service.

This proposal, 20-02 originally was going to be presented by Greg Dunn, the primary author but since I've worked along side with him I'll go ahead and present it here. So you can find the executive summary for this proposal on Page 44 in your materials and the analysis begins on Page 45.

WP20-02 was submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and it requests that the reduced harvest limit for non-Federally-qualified users in Unit 2 be rescinded. The proponent contends that the Federal Subsistence Board did not have the authority to unnecessarily restrict non-Federally-qualified users and that Section 13/14 within ANILCA affirms the State sovereign responsibility and authority for management of fish and wildlife on all lands, except as may be provided in Title VIII.

If adopted, the proposal would return the State deer harvest limit back to four bucks on Federal lands increasing opportunity on Federal public lands for the non-Federally-qualified user group. This would likely increase both the number of non-Federally-qualified user days hunted, as well as encounters between Federally-qualified subsistence users and non-qualified users thereby decreasing harvest opportunity for subsistence users. Deer taken by non-Federally-qualified users would likely increase. Also decreasing harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users.

The OSM preliminary conclusion is to oppose this proposal.

As current data indicates harvest is well below the average of the previous 10 years and peaking in 2015 and then declining 2016 through 2018. Although results from the deer pellet surveys in Unit 2 show a slight decrease in the mean pellet group counts, they're still within the high end of normal range, indicating deer populations are likely doing well.
Other factors, such as changing weather patterns, reductions to access, changes in deer behavior related to presence of predators and competition with non-Federally-qualified users may limit harvest success. But it's also important to note that the current harvest limit for non-Federally-qualified users affects only a small portion of that user group that harvest more than two deer in Unit 2 annually, and will likely contribute to greater hunting success for Federally-qualified subsistence users through decreased competition.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jeff. We'll open it up to questions from the Council members.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Jeff, I'm wondering can you fill me in on other means of assessing harvest other than the mail-out survey. I'm looking at graph Figure 4 on Page 55. And I know in other years the Council has had more intensive harvest surveys on Prince of Wales and I've lost track of whether anyone's been doing anything like that in recent years.

Thank you.

MR. REEVES: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Schroeder.

So since 2005, the data in this graph has primarily been attributed from harvest reports. I don't know if you recall that back 2005 up until, I believe it was 2011, when statewide harvest report was implemented. There was the specific Unit 2 harvest report that was issued to individuals that would be hunting within GMU2. So the State is probably the better entity to elaborate if they do any other survey expansion, but my understanding is that this recent harvest data is derived and possibly expanded a little further from the harvest reports.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jeff. I believe Bob has a followup.

MR. SCHROEDER: I just had one other thing to note and that is that under the designated
hunter program it's feasible for someone who really
hunts a lot or needs a lot of deer or can provide
people with deer to get additional tags in Unit 2. I
believe that that's correct unless Unit 2 is different
from other places in the state.

MR. REEVES: Mr. Chairman. Mr.
Schroeder. Federal designated hunting is allowed
within Unit 2. The harvest by a designated hunter
would be reported on their designated hunting permit,
however, typically they are also required to take care
of the harvest report that is attached to the State
harvest tickets for the recipient. So, ideally, that
information for those harvests are being included in
this because those harvests are associated to the set
of tags that were issued.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jeff.
Anybody else on the Council with questions for Mr.
Reeves.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, I'm not
seeing any more questions, Jeff, but I know you'll be
standing by in case anything comes up.

So tribal consultation on this
proposal. Is Orville still in the room.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else know
of any tribal consultation that occurred on this
proposal -- oh, there he is, Orville any tribal
consultation on this proposal.

MR. LIND: Mr. Chair. Council members.
There was a member of the Sealaska Corporation that
called in and she asked for a review of the Southeast
proposals, which was done by Forest Service. And also
she mentioned that the Prince of Wales subsistence
people should be respected and really take priority
over the, for one, visiting the islands, and then also
their subsistence.

And that's all I have for that, Mr.
Chair.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. That was Sealaska Corporation?

MR. LIND: That is correct.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Time for the Fish and Game comments.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is Ryan Scott with Fish and Game in Juneau.

The Department submitted and supports this proposal. It was based on the data that has been presented, there is no evidence that hunting by non-Federally-qualified hunters has resulted in a biological concern for the Unit 2 deer population or affected subsistence users by uses by Federally-qualified hunters. We believe that failing to adopt this proposal would unjustly limit non-Federally-qualified users and largely in the context of this discussion, many of those non-Federally-qualified users come out of Ketchikan with a long history of hunting in Unit 2.

Over 72 percent of the land in Unit 2 is Federally managed and current Federal regulations provide substantially greater opportunity for Federally-qualified deer hunters compared to non-Federally-qualified hunters. Those advantages include a season that runs from July 24th to January 31; that includes 54 days when only Federally-qualified users are eligible to hunt on Federal lands. There's also a higher bag limit for Federally-qualified users, a limit of five deer, of which one can be a doe, and non-Federally-qualified hunters are limited to bucks only and at this time to antlered deer on Federal lands, and a season that extends -- and they're limited to a season that ends on December 31st.

As we've noted through yesterday's discussion with Mr. Schumacher, the number of hunters that are indicating to us through mandatory hunt reports has decreased, subsequently the number of deer harvested has also decreased. Also as noted in the previous proposal, WP20-01, the State believes that there is no conservation concern associated with deer in Unit 2 based on the data that we are getting from the hunters that would -- that support restriction of the State bag limit.
So in that regard, Mr. Chairman, as I said the Department submitted and we support this and that's all I have for comments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ryan.

Questions from the Council to Mr. Scott.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I have a couple. So the Council's position on this is a little different. The Council, as you're well aware, also, you know, listens to local knowledge on these issues and, of course, when we initially recommended this proposal to the Board, which they did adopt, it was in response to a lot of public testimony that, you know, we had heard from subsistence users on the island that it was getting more difficult to harvest deer in the last few years. And one of the things that seemed to become evident was that there's apparently fewer bucks available for harvest.

Now, you know, subsistence users are allowed to take one doe. And I know from personal experience, and probably some of my colleagues from the Island would back me up on this but, you know, in my community, taking a doe is really just a very last resort. Everybody goes out and they put in a lot of effort to try and harvest bucks. I, personally, do not know of anybody who has harvested a doe in my community in, I don't know, quite some time. I don't know if somebody did I probably wouldn't hear about it because there is such a stigma attached to that, so it's, you know, it's discouraged.

And so we're kind of focused on the buck population in this issue. And we have a number of issues there about, you know, just being able to determine how many bucks are available. We see that, you know, the overall population, maybe the trends there are staying somewhat stable but, you know, how do you differentiate population studies between does and bucks so that's one of the issues we're trying to address.

And I know, I think I asked, you know, I asked this question yesterday in the presentation by
Mr. Schumacher but I guess I'll just, while we're on this proposal, if you could, you know, respond to any information that you have, Ryan, about how the buck/doe ratio is determined, if there is a determination and do we know anything about that other than on the ground observations from local hunters.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think Mr. Schumacher did a pretty good job yesterday when he laid out different ways and indices that we utilize to enumerate or to estimate deer abundance.

So I guess just to answer your question very plainly and matter of factly, we don't know what the buck to doe ratio is. We have a -- Sitka black-tailed deer are one of several species in Southeast that is incredibly difficult for us to come up with an estimate of abundance or density or something like that that we use for other species like mountain goats or moose where we can actually get out and visibly observe them. With deer there is ongoing research trying to get at how do we estimate total population or abundance. And, you know, we've made some forays into different ways to look at that. I believe you guys discussed the DNA work that, you know, is often very good for a drainage but we're not sure how that looks when we extrapolate it out over an entire landscape as well.

So first we got to get a handle on how to count deer, period, before we probably will be able to get too far into differentiating buck and doe ratios.

With that said, some of the camera trap work that's being done now in Unit 3, Central Southeast, that may give us some insight to that but that remains to be seen.

I guess the other thing that I would -- you know, maybe I shouldn't tackle this a little bit but I will, taking a doe deer biologically is not the end of the world, and harvest of deer across the region is comprised -- I apologize, I don't have those figures at the tip of my fingers here, but lots of does are harvested, and what we believe are healthy populations exist clear across the region even where we have doe harvest. Hat's off to the hunters and folks in Unit 2 where they've made the determination to limit the doe.
harvest, and, you know, that's good, if that's -- largely wildlife management is both science and art, if you will, and, you know, if people have a feeling that taking does is not something they want to do but they still have that opportunity and I believe that's -- I think it's appropriate. The level of doe harvest that is reported to us is fairly low. I would suggest that it's insignificant in the overall take.

With that said, again, you know, if people decide that they don't want to take does because they don't think it's the right thing to do, that's great, and I appreciate people putting thoughts into that.

So to answer the basic question we don't have a good feel for what the buck/doe ratio is in Unit 2, and to take it a little bit further, harvesting some doe deer, it's certainly not going to create a biological concern, at least at this time.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you for that, Ryan. And in talking about the doe harvest in relation to this proposal, it's kind of relevant because we have a number of other proposals we're going to be dealing with, you know, specifically to the doe season so we've kind of introduced that subject here.

Also along the same vein there, you don't seem to have a problem with a small doe harvest so what do you feel about this proposal is inconsistent with recognized principles of fish and wildlife management which you state in your summary here, what are we violating; what -- why are we not following recognized principles of fish and wildlife management? I mean I took that as to mean, and you can, you know, see if I'm mistaken that Fish and Game might believe that instead of limiting the buck harvest, that we should eliminate the doe harvest, I don't know if that's the principle you were referring to but we need an explanation to that.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there's two things to really think about in terms of that question.

Harvesting buck deer, in general, is -- and as long as it's restricted to bucks and primarily the Federally-qualified harvest is,
100 percent restricted to bucks, it really is not going
to have -- in most systems when you look at taking male
ungulates, it's not going to have a significant impact
to the overall population. So thinking about that as
we go into taking male deer, buck deer into this and
then looking at, again, based on the data we're getting
from hunter reports that the harvest, yes, it certainly
has come down since it peaked in 2014, 2015, but the
number of hunters for all user groups, Federally-
qualified, non-Federally-qualified have also decreased.
So I don't think that we're going to see a -- looking
at the population as a whole by increasing it, going
from the two buck bag limit for Federal hunters to four
bucks, A, I don't believe that's going to be a
significant population change; B, I believe that Mr.
Reeves pointed out that it really does only impact a
small proportion of hunters, non-Federally-qualified
hunters that go to Unit 2; so looking at those in
total, by increasing the bag limit by two additional
buck deer, I just don't see a significant impact to the
population.

And so I'm not sure that I would say
that, you know, violates wildlife management rules or
intents and things like that, but it is looking at the
evidence that we have in front of us, and, you know,
again, our pellet surveys as we've described to the
Council many, many times, it's an indices, something
pretty drastic would have to happen before our pellet
counts would reflect a change to the population,
somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 percent -- that
would be a completely different conversation, likely,
experimenting with different opportunities to at least
give some -- another sense of what the population is
doing and I'm referring to doing Alpine surveys. And
the next step is trying to figure out how to use these
camera traps to enumerate deer abundance as well and
maybe some kind of gender ratio down the road.

I just, yeah, if we take male deer,
it's not going to have a significant impact. By
increasing the bag limit it impacts only a few hunters,
which gives me a lot of comfort that we won't have a
significant impact.

Hopefully I answered your question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes. The key
point was -- a lot of good background there -- but I
think the key takeaway is that contrary to what's in our analysis here, it doesn't sound like you feel that we are violated any recognized principles with this proposal, or with our proposal that we did originally.

So it kind of boils down to, you know, how you do things.

With the information we have before us that most non-subsistence hunters don't take more than two bucks so restricting them to two is a fairly slight imposition to subsistence hunters -- or non-subsistence hunters. We're looking to actually benefit the subsistence users by possibly having a few more bucks available to them.

As you say, maybe it won't change the overall population all that much but, you know, it doesn't sound like we're violating anything that would cause, you know, worry about conservation concerns or anything.

So I don't know, two ways to look at it.

One other point I kind of want to make to the Department of Fish and Game, kind of involves data gathering in general, which Mr. Schroeder kind of focused on also, you know, for the sake of the folks that might be reading the transcript about this and not in the room, but I'm holding up a post card here, it's four inches by eight inches, it's got six lines on it, this is the reporting requirement that we've been talking about for gathering. Apparently gathering most of the data that Fish and Game uses and what we see in our analysis, six lines on a four by eight post card. I know there's a lot of frustration, you know, in our communities that it's a six month season and people who live on the island are out there just doing a whole range of activities, you know, through a lot of that time that might involve a little bit of deer hunting while they're out there. And trying to reflect the activities of, you know, local people on six lines is just virtually impossible. So, you know, the quality of the data you're getting from the rural users, I feel is pretty poor.

You know Bob Schroeder was talking about the need for more personal surveys and things.
like that, which is something we have always called for. I'd also like to point out that you probably are getting pretty accurate data on these reporting cards from, you know, on-subsistence hunters, primarily people from Ketchikan who are the main participants, you know, they typically plan out a trip to Prince of Wales, they come over there maybe once or twice, they devote most of their time to hunting, you know, it looks to me like a lot of those folks are out there from sun up until sun down doing a pretty concerted -- making the best use of their time and expenses to get there, it's pretty easy for them to reflect that activity on these cards. And the way in which they go about hunting is so vastly different than the way we go about it. Making a comparison on things like hunter effort and days to get a deer and things like that, my view, totally irrelevant. So we need to do better than that if you're going to compare apples to oranges.

So, you know, those are the kind of things that, you know, the people that come to us with their local knowledge, they clarify a lot of what's missing on these cards. So those are the kind of things that we consider, you know, when we're deliberating on these proposals.

I don't know, any comments on that, Ryan.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yeah, I can appreciate that very much so. As with many things in all of our worlds, one size doesn't fit all. And so I guess I would say that I definitely will take that into consideration and talk with Tom and the other deer managers and researchers in Southeast. There's been lots of work over the years in trying to, I guess, get at that very question, trying to understand and help in places that we don't get high rates of reporting. For the simple common goal, I think for all of us to understand, you know, how many deer are being taken and as well as, you know, how many people are out there and how often are they going.

I agree 100 percent, it's much easier for, say, myself to -- when I plan a hunt or two and I'm going to be gone out for X number of days and I'm going to essentially the same are and I'm going to hunt and I can write all that down where it doesn't translate into other activities that may result, you
know, in an hour or two of hunting, or if you harvest a
deer or whatever. So I do very much appreciate the
comment, we've tried to do better by making sure that
we don't have competing reporting systems between the
Forest Service, OSM and the Department, where we've
gone to a report card, we've also provided an
opportunity to report, you know, on line, if that is
available to folks. These are just, you know, tools
that we have tried to make available and improve the
reporting system. You know we can always make it
better.

So taking that to heart and seeing what
we can come up with is something we'll do.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else on
this topic. I have one other -- oh, you want to add
something Mr. Schumacher.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Yeah, just one other
idea to incorporate into the discussion and that is our
reporting method hasn't really changed over time.
We've gone from mail out surveys to the mandatory
reports and now we have on line hunting available so I
think that the trend and stats -- I don't think
people's reporting habits have changed much. You know
these problems that you've mentioned are valid problems
but they've been with us for a long time. So I think
the trends that we see are probably actual trends,
rather than just challenges associated with reporting
all the activity.

That's not to discount the importance
of collecting better information on -- better ways of
capturing all the potential hunting opportunity that
rural residents expend.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. It
needs to be considered for sure.

Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
Hernandez. Page 45, the proponent states that there is
no conservation concern for deer populations and that
deer population continues to be viable and, yet, our
Staff analysis on Page 45 shows that harvest has
exceeded the State harvest objective from 2006 to 2016
and then we had a precipitous drop in 2017 and 2018.
So I mean how are you guys -- how can you say that there's no conservation concern, you know, with that kind of harvest?

MR. SCHUMACHER: This is Tom Schumacher with the Department of Fish and Game. That level of harvest was sustained over a long period, usually if you have over harvest, you'd think you'd see it reflected in the harvest in less than 10 years. But thinking that you weren't here yesterday, and didn't see my presentation on this topic, one of the other things that seems to be associated with this decline in harvest is the decline in hunting effort.

There's been a substantial decline in hunting effort and more by non-Federally-qualified hunters in recent years than by Federally-qualified hunters but both groups hunting effort has declined. And that's not just in Unit 2, it's in adjacent units as well. So it appears that hunting effort is also part of the picture here.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any other Council members.

Mr. Winrod.

MR. WINROD: I would just like to comment on that. That, yes, hunting effort has declined but just my opinion, a likely reason why that is is that the hunters have become less successful and it's just not worth their time so that percentage of hunters just didn't hunt in there anymore. Like I've talked to quite a few hunters, both local and Ketchikan hunters on Prince of Wales that, you know, they used to go and hunt in the woods and pass up five deer every day where this one group we talked to last year, they said, you know, they'd hunted for five days and they seen two deer. So their efforts just weren't successful so they quit doing that.

Just a comment.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I've heard some of those same comments, Elijah. It does seem to be that, you know, the off island hunters are kind of agreeing with what the local hunters are saying is there seem to be less deer available to take. They have other options to go other places. A lot of us don't.
Like I said in my Council report yesterday, you know, people on the north end of the island were going north, were heading to Unit 3 to meet our needs just because of the lack of success. So a little more difficult for other folks on the island.

So I had one other point I wanted to bring up.

The State kind of makes a point that they don't believe that the Board, the Federal Subsistence Board has the authorization to adjust methods and means for non-subsistence hunters. That seems to be -- I don't know if that's a legal opinion or I don't know, the Board took that action, reduced the bag limit, is it the State's contention that the only option that the Board has to regulate non-subsistence hunters is just strictly to open and close seasons and areas?

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman. I believe what the State is pointing out there, that based on the data that we have, we don't see a conservation concern as far -- that would necessitate changing non-Federally-qualified bag limits, which I guess delves a little bit into the legal aspect of this, and I'm not a lawyer and so I won't delve into that.

But the Subsistence Board, based on the RAC's recommendations, you know, has a suite of options that it appears that they can choose from, and this was the option that they chose, again, based on action by the Regional Advisory Council.

The State's comments are focused primarily on the data that we see, not only harvest but other indices we have for the population, you know, doesn't suggest a conservation concern and that's how we approached this proposal.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. It seems like you have made the statement that -- I'll read it here -- the State of Alaska, and not the Board is authorized to establish methods and means and to establish seasons for non-Federally-qualified users. I mean that to mean sounded like a blanket statement that didn't relate to whether or not there was a conservation concern or not. I know, like you said, you're not a lawyer, but it's in our book and it's up
for discussion so I don't know.

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman. Ryan Scott again. Again, this is our proposal, it focuses on the conservation concerns with the deer population. Throughout the state of Alaska the Board of Game is the entity that has been designated as the body to establish seasons, bag limits, methods and means and those types of approaches to different hunting seasons across the board. Recognizing that when we view the data that we have that suggests that there's not a conservation concern, that appears to limit, you know, what would be the appropriate steps by other entities.

And so I think that's the foundation of that statement.

We, again, have come back to the RAC to discuss this and present the information and the data we have. If the data -- and forgive me I'm not overly familiar with all the legal necessities and terms, but without a conservation concern, and, you know, I think it's pretty clear here that there's concerns on either side of this topic, based on what we're seeing we don't see a significant reason to be concerned about the deer population. However, it's very apparent, you know, that that's not a shared opinion across the board with everybody that's in this discussion.

So the State believes that without that conservation concern, changing the seasons, bag limits, methods and means rests with the Board of Game.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. You know we're trying to address this situation where we feel that subsistence needs are not being met, which is the other aspect of the reasons that we can restrict other users, is if needs are not being met and not strictly a conservation concern, you know, we looked at a range of options and, you know, we felt that the least burdensome option to non-subsistence users was a reduction in the bag limit based on the fact that, you know, your data shows that relatively few off island hunters shoot more than two deer anyhow. We might have had a -- we were looking for, you know, hopefully a small benefit without too much of an imposition. You know other options were closing the season earlier. If Fish and Game's position is that we can't adjust methods and means, well, you know, maybe we'll shorten
the season, knock off November or something, you know, make that recommendation. We didn't want to do that. It would have been a pretty drastic step.

So we'll take you at your word that it's not a blanket, we don't have the option of adjusting methods and means if we feel it's necessary so we'll go with that.

Anybody else.

Mr. Wright.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've been sitting here wondering, you know, a lot of the decisions we make are based on numbers but when you've got someone that's supposed to be of an authority saying that we're not sure, and another thing is we're -- what am I saying -- anyway we base a lot of our decisions on numbers and I'm kind of wondering about, you know, it's okay to shoot a lot of bucks and then not -- you know it's not going to affect the population, but if you shoot all the bucks you're not going to have a population, so it doesn't make sense.

But, you know, when -- I was wondering about the hunter observations, is that reported to you and is that the numbers that you're basing the hunting off of, because I'm sure a lot of hunters see some deer but don't -- or else they don't see any deer, so is that what you're basing your numbers on or is it pellets, because I'm sure you can't tell what pellet is a male or a female, so anyway just a question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Was that Fish and Game Department.

MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair. Member Wright. I know Mr. Schumacher's there as well and he can certainly respond to that and I guess I'll take a first crack at it.

So we don't ask on deer hunting report cards for specific types of observations. There is a place for comments, you know, if people want to let folks -- you know, let us know what they're seeing and not seeing. It's pretty -- and, you know, as we've discussed earlier here it's kind of a linear approach to collecting the data and then it's not uncommon,
however, for people to either make a note on the report
card providing those observations or frankly just to
call us and have these conversations with us.

So I guess that's generally how we get
observational type information filtered from the
hunters into the Department.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ryan.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In
spite of the information and presentation by Mr.
Schumacher and the information that we have today,
which is very extensive and I appreciate that and I
feel there's been a lot of work put into that, I agree
with Mr. Winrod's statement there on hunter effort.
And it might be more hunter discouragement than
anything if they're not -- the opportunity might be
there but they just might not be seeing the animals or
having the harvest, the actual harvest of the animal,
so I think there is -- that's a significant impact.

And your statement, as well, as moving
off island to find deer also makes me think about local
knowledge which I take very seriously with the
information that we have presented before us.

So with that it really makes me wonder
about my ability to support this proposal.

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.

Patty Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
Hernandez. So about this deer habitat capability as
the Forest moves -- the cut Forest moves to stem
exclusion stage, how do you guys factor that into deer
populations because as the stem exclusion increases,
then you'll likely see a decrease in deer populations.

MR. SCHUMACHER: This is Tom Schumacher
with the Department. I'll take a crack at that one.

We don't management habitat and we're
not managing the deer population necessarily based on a
number of deer on an island, you know, we frankly admit
we don't know how many deer are on Prince of Wales
Island. So what we look at are to inform harvest is
trend in what we see. And I think this gets back to
Mr. YEager's question, you know, we talked about hunter
participation, and I noted that hunter participation
had declined and hunter harvest had declined in Unit 2
and in the surrounding units, except for Unit 1A. I
tried to get at that question a little bit yesterday
with things like hunter efficiency or days per deer so
that only addresses successful hunters. And also
looked at -- presented information on the percentage of
successful hunters over the years, and the percentage
-- those two figures have been pretty similar. You
know they haven't changed much over time.

So, while, yes, in the big picture as
habitat capability declines the population declines,
but we don't really -- we're unable to document the
population -- the size of these large deer populations.
So I guess until we see some real dips in, not just
harvest, but also these other metrics of efficiency and
success, it's hard for us to really document that we're
coming up that habitat capability limitation.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else on
the Council with questions for Fish and Game
Department.

Patty, followup.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
Hernandez. So, I mean we, as a RAC, tend to look at
things more holistically, I mean we have a proposal
that, you know, deals with one species, but, you know,
we look at the entire ecosystem as a whole and how do
things fit in and so, you know, we've also dealt with
wolf population on POW and, you know, how do you factor
in what the wolves are taking in terms of deer
populations. I mean we have traditional ecological
knowledge telling us there are more wolves than what
the science is showing us and we have Federally-
qualified hunters telling us they're not meeting their
subsistence needs, they're seeing less deer than they
saw before, we have a Forest that's going to stem
exclusion, and so we have this sort of like a perfect
storm of less deer available for harvest.
And, you know, how do you factor wolf
take into deciding what your populations are?

Thank you.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Let's see how to
address that. This is Tom Schumacher with the
Department of Fish and Game again.

Most of Unit 2, and in fact most of
Southeast Alaska is Federally-managed by the Forest
Service so the Forest Service manages the habitat and
there are certain elements in the Forest Plan that say
that there are management units -- generally called
value comparison units, or VCUs need to support certain
numbers of deer per square mile, or they need -- more
importantly what they actually say is they need to
provide habitat capable of supporting certain numbers
of deer. As the habitat manager that's as far as they
can go.

Where wolves live and deer are their
primary prey, I think they need to provide a higher
level of habitat capability. Unit 2 is obviously the
place where those two things come into conflict the
most because of the high level of logging and the need
to support the harvestable population of wolves in that
unit.

You asked about how do we figure out
wolf predation, how do we figure in -- deer move
through wolf predation the entire management, and the
truth is we don't.

We're engaged in research right now
preliminary at this point, looking at predation rates
on deer and other species by wolves. And many of you
probably heard a number thrown around at some point in
the past where every wolf equals -- eats deer every
week or every two weeks, the actual figure that someone
calculated based on the metabolic needs of a wolf
eating only deer, I believe was 26 deer per year per
wolf. So that's if a wolf ate nothing but deer that
year it would meet its caloric needs by eating 26 deer,
26 deer of average size.

Wolves eat a variety of things.

And anybody who's observed them in the
wild knows that they do that. We're engaged in research right now looking, trying to get at that question. The pilot phase of that project is reaching its conclusion now and what we're doing is we're collaring wolves in some areas with collars that are programmed to collect locations I think every 20 minutes during a couple periods of the year. It's very intensive to collect those, it uses up a lot of memory and battery life in the collar so we can't do it all year, but we have specific times of year, in this case late winter, so mid-February to mid-March and then late summer mid-August to mid-September when we're doing those intensive collections -- data collections. And what we're looking for are clusters of points so places where these wolves stopped and spent some time because that means they either rested there or they had something to eat there. And collect those points in real time during those intensive periods and the collars spit up locations to a satellite, which sends an email to the biologist's computer, we have a cluster of points, go out and find that cluster and look at what happened there and hopefully within a day or two of when they were actually there. And, you know, some we don't find anything and some you find, you know, they were eating fish, and we have a wolf collared in the Gustavus area and it's spent a good deal of time doing nothing but eating fish on a salmon stream, just this past sampling period.

We've also done, you know, monitored wolves elsewhere, in Berners Bay, near Juneau, and we're hoping to do some work on Ravelligio Island this winter and the following fall.

And, you know, we're looking at -- the question of the pilot study was can we actually do this, can we find kills, you know, and what they ate. And the answer has been yes so far. You know we found that wolves in Berners Bay ate, you know, mountain goats, they ate some moose, they ate some salmon. But we've found all sorts of other things in there too, sea otters are among them. You know, we're also looking at food habits in general just to get a range of the idea of things that wolves eat.

So through that work we should be able to determine how often a pack kills, in most cases, a large ungulate is what we're interested in at those points in the year. So we're hoping to get at that
question but we don't have a firm answer for you yet.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Ms. Needham.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

When I think about this proposal and, you know, what led to the first proposal I think about competition amongst users and in the analysis I don't see much in the way of like how that is quantified or even qualified, like the perception of competition between Federally-qualified and non-Federally-qualified users on Prince of Wales Island.

I do see on Table 2 on Page 57, my question to you is, the overall statement regarding this data is that that Federally-qualified subsistence users have a higher success rate than other hunters, which might indicate that maybe the competition is not that great, but when you look at the breakdown between the success of one to two deer verses three to four deer, in the one to two deer rate, so success of harvesting one to two deer, the non-Federally-qualified user is about equal to what the Federally-qualified user is, and then when it changes over to three to four deer we see Federally-qualified users being much more successful and maybe that would be a reduction in competition.

So my question back to you and the Department is, first of all, is that -- would that be a decent interpretation regarding competition amongst the two user groups and if not is there any other data that is provided that can actually get at whether -- like what the competition rate might be between the two user groups?

MR. SCHUMACHER: This is Tom Schumacher with the Department of Fish and Game. I don't know that we have any direct -- we don't really have any direct measures of competition or how competition was manifested. We know what individual hunters did, we don't know what that hunter did, discouraged another hunter from doing something or who got to a place first or something like that.

So at this point I don't know that we can answer that question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead,
Cathy, followup.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you. So if you just looked at the percentages that were provided in the analysis, not looking at overall success or overall average success, it says that the Federally-qualified user group is successful in harvesting one to two deer 48.7 percent of the time, and the non-Federally-qualified user is successful 46.4 percent of the time, so would that give any kind of indication that non-Federally-qualified users are equally competitive in harvesting one to two deer on Prince of Wales as Federally-qualified users?

MR. SCHUMACHER: I'm afraid I don't have the benefit of looking at the table and I don't remember the analysis. But was that -- if that included only successful hunters in the analysis, it did -- that might be a reasonable conclusion.

MS. NEEDHAM: The data is provided for a range of years from 1997 to 2017, so it would be before the current regulation is in place where non-Federally-qualified users were restricted, so that's one thing to be pointing out about it, and it actually gives a breakdown of percentages for, you know, either no deer, one to two deer, three to four deer, and five deer, and when the proposal that was put before us that has the current regulation in place, one of the pieces of data that the Department had showed us at the time is that generally non-Federally-qualified users don't harvest beyond two deer, like a very small proportion of them actually do that, and so to me that kind of indicates that if we're getting one to two deer off of Prince of Wales Island it's equally competitive between the two user groups in terms of success, the amount of success of how many deer are harvested in that one to two range.

Is that correct -- that interpretation of it, correct? It's kind of like equal competition between users.

MR. SCHUMACHER: This looks at rates and I see the no harvest rate is much higher than the non-Federally-qualified user. The harvest of one to two deer is very similar. And after that Federally-qualified hunters do better.
So I think you need to look at the percentage of un -- you know, this is a percentage so it doesn't -- they're not hard numbers so you don't competition-wise, you know, if only five non-Federally-qualified hunters took two deer, you know, they're not really providing significant competition to the Federally-qualified hunters so without knowing the numbers of hunters there who took that number of deer, it's hard to access the competitive relationship.

But I think it's also important to look at the unsuccessful hunters as well. And then I don't know what the role of just someone being in your spot when you go there, place in competition, as we've seen over the last, oh, three years at least there's been a steady decline, a very steep decline in non-Federally-qualified hunter participation in the Unit 2 hunt, which is, at least for the first few years, unrelated to the change in the Federal regulation.

So I think, you know, competition has declined since 2015 quite a bit. I think that's a fair statement.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Other questions.

Mr. Leighton.

MR. LEIGHTON: Yeah, I would like to know, and you went over this, but the reporting of this year's hunt, when will that be available -- when will those figures be available to the Board and the people to review?

MR. SCHUMACHER: The requirement for reporting is 30 days after the season closes, so in Unit 2, depending on who you are, that's either December 31st or the end of January. So the earliest we would have data in is by late February but in reality we spend several months encouraging people who didn't report to report, all the while compiling data from people who did. And reports that we get are sometimes -- need to be interpreted a little bit in terms of area, people may be confused about which game management unit they're in or -- and so we check the location, and, you know, but if they have a place name, we'll say, well, does that match this and if it doesn't, you know, we go through -- we make some corrections to things that are obvious errors.
And then compiling that data and running it through the expansion factors for each community takes a little time and usually it's not until late June that we have an actual estimate for the previous hunting season.

MR. LEIGHTON: Okay. Followup to that. On Figure 6, Page 56, you see in 2017 and 2018, a large dip and the way the trends went in previous years, that large dip in 2019 should continue down and could reach as low as 1,500 deer harvested in the area, so if that doesn't demonstrate a little bit of a conservation concern what does?

MR. SCHUMACHER: Well, harvest is not a perfect correlate for population because other things come into harvest. Everybody knows that hunting effort is a big part of harvest and the information I presented yesterday showed that hunting effort very much paralleled the decline in harvest, and the increase. Yeah, Mr. Winrod pointed out that it's a little bit of a chicken and egg scenario, where you don't know whether people expended less hunting effort because they were unsuccessful or fewer deer were harvested because less people hunted. You know, you really don't know which of those happened.

So where you wouldn't see -- you know, look at an actual conservation concern for the population, I don't know -- I think that part of the -- the question here from the State's perspective is -- is that well Federal users say that they're not meeting their subsistence needs at this point, there's no mechanism for saying when those needs are met so there's no way to say when -- you know what conditions would need to be met to rescind those restrictions.

So at this point I don't think that we'll -- you know, when we'd say there's an actual population concern for the deer, I don't know when we'd say that but I think the State's larger point was that there's no way of assessing when we might see this restriction go away either.

I think that's the best I can do for you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, anybody else.
(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, maybe we'll move on here to other Federal agencies.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: None. Tribal comments on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Oh, excuse me, was there somebody on line for other Federal agencies.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any tribal comments on this proposal. I see somebody in the audience. Did you submit the blue card, okay, we'll get you up here next. Well, if you're representing a tribe I guess this would be the time to come up, yeah, that's right.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Go ahead.

MS. BURNS: Thank you, so much. Gloria Burns, Ketchikan Indian Community. And my remarks are quite short.

Two years ago when there was a change in the bag limit, the president at the time, Irene Dundas, had surveyed our tribal membership and we are a large user group, our tribal citizens mostly descended from the people of Klawock or Klukwan or Hydaberg or Kasaan and so we share that traditional boundary. So it was concerning to us to have that limit changed. And so at the time the tribal council took the stance that we were going to oppose the proposal and so she went to have a conversation with tribal leadership and when she came back to us she really indicated to us that the people with the real traditional and ecological knowledge of the island and the user area really were seeing a huge change in their freezers. You know, if their tribal citizens weren't getting the food that they needed to provide, that it was huge, and so we haven't seen a change in that.
I guess I wanted to say my grandmother turned 90 years old this month, and the only thing that she wanted was venison soup, you know, we got her -- my mom went to the Naas River and got five gallons of eulachon grease, we had our cousins from Kake send seaweed. You know, Metlakatla and Sitka sent berries as well as Kake. We went through all of these things, we got eulachons from Anchorage because we can't get eulachons in our area, everything that she could possibly want. Somehow we managed to have a full freezer of herring eggs because she had so many people that loved her. But all she wanted was deer meat soup. And so my mom put out a call to all of our relatives who usually would be able to provide deer meat on Prince of Wales, and she put it out four months ago, and she went to seven different hunters and asked them to provide and it wasn't until three days before her party that we had one deer. And these men were out hunting and utilizing that area on a consistent basis. So much so that one of the people making soup actually got a deer from our island, which never happens, you know, she's used to getting her venison from Prince of Wales, from her Haida family, and her Tlingit friends.

And so I guess I'd say when, you know, there's not a conservation issue, it's not going to affect -- I use that with my tummy -- and my grandmother, all she wanted to make that birthday right was to be able to enjoy that and we had to wait until three days before and it wasn't because people weren't out looking, and so I think that, you know, you have to -- this dad that's being presented is not correct, and we have to listen to those people who are living on the land because they know when a population is going to collapse before.

We didn't listen to the people of Sitka and now what do we have. I think you really have to take into account, you know, that, and it puts a hardship and a burden on the tribal citizens of Ketchikan Indian Community because that is the area that they traditionally feel connected to, to go ahead and harvest, to feel full. But the reality is for us to feel full, is it more important, or is it for our neighbors, who we know absolutely live on that land, have to eat, to be able to feed their families and they need to feed their families first. It's not just subsistence, it's food sovereignty. And I really strongly believe that the people in that area, you
know, living right there, they have a right to their food sovereignty before, you know, before other folks come in.

And so I just wanted to say from the respect of historically looking at that and really, the conclusion that had to come, you know, at a great cost, you know, to the harvesting capability of our own tribal citizens. So I really do feel as though the comments being made by the State are very short-sighted at this moment.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Gloria. Do you want to take a question from the Council.

Ms. Needham has a question.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Burns. I really appreciate you coming forward and offering that information.

The proposal that we're going to be deliberating on soon is, you know, it was put forth by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, basically to rescind the action from this Council where -- or from the Federal Board, where the number of deer being able to be taken from Prince of Wales Island by non-Federally-qualified users was reduced from four deer to two deer, and I want to ask you, in your experience, and your story, do you feel that two deer is still sufficient for fulfilling the needs of the tribal hunters that may actually put forth effort on Prince of Wales Island, is two deer enough?

MS. BURNS: I absolutely can't imagine how people on Prince of Wales could feed their family and their grandparents, their extended family that they're required to provide for with two deer. I mean we even had to give my grandmother's proxy out to try to get somebody to go ahead and get those and still couldn't -- I just couldn't imagine.....

(Teleconference interference - participant's (OSM) phone not muted)

MS. BURNS: .....I couldn't imagine how you would feed your family and the people you're expected to feed off of two deer.
(Teleconference interference - participant's - OSM phone not muted)

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Somebody on the phone needs to mute their phone.

MS. NEEDHAM: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Cathy go ahead.

MS. NEEDHAM: I appreciate that. But I'm actually asking about residents of Ketchikan.

MS. BURNS: You know I think that residents of Ketchikan tribal citizens, the ones that I know that really eat off deer, they do need more than two deer, you know, as far as that, but we have a solution, we'll work with our other sovereign tribal partners about how to address it and come up with that. You know it is the tribal stance on Prince of Wales Island to go ahead and support this, you know, for me, I'd say that that's where we have to come from. That actually hasn't come before the full Council to do a full vote this time, so I couldn't say specifically on behalf of the tribe.

But, you know, I think the people who go, and I think it's the gas and the, you know, the crux with the ferry system, you do have to plan and be there for a certain amount of time, right, and so it's difficult. Our citizens, they absolutely need to have access to that, but we're finding other ways around it, and in the end we also need Sitka herring, but, man, if they'd shut down the Sitka herring for just a little while so it could rebound, why wouldn't we support that, because in the end we can't think about just our freezer today, we have to think about, you know, our freezer, you know, in four years. And so -- and that's just the bottom line.

And quite frankly the deer that came for my grandmother's party came from this island, you know, with the exception of one, you know, that was -- so it's -- yes.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: For the record, what's the bag limit here in Unit 1A for non-Federally-
qualified users?

MS. BURNS: I couldn't answer that because I don't hunt, people give me deer.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Schumacher.

MR. SCHUMACHER: The bag limit in Unit 1A is four bucks.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: There you go, you got four bucks right here in your backyard. Probably literally right in your backyard from what it sounded like yesterday.

Any other questions for Ms. Burns.

Mr. Winrod.

MR. WINROD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a comment to add to what Gloria just said, that I know some hunters from Unit 2 that, you know, kind of frustrated from just difficult to find a deer in the last few weeks, they've come over to Ketchikan and been successful to get their deer over here.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I've been hearing that as well, that the success rate here locally has been pretty good in recent years. Which may explain the drop off in effort on Unit 2 here in the last couple of years, so you got to look at the big picture here.

Any other questions for -- go ahead, Ms. Burns.

MS. BURNS: And I was going to just say and people are illegally driving the Shelter Cove Road, right, and taking down the signs and hunting there right now so they're getting extreme usage out of, you know, that system that nobody's willing to talk about, you know, people are going, pulling off the locks, going through and using the area, people who helped build the road, so, yeah, there's access here that nobody's really talking about that actually is really quite nice in our area so I'm not quite sure why we're -- I mean for us it feels like a solution and that Fish and Game and everything should be looking into our area to figure out how we're making it more accessible for
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: One more question.

My understanding that that Shelter Cove Road you just mentioned, that’s a recently constructed road that opened up a lot of new territory here on Ravelligio Island, is that right?

MS. BURNS: I actually believe from the last presentation the Forest Service did with us, is it's not actually going to be open until the end of 2020, it's got a few things that have stopped it and it's actually very dangerous to run so right now the -- you know, I've been told and we did a PSA for the Council that, you know, people who are going on that, there's a lot of mud that slides, the shoulders aren't really there but, boy, people are having great success regardless and, you know, you can tell them there's a bunch of bucks out there then, you know, go where the bucks are.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Hunters are a resourceful group.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any other questions for Ms. Burns.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, very much for your testimony, we really appreciate it. Let's see that was tribal testimony. Do we have any other tribal testimony on the phone or written.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Apparently not.

Advisory Group comments.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I guess I should
say other Regional Advisory Council comments, and that was a no?

MS. PERRY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair. We received one written public comment in support on this proposal. It can be found in your meeting books on Page 61. The comment came from Ketchikan Advisory Committee and states we support State managers and their assessment of the deer population, and the opportunity it can support.

That was the only public comment received from a Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you.

Subsistence Resource Commissions.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about summary of written public comments.

MS. PERRY: No, other than the Ketchikan Advisory Committee's comment.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. I have one other blue card up here. It says -- I can't read it, the first name is kind of illegible to me, but Mr. or Mrs. Stanton, and they said they wanted to comment on all deer in general. So come forward. If you want to do it now on this proposal that'd be fine.

MR. STANTON: Yes, my name is Loren Stanton. And I'm 60 years old. And this will become important later, you'll realize.

But we may be coming to, in the picture, to the end of an era, and I want to provide some things that you're not thinking about. And I'm wearing the hat of a resident of Ketchikan. I was born here in 1959.

I hunted Ravelligio, climbed mountains here when I was eight, nine and 10 years old to hunt
deer, and that's when I started. But I started hunting
POW in 1978. And that's when the roads were really
bad, and hunting there was a lot of fun. And so from
'78 on I've hunted there. Now, I'm 60. And the last
four years will be illustrative of what's been going on
on Prince of Wales Island. You've heard a few stories.
But I've been there on that island, and I have been
there for weeks, and I go in August and I go in
November.

Last year I went in August and last
year I went in November. I'm still eating November's
deer. I have four pieces left in my freezer.

I felt badly for -- it's hard to fault
the women previous because I felt badly for her and I
wanted to give her the rest of my deer but she said she
doesn't want people giving her deer.

Anyway I guess I'm in the part of the
successful deer hunter from Unit 1, who goes to Unit 2
and I have all my life, and all my adult life. And
when I listen to people and I look at all -- and I read
a lot of the material, the first 100 pages plus of your
agenda, I look at it and I go, yeah, the science is
there and, yes, for years the scientists have been
telling you there's a lot of deer on Prince of Wales,
and, yet for many years this body passes one, or zero,
or two restrictive measures for hunters from Unit 1 to
hunt Unit 2. And even as late as three or four years
ago there were large groups from Ketchikan that would
go over there and hunt and be very successful,
extremely successful, and I've seen the pictures, I've
talked to the guys, I go there. But the larger
umbrella issue that's going on is that we're boomers,
and the boomers are a big part of the population, and
boomers, as boomers, we loved to go hunting, we were
taught to go hunting by our fathers. My father arrived
here in Ketchikan in 1952. We're taught by them that
we needed to go out and we needed to hunt deer. But I
don't think you're going to have to worry about as many
people from Unit 1 anymore, because you can see by the
statistics that the number of hunters are going down
and the amount of time we're hunting on Prince of Wales
is going down and there are multiple reasons for this.
The boomers are getting older. My father no longer
hunts. He's 87. So he stopped hunting awhile back.
My older brothers no longer hunt, they are 65 and 62.
And they've attempted to give me their guns and say
they're not going anymore. And they have stopped

So this age, and this bubble of
boomers, where we all went out and had great times on
Prince of Wales Island hunting and we fed ourselves and
we fed our families, that may be coming to an end.

So there's another part of the
population, which I am very aware of and that is the
vegetarians and the vegans. This part of our culture
may be bypassing us because there are so many
vegetarians and vegans and that includes my daughter.

Now, my daughter is a vegetarian and
she never touched meat and she doesn't want me to hunt.
I think an increasing number of the population are
vegetarians/vegans, and that the number of people who
actually eat meat is going down. Certainly there are
environmental reasons, climate change reasons and other
reasons to eat less meat. We know that if you just pay
attention to the news.

As I listen to people, I can write
pages and pages of notes and comments regarding what
they say, and, because I've been here so long -- I
can't give you everything that goes through my brain,
but I will tell you that most people on Prince of
Wales, who go over there hunt within a couple of miles
of the road, they want to carry the deer that far and
as you get older you want to carry it less and less,
and I can tell you from experience. And so you're
going to shoot a deer 500 yards from the road, a mile
from the road, you still got to carry it and I'm
concerned for the elderly, the boomers, and I'm
concerned for the disabled to be able to get their meat
and, yes, of course, my sister who happens to live in
Saxman and is a subsistence -- could be a subsistence
hunter, she isn't hunting anymore either, and I give
her my meat. Kind of a switch. And she does not give
me her proxy. I've been giving her meat for years and
she won't give me her proxy.

(Laughter)

MR. STANTON: So I can't go to Prince
of Wales on July 24th, and I asked her to, and she
said, no, no, you can't. She's disabled and 64 years
old. So there's stories, people tell stories about
Prince of Wales, I have hundreds of stories about
Prince of Wales. But I think for this particular
committee, right now, the last four years are
instructive. Well, the last four times I've gone,
August/November, August/November, I've gone alone,
alone because my son's don't hunt anymore. I gave them
their guns and they put them in the closet. So it
could be an end of an era if I can't teach my own sons
the value of hunting.

And it's kind of sad actually.

And so if you're talking about the
science, there are more deer over there.

If you're talking about the people,
there are fewer hunters.

Those statistics are borne out.

And if you look at the numbers and you
say there are 250 or 270 deer, I quickly did the math,
times 26, that's either 7,000 deer the wolves are
eating or it's 6,500 deer the wolves are eating. If
the wolves can eat that many deer we can go hunt some
deer. We should be able to go over there and get our
limit because we can't be anywhere near as efficient
the wolves are. The wolves are a whole lot better at
hunting than we are.

There's got to be a balance here, and
it's not being balanced when you're constantly driving
this and saying Unit 1 hunters, non-subsistence hunters
can't go to Prince of Wales, and you're making more and
more limits. And at the same time doing contradictory
things like opening up doe season and people say, well,
it's insignificant. Well, I don't think it's
insignificant. There were comments here earlier about
people growing up and never wanting to shoot a doe. I
have never shot a doe; I never wanted to shoot a doe.
I was trained to not a shoot a doe. It makes no sense
to shoot pregnant deer. And by January when you have
this doe season, they're all pregnant. And that's my
problem with the doe season, is, that you have the rut
in November right now -- and that's another issue, and
I want to raise this one time, and that is, right now
many of my friends who hunt are hunting and they're not
at this meeting, and in some ways I feel like I'm
representing all of them, because they're not here.
Sometimes when you have a meeting like this and you have proposals, you're going to have 20, 30, 40, 50 people here talking to you but now there's one, me, because I have another job now and I couldn't go hunting. But I'd like to say that we're competitors but I guess we're not competitors anymore because it takes us longer to kill a deer on Prince of Wales Island.

I just wanted to make sure that you know that last November when I killed four, that on the area where I killed that four, on the day that I killed that four, six bucks were killed right there in that one little area, and that was just one day on that one road. And people from Craig, and people from Point Baker and people from Klawock are saying there are fewer deer, well, I can tell you that I'm going to -- I'm going to give you, this is what we never, ever do, I'm going to give you where I hunt. Go to Polk Inlet (ph), last November I left 11 large bucks standing at the end of the season. Now, these were on the last road, left turn before the cabin, these were on the right road and back down toward the logging. I know there's a lot of traffic down there right now and there's a lot of logging going on but it's not affecting the number of deer, it may be exposing the deer more like it does, but there are a lot of deer over there. And that's the Sealaska logging area. If you want deer, and you want it within a few minutes drive of Craig or Hydaberg or down in the central part of the island, drive over to Polk Inlet, wait until about an hour before sundown and wait in a nice spot and you'll see the bucks, I guarantee it.

So now that I've told you I can't hunt in Polk Inlet anymore.

(Laughter)

MR. STANTON: All right. I've hit all those high points and low points, the joys and sadness. And it's hard to compete with people who talk about hunting to survive. But I think there are still a lot of deer on Prince of Wales Island and there are going to be fewer hunters, and I may not be going there anymore myself. It's getting too difficult. And neither are my sons, my father and my brothers who hunted there for 30 plus years.
I thank you for your time.

Yes, I will take questions.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, that's what I was going to ask.

Are there any questions for Mr. Stanton.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I don't know, maybe one question. Why do you hunt, do you hunt strictly to eat or what's, you know, the reason you hunt?

MR. STANTON: I just absolutely love being in the Alpine. There is no better place to be in this world than the tops of the mountains. There's no better place. It's a mountaintop experience. You've got to go. Every time I go I climb the mountains, every time. You, sir, I know where you live, and I've been up on the north end between Red Bay and Memorial Beach many, many, many times, so many times I do not know, and I've hunted 83, 84, 85, 86 and 87 and the final road to the mountain, so 87 is getting deteriorated so badly. I feel badly for you guys up in Point Baker because the access now is so limited, you can't get up 86 and 87, you can't get -- and in the back they were using 83, two years ago, so, you know, it's really difficult. I can give you local knowledge across the entire island because I have hunted every single road. And I feel badly for you guys because there are fewer deer up in the north end, and as I looked at the charts and everything here, nobody's counting the deer in the north end. Once you've reached that crack and you head west on the road there are fewer deer and I know why you guys go to Unit 3 because there are fewer deer up there and also you can't access the deer because it's so difficult, even with fourwheel drive and/or smaller vehicles it's very, very difficult.

I'm sad about the inability to access what we call Cherry Tree Lane anymore, if you know the road, that has a cherry tree growing on it, Cherry Tree Lane is completely overgrown now and so is -- well 86 and 87, you just can't get up them. And when those are
gone we don't have access anymore except by walking and
I can't carry the deer that far.

So, yeah, you are right there are fewer
deer up there.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, well, thank
you for that observation. Of course I agree. And
that's one of the reasons I never hunt the road, I hunt
strictly by boat myself.

But the reason I asked you why you hunt
is because, you know, there's a lot of reasons people
go out there and do what they do and I know for, you
know, your generation and maybe -- it was an
interesting observation about the younger generation,
good observation for us to keep in mind, but, you know,
for many people it's just the enjoyment of being out
there, and camaraderie and enjoying nature and, you
know, all those things that are important to you, and,
you know, somebody asked me why I hunt, I hunt to eat.
That's the only reason I hunt. I really, you know,
when I pull the trigger on a deer I always get that
little moment of regret because I just really
appreciate, you know, having them there, but that's all
I eat. I couldn't even tell you how much a pound of
hamburger cost in the grocery store because I've never
bought one. That's why I hunt. I hunt to eat, and
that's it.

So thank you.

MR. STANTON: Well, I feel a little
defensive.

(Laughter)

MR. STANTON: But I will tell you that
I'm not like those hunters that are wasting meat, I've
taken every single ounce of meat off of every single
deer I ever shot. And I'm not out there blowing things
away or anything without taking every single ounce of
the meat. I've eaten it all so there's no waste
involved. And I recognize that a person like you
exists and I totally recognize your need to survive.
So I just wanted to give you the perspective from my
side and that I can tell you that eating deer meat has
probably saved me a lot of money so that I could maybe
send my kids to college or do something else with my
money so it's kind of a displacement theory. But I do understand where you're coming from and I have eaten it all.

So I appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And I absolutely understand where you're coming from and, you know, I don't want you to take that as a criticism, I'm just, you know, pointing out the differences between -- you know, quite often the differences between where you live and why you do what you do, so that was my only point.

MR. STANTON: I will note that....

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: No criticism intended, or anything, I totally justify, you know, all your reasons for being out there, it's perfectly fine with me, you know, it's just pointing out the difference that's all.

MR. STANTON: I will note that within a couple hundred yards of here there's a younger man than I who takes his sons hunting and they're out on Prince of Wales right now, and I sold my freezer last year, my big freezer, and he bought it and he fills his freezers with venison and that's all he eats. So it's true for over here too. So he, and his sons and they've got a lot of venison and they do eat it all.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any other questions for Mr. Stanton.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. I really appreciate you coming forward and representing the people that are not here. I have to admit I expected a lot more public testimony but you probably gave us an indication of why we're not seeing that. So I do appreciate it.

I think that's all the public testimony we had. This has gone quite lengthy I realize, but this discussion also is going to inform a lot of other proposals we have before us so I guess it's good to get it out of the way.
Let's go to the Regional Council recommendation and motion.

(Pause)

MS. NEEDHAM: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Ms. Needham.

MS. NEEDHAM: I move we take a lunch break.

(Laughter)

MR. SCHROEDER: I second.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We could do that. That was kind of the question I had in my mind. Sometimes it's best to just kind of, you know, get the information and get right to deliberation, sometimes it's best to get the information, mull it over for awhile and come back so if it's the wish of the Council that we take a lunch break now and digest all of what we've heard that would be fine with me.

Is that the wish of the Council.

(Council nods affirmatively)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, I'll agree to Cathy's request and we'll take a break. I did want to take maybe a little bit longer lunch today so the Council could maybe get into town and cash per diem checks or whatever, plus yesterday we had a pretty short lunch, so I kind of hesitate to do this, but let's come back at 2:30 -- 2:15.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: 2:15. As soon as possible.

(Laughter)

(Off record)

(On record)
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We got here as promptly as possible, that's good, I appreciate it. We're just missing Mr. Schroeder and I know he's on his way so I think we can get started with the discussion.

This will be Council deliberation is where we left off on Wildlife Proposal 20-02, which is a request from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to rescind the regulation, which was adopted by the Board just last year, I think, that restricted the harvest to non-subsistence users in Unite 2 from four bucks to two bucks.

So in order to get the deliberation started we need an action from the Council -- I should say we need a motion from the Council.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to adopt WP20-02.

MR. KITKA: I second it.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you. So who has thoughts on this proposal.

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Listened to a lot of testimony this morning and a lot of things but when it actually came down to it and I -- the lady from KIC probably hit it more closely than what I was really thinking about earlier and I never really thought that another organization would come out and say the needs of the people have to be met first. And I know this is one of our reasons for being on this Council, is that, if the needs are not being met then we need to listen and talk to these people and do what they want us to do.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Harvey.

Anybody else want to speak to this proposal and address some of the justifications that we need to include our rationale.
Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we generated this proposal we were in Craig and heard numerous people all say the same thing, that they were struggling to get their deer and most of them, or a lot of them weren't getting their needs met, which generated this proposal.

But, you know, this RAC does listen to TEK and it's a little bit different than what the State might do, but when people are all telling you the same story there's something to it.

I believe that the buck/doe ratio is out of balance. We're seeing does but we don't see what would be an adequate amount of bucks. We also see things like fawns that should be more mature, still having their spots way later than what we've seen in the past, means breeding later and we see does with no fawns, but that could be attributed to other things, too, like bear predation or wolf predation but we do see that more than usual.

We have other things that are factors. We have vast amounts of the island that's -- vast amounts of acreage I should say that is in stem exclusion which is not productive deer habitat. We have over 3,000 miles of road that's been built in Unit 2 that allowed access to every corner of the island almost and the deer are, or in past years have been hammered, you can't take 3,000 bucks off that unit every year and still expect things to remain the same. So I think that's what we're seeing is a balance that's not right. We have not only a higher wolf population than I think the biologists are saying but we also have a very high bear population. All those are factors. We've had a lot of hunters on island that have been relatively successful and they work hard at it, they come over there for one specific reasons, they're not like the people that live there, we wait until it's not raining to go hunting, they're there and they're there going no matter what.

So all those things considered and what I'm seeing, not on Prince of Wales itself, but where I hunt, and the people I talk to which also hunt like on Dall Island, on Suemez, on Lulu, on SanFranando, on Baker, the population is not there. That's from a
different cause, that's from wolf.

So I don't believe at this time is a good time -- I do not support the proposal because I think that part of what this proposal will do is eventually, or hopefully bring some sort of balance back into the buck/doe ratio if we slack off on them.

I guess that's my testimony for now.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.

And I think you laid out very plainly kind of what the issues are here.

Anybody else want to speak on this proposal.

Ms. Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. From my reading of the analysis, on Page 56, Table -- or Figure 5, it's showing a harvest below harvest objectives. However, if you compare 2016 to 2018 harvest and hunters, the amount of Federally-qualified hunters went from -- an estimated, you know, based -- it's not a hard number, 2,150 Federally-qualified hunters in 2018 to a thousand Federally-qualified hunters, so, you know, we've lost 1,150 hunters and if you go 2016 900 non-Federally-qualified hunters to 2018 750 non-Federally-qualified hunters, so that's 150 less hunters. So that's a reduction of 1,300 hunters and yet we're still having harvest that is below the harvest objective.

And then on Page 57 it says that members of the subsistence community are unable to meet their subsistence needs.

So I think there is a conservation and a Federally-qualified harvesters are not meeting their subsistence needs, so I will be voting no on the motion.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty.

Anybody else with thoughts on this proposal.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I'd like to speak to it as well. You know I'm not in favor of changing anything right now, rescinding the actions that we took a couple years ago.

You know speaking directly to the conservation concern, you know, there's been a lot of discussion about that, Fish and Game doesn't think there is a conservation concern, yet, you know, we do acknowledge that there are problems that we see developing maybe, or have developed. You know Fish and Game is well aware, they've given a lot of testimony as to their concerns about what happens, you know, as more timber is harvested and more acreage comes into stem exclusion, we know that's kind of an ongoing process, you know, it's happening and it's still in the future. You know we listened to all the public testimony, people on the island, even people from here in Ketchikan and they're talking about seeing, you know, reductions and availability of deer. So maybe we won't be able to convince the Department of Fish and Game that we're looking at a conservation concern, but I think we're certainly looking at a situation where we could be in a dire conservation concern in the near future if we don't, you know, take some action now. The trends do not look good.

I don't know, in my view, I'm kind of inclined to try and prevent a conservation concern instead of waiting until a conservation concern is upon us and trying to deal with it. So I think that's what we're trying to do here when we see these disturbing signs. So I'm not willing to, you know, abandon that idea of a conservation concern.

Also, you know, something that's in my mind, in the background of my mind, is, you know, with an allowable doe harvest for subsistence users, when the buck population seems to be hurting and like I pointed out, people -- most of the people that we know on the island are pretty hesitant to shoot a doe but they want to fill their freezers and they can't find a buck, they will start taking more does. That doe harvest has been very low. I don't want to see us get into a situation where that starts increasing because people can't find enough bucks.
So, yes, those are some of the big factors and why I can't support, you know, rescinding this regulation at this time.

I guess our hope is that by trying to slow down the harvest of bucks in any way we can, without unduly, you know, impacting the non-subsistence hunters, if we can do that and have some success then things might get better in the future. I don't know if I ever see a scenario where, you know, this Council would be reinstating a four buck limit on Unit 2, I'll be frank, you know, that might be here to stay but, I don't know, it's just -- that's to be considered in the future.

For right now I definitely don't think it's time to rescind this regulation.

Any other thoughts.

Mr. Wright.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A few years back we had -- quite a few years back we had a big snowfall and there was hundreds of deer that were on the beach dead, you know, so what had happened after that was that we had told the local hunters that you couldn't be shooting does and then we closed down the hunting early in the season. But then about a couple years later we had deer all over the place, I mean that's how fast they rebounded on us, you know, and now we have deer walking around town and looking in our windows and having a good time, you know, eating our apples. You know so in order for anything to come back you have to cut back a little bit.

I always bring up the herring, cut it out for a year or two, maybe it'll rebound a little bit. You know in order for anything to rebound you have to cut back.

When you got local knowledge that are saying that they're having a hard time, you know, one of the things that we always said that we were going to be listening to local knowledge, the people that's going on on the land, you know, we always don't have to rely on the scientific stuff because, you know, sometimes we think they're wrong. One of the things we always says is we need to listen to the people, the
local people that see what's going on in this world in
their part of the world.

So that's my statement, thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you for
those thoughts, Frank.

Anybody else.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question?

MR. KITKA: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question's been
called for. So the motion was to adopt Wildlife
Proposal 20-02 which would rescind the previous action
of the Board to decrease the bag limit in Unit 2 for
non-subsistence hunters so I will call for a voice vote
on this as well.

All in favor of the motion say aye.

(No aye votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All opposed to the
motion say no.

IN UNISON: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Motion fails,
DeAnna, unanimous.

Okay. Next up is probably Wildlife
Proposal 20-03 and as soon as we find out what page
that is on we can turn there, and, Terry, you can
probably help us out, get started on where to find that
and who our presenter will be.

MR. SUMINSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Jeff Reeves will be presenting that proposal and I
think he has the page numbers for you as well.

Thank you.

MR. REEVES: Are you ready, Mr.
Chairman.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Excuse me, I missed that?

MR. REEVES: This is Jeff, are you ready?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Oh, yeah, hello again Jeff, yep, we're ready.

MR. REEVES: Okay. Jeff Reeves with the Forest Service. You can find the executive summary for WP20-03 on Page 70 in your materials and the analysis is on Page 71.

This proposal is submitted by the East Prince of Wales Fish and Game Advisory Committee and it's requesting the elimination of female deer harvest in Unit 2 and to change the harvest in the unit to only antlered deer.

The proponent believes that the change is necessary because the harvest of female deer is under reported and that change is needed to allow for future harvest of deer on the island. Also changing to antlered deer is because the proponent believes that most hunters use antlers to determine sex before harvest.

This proponent has also submitted a number of other proposals that we'll get to here in a bit, 4, 5, 6 and 7, that regard deer harvest regulations in Unit 2, and that's to ideally provide the Board with a suite of management options that they believe can increase deer population and hunter success in the unit.

So the proposal that's in front of you, if it's adopted, harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified users will be decreased and besides prohibiting the harvest of female deer, adoption of the proposal will implement an antler requirement for harvesting deer which could further decrease harvest opportunity of both yearling bucks throughout the season as well as some mature bucks later in the season that may have dropped their antlers or will lose their antlers during the act of harvest.

The preliminary conclusion is to oppose this proposal. Continued availability of the female
deer season is important for maintaining harvest
opportunity for Federally-qualified users. During past
wildlife regulatory cycles the Board has opposed
elimination of antlerless harvest of deer in the unit
many times. The Board has justified the opposition as
testimonies indicated that female deer harvest is
customary and traditional and that deer populations
have been stable.

Although some smaller, geographical
areas in the unit may have slight declines, current
pellet count data suggested that the deer population
across the unit is stable so female deer harvest does
not need to be prohibited for conservation needs.
Implementing an antler requirement on male deer will
further reduce harvest opportunity while potentially
created unintentional violations in Unit 2. Based on
the current definitions of antlered and antlerless,
adopter the proposal will make the harvest of any male
deer without antlers illegal and would also include any
male deer that may lose their antlers during the act of
harvest.

This concludes the presentation.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
Jeff. So questions from the Council to Jeff Reeves.

Ms. Needham.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Jeff, one thing -- before I was on the Council I know
that there was a deer -- a Unit 2 deer subcommittee,
and they came up with some recommendations that went
towards -- that actually addressed like doe harvest and
supported doe harvest, and I'm wondering if there is --
if you have any quick references for those of us that
weren't on the Council during that -- when that deer
subcommittee went through that huge process about what
the recommendations were from the subcommittee
regarding doe harvest on Prince of Wales.

MR. REEVES: Mr. Chair. Ms. Needham. I
wasn't fully involved through that process at that time
because there was another wildlife person on but what
I'm thinking and based on my recollection was that the
doe harvest, or the female deer harvest was still to
continue but it was just more there was changes to how
the permit needs and the reporting requirements, and
that's what we have seen over the years, is actually
changes to how the, you know, the harvest is recorded
and that such. But I don't know, I wish I had an
answer for you about specific details on it but I
wasn't really a part of that committee.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Reeves.
If maybe somebody on the Regional Advisory Council
might be able to answer that that was actually on that
subcommittee.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you,
Cathy. We have three people at the table that were,
you know, part of that subcommittee. Mike Douville and
I were both Council members on that, and at the time
Mr. Schroeder was our Council coordinator, who, you
know, steered us through the whole process there.

So doe season, you know, of course was
a real hot topic at that time. That Unit 2
subcommittee, for those not familiar with it, it was an
actual subcommittee that was put together, we had
Council members -- there Council members were on the
committee, we had I think three residents of Prince of
Wales Island and three residents from Ketchikan that
all got together and through the course of six meetings
over the winter in different locations, Ketchikan,
Wrangell, Petersburg and Craig we held our meetings so
that, you know, local people could attend and give
input and it was just a -- it was just kind of a
concerted effort to try and find some solutions to some
really problems that had dogged the issues on user
conflicts and conservation concerns and all those
things associated with deer hunting in Unit 2.

Like I say, what to do about the doe
seasons was a real big topic. The doe season was in
place at the time, had been for awhile as I recall. A
lot of people wanted to do away with it, you know, some
subsistence qualified people wanted to do away with it
as well. So it was quite the topic to debate. And
after all of our meetings the doe season remained. We
did want some accountability, we started a registration
where if you wanted to take a doe you actually had to
go into the Ranger District and get a permit, you know,
to take a doe and have that with you in your possession
to show that, you know, you intended to take a doe. So
we wanted accountability. Also with the permit, I
guess probably the main idea was, you know, you'd have
to report that take of a doe at the end of the year so
you'd have a real accurate, a super accurate count of
how many does were taken. I think that was really
important. So, you know, that permit system was in
place for a number of years. It got rescinded
eventually because, you know, at that time all the good
information showed that people were not taking that
many does and so then we went to that system where now
you have to reserve harvest ticket No. 5 for a doe, or
punch that for a doe, so at least there's no -- there's
not the same absolute accountability but there's
accountability in the field to, you know, for
enforcement to know that you've only taken that one doe
if you only have that one ticket punched.

So I think that was -- you know after
all the debate about whether to do away with it or not,
what we wanted -- what we ended up deciding was
accountability was, you know it was really important to
know what that harvest was and as a result of that we
got some real good numbers of what the harvest was and
I think, you know, some of the concern went away
because we saw that it was not a real high harvest.

I don't know if Bob or Mike have
anything to add to that. That's kind of my
recollection and it was 16 years ago now.

MR. SCHROEDER: Well, since you almost
called on me there.

(Laughter)

MR. SCHROEDER: This was a really
successful effort and success in both coming up with
good management directions but also we can remember
that it was a really cooperative project with the
Department of Fish and Game and I think people really
put their cards on the table and participated real
well. So I think that helped out our relations between
the Council and subsistence users and Fish and Game
quite a bit.

And just so we have on the record that
one of the other recommendations from that group was
that we work to restore and rehabilitate the Tongass to
its natural condition. And this is a little bit out of
order but I wanted to mention that so that we have some
record of that because that will be part of our
roadless comments as well.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Bob. And seeings as how Cathy, you know, brought the subject up on that subcommittee, I mean what we did 16 years ago still kind of affects a lot of what's happening today because, you know, we did take some actions as a result of that subcommittee. As we got into discussion it kind of became pretty clear that there wasn't going to be a lot of consensus on what to do with seasons and bag limits and those kinds of things so we kind of started focusing on what we could agree on and what it boiled down to was, you know, a few key things that we all could agree on. And aside from what Bob mentioned one of them was hopefully some restoration, but it boiled down to we wanted to try and get some better population information. And, you know, at that time most of what we had was hunter surveys which were mail out, kind of random surveyors, not everybody did a survey, it's a statistical analysis on how many surveys you send out, how many you get back, so we wanted a better means to track, you know, what harvests were. And that resulted in this, you know, mandatory reporting form that was standardized between subsistence and non-subsistence users, the post card that I held up earlier. So that came as a result, try and get some good hunter information. You know I still think it's a little bit inadequate but it was a step.

The other thing we wanted was -- oh, in terms of the population, we wanted to try and get better population estimates and at that time we had this research going on by Todd Brinkman, Phd. candidate, who we talked about yesterday and he was proposing, you know, enhancing the pellet counts with DNA analysis and there was a lot of debate about whether or not that would actually work or not, 16 years ago, DNA technology was not what it is today but, you know, Todd convinced us that he thought it could work and we made the recommendation to fund his project, which, at the time, we had -- now we have Fisheries Resource Management projects that we're going to be talking about before the end of the meeting, we had Wildlife Resource Management Funds available to us and I don't know if we still have those funds available, because they were pretty useful, we used those to finance Todd Brinkman, and he went out and started doing DNA captures and by golly found out that it could be done and it could be really successful.
So, you know, so at times we've had some really good enhanced pellet counts that, as I recall in some cases, kind of, you know, were not in synch with what the old standard pellet counts were showing. Todd showed that he could get more accurate numbers and as I recall on some of the locations he saw a significant difference from what the old standard pellet counts used to show. DNA analysis also allows us to get the percentage of does and bucks because DNA can identify, you know, sex. So that came out as a result of that subcommittee meeting.

And the third thing, the third real important factor was we wanted to get more information on what the subsistence uses and needs were for the people on Prince of Wales Island. And, unfortunately we never really got any really significantly new and better information on that. We're still relying on talking to local people but we never got an actual study completed that would, you know, give us some real solid information to go on.

So those were the three legs, you know, of the -- like somebody put it, in order to have a basic stool stand up and be functional you need at least three legs, you know, one or two won't do it, and we decided those were three things that could inform our decisions and we got consensus, that that's the kind of information we need and we decided what the best way was to go about getting it and it's helped to inform our decisions ever since in the last 16 years.

The subcommittee did, as I recall, it did decide to make the one regulation change and that is when the seasons got changed so that there was an early start to the subsistence hunt so that the idea -- that was instituted to give somewhat of a rural priority by giving subsistence hunters a chance to get out ahead of the non-subsistence hunters and maybe take a deer before anybody else.

And we also -- another regulation which is still in effect was that season -- length of season change, we did not implement that -- there's an area on the southeast side of Prince of Wales Island that is not subject to that early season differential between subsistence and non-subsistence because we had a lot of testimony that people from Ketchikan, in the summertime, would take boats across Clarence Strait and
liked to hunt some of those bays on southeast side of
Prince of Wales Island, which were not very heavily
used by other people that lived on the island, you
know, it was a little more remote to island residents.

So that's what happened as a result of
that. Some of those changes are still in place and
working.

So thanks for the question, Cathy.

So anybody else with things to say
about this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, sorry that
was a question, we're still in the question phase, so
is there any other questions for Jeff Reeves. I talked
so much I forgot where we started.

(Laughter)

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, I guess not,
Jeff, so thank you very much.

So was there tribal consultation on
this proposal, Orville.

MR. LIND: Afternoon Chair, Council
members. During the consultation there were no
questions or comments on Proposal 20-03 -- correct?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Correct.

MR. LIND: However, I would like to
mention that Mr. Wayne Owen did state during the talk
that people that are not actively engaged in the
Regional Advisory Council are often surprised by the
decisions made by the RACs or the Federal Subsistence
Board, and just basically put it out there that if you
have any idea to become more transparent that he is
willing to listen to and would like more transparency
to take place.

And that's all I have, Mr. Chair.
Council members.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you, Orville.

Now, we get comments from Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is Ryan Scott with the Department of Fish and Game in Juneau.

The Department's neutral on this proposal. The current estimated doe deer harvest makes up right around three percent of the overall estimate, we don't see that as a biological concern and our position is neutral on it.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you, Ryan. Any questions for Ryan.

Ms. Needham.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the proponent of this proposal actually comes from a Fish and Game Advisory Committee and I'm just wondering whether or not the Department spends much time -- I know the Department's kind of stance is that there isn't a conservation concern with deer, however, the proponent is now presented a suite of potential proposals that could address concerns that they've been hearing on Prince of Wales Island and so I just want to find out whether or not they get the same type of information that we get in terms of the analysis and whether or not the Department has conveyed to them that, at this time, they don't feel like there's a conservation concern with deer on Prince of Wales.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Is somebody from the Department going to answer that.

MR. SCOTT: This is Ryan again. I apologize, I didn't hear it. I just heard the last -- kind of the last portion. Could you repeat the question, sorry about that.
MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
The proponent of this proposal was a Fish and Game Advisory Committee, and the basic question is whether or not the Department provided any of their analysis in terms or their stance that there is not a conservation concern with deer populations on Prince of Wales Island, so I was just checking to find out whether or not the Fish and Game Advisory Committee has that same information available to them?

MR. SCOTT: Thank you. Through the Chair. Member Needham. I'm going to ask Tom Schumacher to, you know, confirm this, but certainly if anybody who asks for the data, that the Regional Advisory Council has seen already, it would have been provided to them as well.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead, Cathy, followup.

MS. NEEDHAM: All right, thank you.

And then as a second question kind of along the same lines, has the Fish and Game Advisory Committee presented any proposals to the Board of Game process that addresses their concerns with deer populations on Prince of Wales Island?

MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair. Member Needham. I would have to go back and look and see exactly which ones they did submit to the Board of Game. This group of individuals has been very active. Actually it's really pretty neat. They were very engaged. I had several conversations with them in Petersburg last winter and they were extremely engaged with the overall process. But I apologize, off the top of my head I don't remember which proposals they submitted to the Board of Game. I believe they did submit both deer and wolf proposals, however.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Any other questions for Fish and Game.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I guess I have one. In the discussion portion of our analysis, it says that the proponent believes that this regulation
change is necessary because the harvest of female deer
in Unit 2 is under reported and biologists are not
getting factual information.

Did they provide any reason why they
believe that it's so under reported, I mean we have,
you know, made efforts to get a good handle on what
that number is?

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I'm not aware of any empirical information or, you
know, data that they provided to the Department on that
particular topic.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, okay, thank
you.

Any other questions for Fish and Game.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, I'm not
seeing any more Ryan. So we will move on to any other
Federal agencies that commented on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: No. Do we have
tribal comments on this proposal.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: No tribal
comments. So I believe -- or how about other Regional
Advisory Councils.

MS. PERRY: No other Regional Councils
commented on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: But I think we do
have Fish and Game Advisory Committee comments,
correct.

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair. One
written public comment in opposition was received on
this proposal. It could be found in your meeting book
starting on Page 87.

This comment's from the Ketchikan
Advisory Committee and it states:

Though the AC does not agree with doe harvest we do not support this proposal because it would have minimal impact.

That was the only AC comment that we received on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you for that. Subsistence Resource Commission comments.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about written public comments.

MS. PERRY: No other written public comments other than the Ketchikan Advisory Committee.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Is there anybody here in the meeting or on the telephone from the public who wants to testify on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing or hearing anybody.

So what's the Council's recommendation on this proposal, are we ready for a motion.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Move to adopt Wildlife Proposal WP20-03.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Do we have a second.

MR. KITKA: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you.

So open to discussion. What's the view of the Council on eliminating the doe harvest.

I think we have Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Mr. Chairman. I do not
support this proposal. Quite a few years ago, before I was even on the Council, I was at a meeting in Saxman, and there was concern on the island that doe harvest was causing problems as far as too many does and so on and there was a quite a group that wanted to eliminate it and they had me convinced too. So I went before the Council and gave it my best shot and made the best argument I could to not have a doe season. And Big Bill was the Chairman, Bill Thomas......

MR. SCOTT: Hey, man, sorry, I'm jumping between a RAC teleconference and everything else.....

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Hit your mute button on the telephone, Ryan, please.

MR. DOUVILLE: Anyway he listened and everybody listened and said that's a very good argument, he said you really did good but we have this thing called customary and traditional and it's customary and traditional to harvest does.

MR. SCOTT: Yep, totally.

MR. DOUVILLE: So it wasn't going to go away. So the next thing I asked for was accountability, and this is probably where this doe registration came from because.....

MR. SCOTT: ......uh-huh.....

MR. DOUVILLE: ......the Council did agree that accountability would probably solve a lot of the issues that we were having with it so.....

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, and I.....

MR. DOUVILLE: ......you had to go to.....

MR. SCOTT: ......it was already I thought, I thought it was the 4th, 5th and 6th, and I told them I should be available.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Could the people on the phone lines hit the mute button or star six, please, we're hearing you at the meeting.
Okay, go ahead Mike.

MR. DOUVILLE: Okay, I forgot where I was. But anyway there was a registration, you had to go to the Forest Service to get a specific tag to get a doe. Well, it was, you know, like earlier you said it showed that there really wasn't that much, significant, take so that eventually went away.

But down the road here, a ways farther, the enforcement thinks that there's still issues and some other people did too, so comes the proposal to use Tag 5.

So there is accountability, and the take is not -- it's not creating any conservation concern with the doe population. But to pass this, also would be a restriction on rural users and Title VIII is specific, it says, before you can put a restriction on a rural user you first have to eliminate all other users so that's something to consider. But all considered, I do not believe it is a problem. There's no conservation concern. To eliminate it would take away from a rural user. I do not support it.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike. I believe you covered a lot of the rationales that we're supposed to cover on this.

Is there anybody else who wants to speak on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. What's the wish of the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Excuse me, do we have a question.

MR. KITKA: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question's been called for, thank you Harvey.

So the motion was to adopt Wildlife Proposal 20-03 which requests the elimination of female
deer harvest in Unit 2 and also to add a requirement on the harvest of antlered deer. So I will just do a voice vote on this as well, all in favor of the proposal say aye.

(No aye votes)

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Did I hear an aye -- no, that was on the phone line -- yeah, okay. All opposed say no.

IN UNISON: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: It is unanimous in opposition. Yeah.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Next proposal, Mr. Suminski, you want to tell us who's up for that one.

MR. SUMINSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is also Jeff Reeves presentation.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you. Jeff, you ready to go on Proposal No. 4.

MR. REEVES: Yes, I am Mr. Chairman.

Proposal WP20-04 you can find the executive summary on Page 97 and the analysis is on Page 99.

What you'll notice with this one is that it's very similar to the last one you just dealt with so this proposal is also submitted by the East Prince of Wales Advisory Committee. It's asking for the elimination of the female deer harvest, but this -- it's only for one regulatory cycle, but it also asks for the antlered deer requirement.

So the proponent believes that the change is necessary for improving future deer harvest on Prince of Wales, and the last few years that
predator populations have been drastically increasing while the deer populations have been decreasing and that the closure should aide in the rebuilding of the Unit 2 deer population, and automatically allow the female deer take to resume on October 15th of 2022 if the proposal was approved.

The preliminary conclusion is to oppose the proposal and it's the same justifications as the last one. It would go against what the Board has done in the past with antlerless stuff and there's no necessary need to go against the Board's wishes at this point as the female deer harvest is, again, it's so small that it's not really needed to get rid of for conservation. And the antler requirement, based on the definitions would create, you know, potential for some violations and also reduce some opportunity on young male deer and mature bucks later in the season when they're losing their antlers.

So I'll leave it at that.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you, Jeff. Any questions for Jeff from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any Jeff. So we'll move on to any tribal comments on this proposal, DeAnna.

MS. PERRY: Orville's coming up, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Oh, sorry, yeah. Sorry, this is consultation, I mean, not comments.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Chair. Council members. For the record, Orville Lind, Native Liaison for Office of Subsistence Management.

Again, Sealaska Corporation was the folks that called in and she did ask some clarification of the proposal. She was confused on the changing of the harvest limit. And then Forest Service Staff were there to give a quick overview and Forest Service also mentioned that there would be another opportunity to
speak on this proposal during this Southeast Regional Advisory Council meeting.

She was also concerned that the lack of participation from the corporations during the Regional Advisory Council meetings and she says that she will encourage others to attend in the future and she finds it very important because the resource doesn't know boundaries.

And that's all I have for you, Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Orville. So time for the Department of Fish and Game to give their comments.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ryan again, and the Department, similar to the previous proposal are neutral on this one primarily because of the level of harvest that currently exists, less than three or right at three percent of the overall harvest of female deer, or antlerless deer even and the Department's neutral on 20-04.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ryan. Are there any questions for Ryan on this one.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Don't see any. Any other Federal agencies comment on this, DeAnna.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Did we have any tribal comments on this?

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Other Regional Advisory Council.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

MS. PERRY: One written public comment in opposition was received on this proposal. It can be
found in your meeting book on Page 115. The comment' from the Ketchikan Advisory Committee and states:

Some AC members support cessation of
doe harvest, if only for a short period of time.

That was the only comment received from
a Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you.

Subsistence Resource Commissions.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about written
public comments.

MS. PERRY: No other written public
comments were received on this proposal other than the
Ketchikan Advisory Committee comment that I just
stated.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Anybody
from the public on the phone or in the room want to
comment on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Apparently not.
So what's the Council's action on this proposal, do we
have a motion.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Move to adopt Wildlife Proposal WP20-03.

MR. KITKA: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. A
motion and a second by Harvey. So what's the Council's
thoughts on this proposal.

Ms. Needham.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
think some of this -- I think the discussion and
justification on the last proposal carries over to this
so I think the record should reflect that as one item.
And then I would be interested if there was any additional justification, for other Council members to share that.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any other justifications from the rest of the Council on this one.

Yeah, Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Nothing new, but the previous justification would certainly apply here and I can't think of anything to add.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Mr. Chair. I'd just note that while it's possible to put into regulation something that would only apply for two years or two seasons, that this is a rather unusual request and it's not something that is kind of a normal part of our business or a very usual part of wildlife management. So in that respect it's inappropriate and I'd second that the comments made and the analysis for the previous proposal applies for this one as well.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Bob. Any other discussion on this.

Elijah.

MR. WINROD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a question, and mostly I guess just to familiarize myself, but what would be the cutoff point or justification of say the does got so few, like where would you cut off a line where you would no longer allow subsistence take, how would that be determined?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Boy, pretty speculative, I don't know you got any thoughts on that Mike?

MR. DOUVILLE: It is a good question. Thankfully we're a long ways from that, and hopefully we don't ever get there. But there is mechanisms in Title VIII to eliminate all other users should the resource get diminished to that point and then you would start reducing the bag limit for the rural users that were there and this would also eliminate other
rural users that have less priority, if you will, from Petersburg, Wrangell. But the mechanisms exist to lower the bag limit for rural users like in Unit 2, but first everybody else is eliminated, starting with non-rural people, then rural and then you start putting restrictions on those that live in Unit 2.

I would think that our biologists, the State biologists and we, as a RAC, and the people with the TEK are going to be watching this so it never gets to that point.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: That was a good answer, Mike, thank you very much. Good question too Elijah.

Any other thoughts on this proposal before we call for the question.

(No comments)

MR. KITKA: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question has been called for. We'll do another voice vote on this one. So the motion is to eliminate the female, the harvest of female deer in Unit 2 for one regulatory cycle, which is two years, and it's spelled out, the dates of what that is, but elimination of female deer harvest for one regulatory cycle.

So all in favor of that motion say aye.

(No aye votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Opposed, no.

IN UNISON: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Unanimous opposition, DeAnna.

So Proposal No. 5 is up.

MR. SUMINSKI: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Jeff Reeves will also present this proposal for you.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, go ahead,

MR. REEVES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I guarantee you guys are going to become experts on Unit 2 female deer after this one.

So Proposal WP20-05, you can find the executive summary on Page 125 in your materials. The analysis begins on Page 126.

So this proposal is also submitted by the East Prince of Wales Fish and Game Advisory Committee and it asking that the female deer harvest in the unit occur under a Federal registration permit. They believe that the regulation change is necessary because they believe that female deer harvest in the unit is currently under reported and that a registration permit will allow biologists better ability to manage the deer population as well as clarify regulations for subsistence users.

They believe that most Federally-qualified users in the unit are unaware of the Federal regulations and that harvest on State and private lands is not allowed. The proponent suggests that a registration permit should help educate Federally-qualified users on Federal regulations, while also gathering harvest data for biologists to manage deer in the unit.

The conclusion is to oppose this proposal. The registration permit requirement creates unnecessary burden for subsistence users and would contradict past Board action, to simply to simplify reporting requirements. Currently all deer harvest in the state is reported under State deer harvest report and this is actually reflecting the female deer harvest quite well. Requirement of a registration permit will mis-align State and Federal regulations increasing regulatory complexity and could result in dual reporting. Adoption of the proposal will not likely have any positive effects on the health of deer populations in Unit 2 as deer populations are more greatly affected by available habitat and winter weather conditions rather than harvest.

From 2001 to 2018 reported female deer harvest in the unit have ranged from 57 to 119 with an
overall annual average of 88 deer, or as we've been hearing up until now, three percent of the annual harvest. So a registration permit requirement to harvest female deers is not necessary for the conservation of this resource.

So that concludes my presentation.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jeff. How about questions for Jeff on reinstating the registration permit for does.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing questions for you Jeff. So we will move on to the tribal consultation again.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Council members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. There were no questions or comments on Wildlife Proposal 20-05. However I did fail to mention that there was two things, Sealaska Corporation encourages everyone, all the agencies to keep contacts up to date, that could probably be beneficial for everybody in knowing when the next meetings were going to happen.

Also Mr. Owen from Forest Service extended himself and his office to work together to get the local people participating in these meetings.

That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Orville. Time for the Fish and Game comments on this proposal.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's Ryan Scott again with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Juneau. The Department's neutral on this proposal primarily because we don't believe there's a conservation concern with it and as we've discussed at length, very little harvest as far as doe deer go.

With that said, should the Council adopt this proposal, there may be some additional
detail in harvest accounting and the Department would ask that we work, are able to work very closely with managers to design the permit and the reporting aspect of it, primarily so there's no cross messages, you know, as far as getting information shared across the boundaries. That's just something that, you know, we've all experienced at one point in time, where if we have dual systems running, it's sometimes difficult to make sure the data gets passed one way or the other.

But in general, the Department's neutral on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you for that Ryan. Any questions for the Department of Fish and Game.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any. Other Federal agencies, DeAnna.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any tribal comments on this.

MS. PERRY: No, not at this time.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Other Regional Advisory Councils.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Subsistence Resource Commissions.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

MS. PERRY: Yes. One written public comment in support was received on this proposal. It can be found in your meeting book starting on Page 140 and the comment's from the Ketchikan Advisory Committee and states:

AC supports the proposal as it may lead
to better data for management.

And that's the only comment received from an Advisory Committee.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you for that. Written public testimony.

MS. PERRY: None, other than the Ketchikan Advisory Committee comment.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about public testimony in the room or on the phone.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Don't see or hear any. So what's the wish of the Council on this proposal.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to adopt WP20-05.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.

MS. NEEDHAM: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We have a motion and a second. So Council discussion, whether or not we should bring back -- if it would be a good idea to bring back a registration permit for taking a doe in Unit 2.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I do not support this proposal as I believe that using Tag 5 is an adequate way to keep track and for the most part keep people legal and it's upon yourself to know where it's legal to hunt, you know, I guess ignorance is no excuse but I think most people know and understand that by now, pretty well. And I think it's an unnecessary burden to want somebody from living in Point Baker to go to a Forest Service office in Thorne Bay or Craig to get a permit so they can get a doe, that's totally unnecessary, and I think we have adequate accounting.
I do not support this proposal.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.

Anybody else.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, you know, I agree with Mike. I think what's important on this proposal and the justification is, you know, is there substantial evidence, you know, to back up our action and, you know, we're talking about accountability on this and as Mike pointed out, that mandatory requirement to use Tag No. 5 for a doe, I think it's pretty effective for the, you know, the enforcement of this, and I do believe that with the State and Federal enforcement people out on the island, I think they do a pretty thorough job of, you know, checking people from what I hear. And then as far as, you know, getting data on the overall take of does at the end of the season, I actually think in this instance with the hunter report information, you know, that is a really straight forward question on the form; did you take a doe; yeah with only one doe available there's no confusion, you know, I don't care if you went out 100 times or 10 times you know if you took a doe. So I think they're getting pretty good information to go by.

I agree that, you know, putting permit applications, the requirement for people to go get permits and fill it out and return them and people forget and agencies have to track them down, and remind them, they forgot to turn in their registration and brings up subjects of whether or not you're going to fine people, if you don't, and all these questions. I just don't think it's a necessary burden to put on people.

So I would not support this proposal.

Any other thoughts, comments.

Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Mr. President, thank you.

How far back was it that you had to have registration for does, this was -- was this adopted as a ruling in the past under this Council?
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: It was, it was probably -- I don't remember if there was a permit requirement prior to our deer subcommittee 16 years ago, I'm thinking that's when the permit got instituted and I can't remember when the date of when the permit requirement went away and we went to the mandatory punching Tag No. 5. I'm thinking that might have been 10 years ago or so.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: My memory tells me that at the meeting that I was at, before I was on the RAC, that the permit for does was -- it stated where you had to go to the Forest Service and this was before the deer planning committee, that was already in place.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, quite likely. It does -- so that goes back 20 years or so that we instituted that requirement and then did away with it. It was probably in place for maybe 10 years or so, I'm guessing.

MR. BEMIS: Yes, that answers that. And the reason why I'm bringing it up is because if this punched tag No. 5 is working, it doesn't seem necessary to bring back and readapt another user for doing a registration for does. It seems like a cost of money, right, and extra effort and it's already been on the books once and what's in place now is working. So I'd just like to reflect that on the record.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Larry. Any other comments on this proposal.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Do we want the question.

MR. WRIGHT: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question's been called for. The motion is to adopt Wildlife Proposal WP20-05, which would institute a requirement that a person who wanted to take a female deer in Unit 2, a Federally-qualified hunter in Unit 2 would have to get a registration permit. So that's the motion, I'll do another voice vote on this. All in favor of the motion
say aye.

(No aye votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Oppose, no.

IN UNISON: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Unanimous in opposition, DeAnna.

Let's move on to Proposal No. 6, and I'm going to see if we can work through all the Unit 2 deer proposals before we take a break. I hope we -- let me just take a look again here and see if that seems possible.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Two more. If everybody's okay, let's try and get two more proposals and then we'll take a break before we switch topics here. So Terry is this another one for Jeff Reeves?

MR. SUMINSKI: Yes, Mr. Chair. This one and the following one are also Jeff's proposals.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, go ahead Jeff.

MR. REEVES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the executive summary for Proposal WP20-06 is located on Page 149 of your Council material and the analysis can be found on Page 150.

As with the past several, this one is also submitted by the East Prince of Wales Fish and Game Advisory Committee and it's requesting a reduction of the season ending date for deer in Unit 2 from January 31 back to December 31st.

The proponent believes that the season reduction will prevent regulatory confusion for subsistence users and also benefit the Unit 2 deer population. They believe that removing January opportunity is detrimental to subsistence users as there is still a subsistence priority for harvesting deer beginning on July 24th prior to the State season that begins on
August 1st.

The preliminary conclusion is to oppose this proposal.

The proposal reduces harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified users if it is adopted. Opportunity to legally harvest deer in January in Unit 2 has been available since the 2016 regulatory season. The amount of deer made available for future deer seasons is going to be negligible if (indiscernible) this proposal, as the reported harvest in January has been very low and only ranged from 12 to 26 deer. Adopting the proposal does not prevent future conservation issues as deer populations in the unit are more affected -- are more greatly affected by habitat and winter conditions than by harvest and the reduction of season length is not necessary for continuation of future subsistence opportunity, nor for the conservation of deer in the unit.

If by some reason Federal -- or future harvest were to increase to high levels or the winter conditions dramatically reduce deer numbers that did create a conservation concern, the delegated in-season manager has been given authority by the Federal Subsistence Board to take action accordingly.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jeff.

Questions for Jeff Reeves.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, not seeing any questions. So consultation, tribal consultation in regards to this one, Orville.

MR. LIND: Mr. Chair. Council members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. There were no questions or comments on this proposal, however, there was a lot of interest from Sealaska Corporation to see more young students participate in these types of meetings that involves the resource. Also that they would be interested in working together to get more students to these meetings.

That's all I have, Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you, Orville. And we're fortunate to have some students at this meeting so it would be great if Sealaska could maybe help with some of the funding on that in the future, that seems to be a problem.

Okay.

Fish and Game comments.

MR. SCOOT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ryan Scott with the Department in Juneau. The Department supports this proposal primarily because it moves in the direction to align Federal and State season lengths as well as was identified, at least touched on in the OSM analysis. The author of the proposal also wanted to address confusion over, you know, where is it legal to be hunting and harvesting in that January season. And by better aligning State and Federal regulations, that eliminates some of that confusion. Certainly the harvest in January is very low, averages about 16 deer a year, so on a population scale it's a negligible scale. However, the Department did support this.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you, Ryan. Questions for Department of Fish and Game.

You got your hand up Harvey -- yes, go ahead.

MR. KITKA: Thank you. I just was curious, a few years back there was people that were subsistence harvesting in Federal waters and then taking it across State property and were ticketed because of that, would that happen at this point?

MR. SCOTT: Through the Chair. Member Kitka. I am not the Wildlife Troopers but I don't believe so. The regulation is specifically for where the game is taken and that's how I would -- that's how I anticipate it would be looked at.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you, Harvey. Other questions for Fish and Game Department.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any,
thank you, Ryan.

Any other Federal agency comment.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Tribal entities, tribal comments.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Other Regional Councils.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Subsistence Resource Commissions.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

MS. PERRY: Yes. One written public comment in support was received on this proposal. It can be found in your meeting book starting on Page 163. This comment's from the Ketchikan Advisory Committee and states:

AC supports removal of January hunt due to a small amount of harvest, reduced quality of meat and difficulty in distinguishing bucks and does.

That was the only AC comment.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Any other written public comments.

MS. PERRY: Not other than the Ketchikan Advisory Committee comment.

Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Public testimony on this one, anybody on the phone or in the room want to testify on this proposal.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Don't see any. So the wish of the Council on this proposal.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Move to adopt Wildlife Proposal WP20-06.

MR. KITKA: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I have a motion and a second. So discussion on shortening the length of the subsistence season by one month in Unit 2, what's the Council's thought on this one.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: It does raise a variety of issues dealing with being able to identify deer and the difference between bucks and does, a few concerns raised on this one, aligning State and Federal regulations for less confusion. I don't know if anybody wants to address any of those topics.

Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Yes, Mr. Chair. My question would be, what's been the average take in January and what has been the problem in between both the antler and antlerless deer, and if we were going through a situation where we were having problems, as we increase the problems as we see for the hunter, especially non-rural user -- or subsistence user, as we see -- that we keep talking about this problem of hunting and getting harder areas and this sort of thing, if they want to stop it by a month, is the hunting that good to stop it by a month, or are we looking at the opposite where it's getting harder to hunt and would this put more pressure on the individual's non-rural -- or I mean the rural hunter to be able to get his game in a timely manner, and maybe does need that extra 30 days, if hunting is getting harder and more difficult to hunt.

Listening to all the testimonies it don't sound like it's getting better, it sounds like it's getting worse, and if you take a month away from this hunt, that -- if things are getting harder and harder, that is going to put pressure on some
individuals that probably depend on that extra time.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Larry. To answer your first question about, you know, the numbers that are taken in January, I think the data showed that that number was very small, varied between like 12 and 20-some harvested in January so it was described as being insignificant.

So, yeah, as far as what it would mean to subsistence hunters, I don't know, Mike did you want to -- it looked like you were getting ready to address that maybe.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can add a little bit, you know, not all the horns fall off these deer. I've seen horns on deer clear to the end of February. And not only that the doe season is open so, you know, and there's very little effort but there are some users that may not have gotten one earlier or need more, or didn't have an opportunity or any number of reasons that want to get one in January and I don't think there's issue with that.

There's no conservation concern at this point that would make me want to say, no, you can't do that.

There was one other thing I was going to say but I'll have to think for a minute.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: While Mike's thinking there, anybody else with thoughts on this.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: I'd just toss in that, you know, we are talking about Unit 2, of course, but just right across from where you live is Unit 4 and there's been a January season in Unit 4, I think, since the '80s and this doesn't seem to cause great confusion among hunters. They seem to know whether they can hunt legally or not, if they're Federally-qualified they can. And we haven't had anything come before us to say that this is detrimental to the resource in Unit 4 over
this long time period, or that there are particular reporting requirements.

And just following on what Mr. Douville said, in doing research with deer hunters over the years when I was actively doing that, most people close out, they're kind of done hunting by Christmastime. They don't like the skinny deer. But there are some people, as Mr. Douville said, who, are still hunting and for whatever reason could use to get another deer or two.

So I'd be opposed to passing this.

I feel that it would be solving a non-problem.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Bob. Mike, something to add.

MR. DOUVILLE: Yes. Back in the day, if we got an opportunity to get a deer we got it, we didn't care what time of the year it was, especially my grandparents and on down the line, it didn't matter.

But what I was going to say is this mentions aligning seasons but we have a rural priority and it's nice to align seasons and regulations where we can but because of the rural priority we can't always, but we do make that effort, and it is a consideration is what I wanted to say.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Right. Where it's practical we do it but we don't want to unnecessarily restrict a subsistence user just for that reason alone so I agree with that.

Anybody else, thoughts on this proposal.

Elijah, go ahead.

MR. WINROD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a question, if a subsistence hunter in January were to shoot a deer that he thought was a doe and it ended up being a buck, what would be the ramifications of that?
MR. DOUVILLE: Mr. Chair. Could he restate his question, please.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead, Elijah, restate that again.

MR. WINROD: Thank you. My question was, if a subsistence hunter in January were to shoot a deer that he thought was a doe but it ended up being a buck, what would be the ramifications or anything wrong with that?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mike.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Your tag 5 is good for a buck or a doe.

MR. WINROD: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Right, that was the answer. Good.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. And, yeah, I'd just interject into the discussion here. I don't know how many places where people live in Unit 2 that are still without electricity, you know, I look at Mr. Leighton over there on South Thorne Bay, do you have full time electricity over there?

MR. LEIGHTON: Yes, for the most part. We do have an awful lot of power outages, but, yeah, we have electricity 24/7.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I know in two communities on the north end there's no community electricity, everybody has to generate their own. I think there's probably still people that live in island locations that may not be -- without power, like some of the islands surrounding communities, that they might still be off grid. I'm not sure about Edna Bay, if they have full-time power, you know, places like that. I mean that was kind of the consideration, to stretch this season out, that not everybody has a real easy time running a freezer and can stock up on meat for the year. Expanding this opportunity so that -- especially into the winter where, you know, you can hang a deer for along time if you're looking for some meat to get
you through the season. So that was kind of a consideration in my community.

I just didn't know how widespread that was on the island. I know they're electrifying more of the island all the time. But some of us still live in the dark. But, yeah.

Any other thoughts. Observations.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. What's -- are we ready for the question on this one.

MR. KITKA: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question's been called for on the proposal, Wildlife Proposal 20-06, which is a proposal to shorten the subsistence season by one month from January 31st to December 31st. So I'll do another voice vote on this. All in favor of this proposal say aye.

(No aye votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Opposed, say no.

IN UNISON: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Another unanimous decision, DeAnna.

Okay, one more proposal dealing with Unit 2, I believe, and we will do that one and then take a break.

MR. REEVES: Are you ready, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yep, go ahead, Jeff.

MR. REEVES: Okay, thank you. So the executive summary for Proposal WP20-07 is on Page 172 and the analysis is on Page 173 of your materials.

This proposal is also submitted by the East Prince of Wales Fish and Game Advisory Committee
and it's requesting a reduction in the Federal harvest limit for deer in the unit, from five deer down to four deer.

The proponent states that deer have been declining in the unit due to both the growing predator population in combination with years of increased harvest by hunters. They believe that in addition to the recent harvest limit reduction for non-Federally-qualified users that a harvest reduction to subsistence users is also necessary. Clarified with the proponent over the word, deer, in the proposed language and they indicated that they were not seeking to change the hunt to the harvest of any deer, but wanted to cap the harvest limit at four while still retaining the opportunity for subsistence users to be able to harvest the one female deer. As a result modification would require which harvest ticket would be required for tagging the female deer should this proposal be accepted -- or approved.

The preliminary conclusion is to oppose this proposal.

And if adopted the proposal will reduce harvest limit for Federally-qualified subsistence users hunting deer from Federal public lands in the unit. The percentage of users that harvest five deer is so low that the restriction will have little effect on increasing Unit 2 deer numbers. Reduction of the harvest limit for Federally-qualified users is not necessary for conservation or continued subsistence opportunity, and if we ever did have an issue where conservation needs were required the Craig District Ranger has been delegated authority from the Federal Subsistence Board to close or reopen Federal seasons and to adjust harvest and possession limits through their delegation.

So that concludes my presentation.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jeff. Any questions for Jeff from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any Jeff, thank you very much.
Do we have tribal consultation on this one, Orville, or corporate consultation.

MR. LIND: Good evening, Chair. Members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. The last statement Sealaska Corporation made was that they were interested in the application process and Forest Service did mention that there is a process to go through, applications are on line, people can apply, and if you have any questions just call our office.

And that's all I have, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Was that.....

MR. LIND: Application for Regional Advisory Councils.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, right, thank you.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, what's your thoughts on this one.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ryan Scott with the Department of Fish and Game in Juneau. The Department supported this proposal. And primarily that was so an interest in distributing the available harvest across all user groups, but certainly there's potential here, we thought, for Unit -- Federally-qualified hunters in Unit 2 as well. The percentage of hunters harvesting more than four deer drops off drastically, once you get past about two deer per person it starts a decline as far as the overall number of hunters taking those animals, but, certainly anything above four is very small. In general, any changes in that fifth deer portion of the bag limit is going to have negligible effects on the population overall, however it might distribute some additional harvest or leaves a few extra animals on the ground for others to take.

In addition to that, since designated hunter opportunities exist, really having, you know, whether it be four deer or five deer, I'm not sure that it makes a significant difference, but the Department did come out in support of this.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
Ryan. Questions for Fish and Game Department from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any Ryan, thank you very much.

So other Federal agencies, any comments?

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about other tribes.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Other Regional Councils.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Subsistence Resource Commissions.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair. One written public comment in support was received and can be found in your meeting book starting on Page 188. This comment’s from the Ketchikan Advisory Committee and just simply indicates that the AC supports this proposal.

That was the only written comment received from an Advisory Committee.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. How about written public comments.

MS. PERRY: No additional comments other than the Ketchikan Advisory Committee comment.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody from the public, on the phone or in the room.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Apparently not. What's the action that the Advisory Council would like to take on this proposal.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move to adopt WP20-07.

MR. YEAGER: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I have a motion and a second so it's up for discussion.

What's your feelings on reducing the bag limit by one deer in Unit 2.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This East Prince of Wales Advisory Committee is kind of, make a comment all over the place. 03 wants us to only harvest antlered bucks, five of them. And then this proposal wants you to harvest four deer and one could be a doe. I mean it's kind of all over the board here.

But in any case I do not support this proposal. There is -- while there is a down trend on deer, there's not a conservation issue at this time that I'm aware of. And this proposal would put a restriction on rural users. So Title VIII is clear, as to what happens when -- before you can restrict the rural user. So I do not support it.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

Anybody else want to speak to this.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: I won't be supporting this proposal, even though a relatively small number of people are listed as taking five deer.
I will point out that in many communities high harvesters account for a really large portion of the harvest and that they provide many other people with the food that they need, and this would put a restriction on those folks. I suspect -- I think when I was doing deer research, which these proposals have brought to my mind, I did interview people who regularly got 25 or 30 or 35 deer, and these weren't wasteful hunters, these were community heros and an unnecessary reduction in bag limit would simply make their lives and their community service more difficult. And because we have a good proxy hunting provision in Federal regulations, people can harvest that many deer legally so we're not talking about outlaws here, we're talking about people who are doing things that are completely appropriate and part of customary and traditional life in Southeast Alaska.

Thank you much.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Bob. Any other thoughts on this proposal from the Council. (No comments) CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So I'm looking and I think we've covered the justifications here. This would only affect subsistence users so there are no other effects on non-subsistence users. And basically it's viewed as being a restriction, an unnecessary restriction to subsistence hunters. So we have all the -- like all the other proposals, we have a lot of data on this one, good data to go by and, you know, whether or not this would address any kind of a conservation concern is not really necessary to solve that problem, any problems there. So any other thoughts on the proposal. Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I agree with Mr. Schroeder. You know not everybody's a hunter or a good
hunter, a lot of those guys that are good at it or have better access are supplying others with deer. I, myself, experience that all the time, like three is enough for me and if I get an extra one it goes to somebody who is less capable or in need. So it's not like everybody is going to get five. Some of them don't need it, and some of them need more than five.

So anyway.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, that's kind of been my experience as well, you know, with a generous limit like that of five deer, you know, I know people who just use the tags, they don't really need for their own selves, to provide a deer to somebody else without having to go through that process of getting a designated hunter permit. I think that's actually fairly common.

So yeah I don't see a necessary reason to change that.

So any other thoughts.

MR. KITKA: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question has been called for, we'll do another voice vote on this one. The motion is to support Wildlife Proposal 20-07, which would lower the bag limit for subsistence hunting from five bucks to four. So everybody in favor of that motion say aye.

(No aye votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Opposed, no.

IN UNISON: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Unanimous opposition, DeAnna.

Okay, we'll take a break. We got a bit of time left here this evening, we may not even have to run late if we get through a few more proposals this afternoon. Seems like things are going pretty well, so we might run into roadblocks but so far so good.

So take a break.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, we'll get through a few more proposals here this evening. Our goal is to not go past 5:00 o'clock, so we'll see if we can get a few done. The next one up is 20-08. Jeff Reeves again. You still there Jeff?

MR. REEVES: Yes, I am, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, go ahead.

MR. REEVES: Okay. You can find the executive summary for WP20-08 on Page 197 and the analysis on Page 199 of your materials.

This proposal was also submitted by the East Prince of Wales Fish and Game Advisory Committee and it's requesting a requirement that traps and snares be marked either with the trapper name or their State identification number.

The proponent believes that the current regulations do not allow for proper accountability if a trapper leaves sets out after the close of the season or uses illegal bait. They believe that requiring trap ID will make enforcement easier and prevent the issues from happening. And upon clarification with the proponent that they indicated that this was to apply statewide.

The OSM conclusion is to oppose this proposal.

Implementation of a mandatory requirement to mark traps under Federal regulations creates unnecessary divergence of State and Federal regulations. If adopted, Federally-qualified subsistence users trapping under Federal regulations throughout the state would be required to mark traps and snares with identification tags which would result in additional burden and cost for Federally-qualified users. Some trappers will often borrow or trade equipment from other family members or friends and changes of identification tags on a large number of traps or snares would require significant effort. While the proposed requirement could benefit law enforcement officials.
enforcement by allowing easier identification of traps and snares, differences in land ownership limit the effectiveness of the proposed regulation. Traplines can often span across Federal and State managed lands and, therefore, it could have different regulatory requirements along the line. Alternatively, Federally-qualified users could just simply choose to trap under State regulations and avoid the proposed requirement, as both State and Federal trapping regulations are applicable on most Federal public lands. Mandatory trap marking is not likely to prevent illegal trapping activity or prevent any pets from getting trapped.

So this concludes the presentation.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jeff.

How about questions for Jeff Reeves from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any, Jeff, so thank you very much. Did we have consultation on this one, Orville.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Chair. Council members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM.

During the consultation held on September 30th for the tribes and ANCSA Corporations there was no questions or comments on that wildlife proposal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Orville. Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments on this proposal.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ryan Scott with the Department of Fish and Game in Juneau. The Department is neutral on this proposal. There's been no biological concerns identified in association with it.

It is largely an enforcement related proposal and as the Council is likely aware, previous, up until just a year or two ago, across Southeast
Alaska trap tags and identification were required. The Board of Game rescinded that regulation just a year or two ago and at this point in time the State does not require that.

These types of proposals, they arise, with both regulatory bodies, pretty regularly. Certainly there's a proportion of folks that believe traps and snares should be identified and often times they point to other gear groups, as an example, such as crabbers, shrimpers, people who are using pot gear, things like that, or even other kinds of fishing gear that have to label buoys.

However, with that said, we haven't identified any biological issues with the proposal as written and we are neutral on it.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ryan. Questions for Mr. Scott from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any, thank you, Ryan. Other Federal agency comments, it was statewide.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about any other comments from tribal entities.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about other Regional Councils on this one.

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair. Many of the 10 Regional Advisory Council heard this proposal during their RAC meetings this regulatory cycle.

Southcentral Alaska Regional Advisory Council opposed this proposal saying these should not be a standard one size fits all fix for the whole state. It is an issue that should be addressed, focused in areas of local conflicts and problems. And it also places an additional burden on Federal users and creates too broad a solution.
The Kodiak/Aleutians did hear this proposal but took no action.

Western Interior RAC just simply opposed.

Seward Peninsula RAC opposed, saying Council did not believe this proposal would have any beneficial impact on trapping in the Seward Peninsula.

Lastly, Eastern Interior did oppose this proposal and provided a comment, compliance would be costly and burdensome to Federally-qualified subsistence users.

Those were the only comments received by other Regional Advisory Councils on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, very much, DeAnna. Fish and Game Advisory Committees, any comments there.

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair. One comment received on this proposal. They start on Page 203. The Ketchikan Advisory Committee is in opposition and the comment states:

Though some type of compromise should be reached in regards to labeling of traps and snares, a one size fits all regulation could be overly burdensome in some areas.

That was the only AC comment.


MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair. The Wrangell-St.Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission opposed this proposal saying, requiring the marking of traps and snares puts an unnecessary burden on subsistence users, would make Federal regulations more restrictive than State regulations, and will not necessarily prevent illegal activity. If someone is trapping illegally, he or she is not going to mark his or traps. Additionally, ravens are attracted to bright shiny objects so that requiring the marking of traps could lead to accidental bycatch.
1 That was the only Subsistence Resource
2 Commission comment.
3
4 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you.
5 How about written public comments.
6
7 MS. PERRY: One additional written
8 public comment in addition to the Ketchikan Advisory
9 Committee comment. That proposal, again, starting on
10 Page 203, it's in support from Jim Kowalski, Chair for
11 Alaskans for Wildlife and states:
12
13 This proposal is topical, even in urban
14 municipalities of Alaska as conflicts in public use
15 areas resulting in injuries to hikers, pets and other
16 outdoor public land users rise. Keeping in mind even
17 the use of more remote public lands grows as outdoor
18 users of their lands increase, the potential for
19 conflicts including serious injuries resulting from
20 hidden owner-unidentified traps will increase.
21 Organized trappers have strongly opposed such
22 requirements as proposed here in past requests for
23 change considered by the Alaska Board of Game. We
24 witnessed the public land owners, including Federal
25 public lands, would most certainly strongly favor this
26 accountability.
27
28 That was the last public comment,
29 written, received.
30
31 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you for
32 that. Is there any public testimony on this one from
33 folks in the room or on the phone.
34
35 (No comments)
36
37 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any,
38 what's the recommendation from the Council on this
39 proposal.
40
41 Mr. Yeager.
42
43 MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Move to adopt Wildlife Proposal WP20-08.
45
46 MR. DOUVILLE: Second.
47
48 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Motion and
49 second. How about discussion on this one from the
Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Well, I'll lead off. I'd say that this proposal attempts to fix a problem that's not a problem, and so if we had clear issues concerning trapping, they would come up through Staff reports and through recommendations from our State and Federal biologists. This proposal attempts to fix something that isn't broken.

So I would oppose this, and strongly oppose it because -- especially because it was proposed as a statewide regulation.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Bob. Anybody else.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Kind of proposals like this don't necessarily need to address all of the concerns here, like we don't see a conservation concern of any kind with this, it's just whether or not it's detrimental to subsistence users and needs. Questions like that, so I think we covered that.

What's the wish of the Council, or are we ready to take a vote.

MR. LEIGHTON: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question's been called for. So the motion was to adopt Wildlife Proposal 20-08 which would require for statewide, that all traps or snares must be marked with a trappers name, or State Identification number. So once again I'll do a voice vote on this.

All in favor of the motion say aye.

(No aye votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All opposed say
IN UNISON: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Unanimous, in the negative.

It looks like Proposal No. 9 is going to be -- is that going to be presented by Susan Oehlers.

MR. SUMINSKI: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Susan, are you still with us on the phone?

MS. OEHLERS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, I am. Can you hear me all right?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes, coming in very good. Go ahead.

MS. OEHLERS: Okay, thank you. So Wildlife Proposal WP20-09 was submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council requesting that the trapping season for beaver be extended in Units 1 through 5.

So in effect, for Units 1, 2 and 3, except for Mitkof Island, and Unit 4, the season would open three weeks early. This would be a change from December 1st to November 10th. For Unit 3, Mitkof Island, the season would open three weeks early, changing from December 1st to November 10th and remain open one additional month, changing from April 15th to May 15th.

The proponent states that adoption of this proposal will increase beaver harvest opportunity in Units 1 through 4 for Federally-qualified subsistence users and align the Federal season with the State season, which was recently extended by the Alaska Board of Game.

Beaver populations throughout Southeast Alaska are healthy so no conservation concerns are anticipated with extending the season.

There will be no change in Unit 5 as
the current Federal trapping season is in alignment with the proposed dates.

The proponent also states that adoption of this proposal is not expected to impact any other users.

In January of 2019 the Board of Game adopted Proposal 11 to extend the beaver season in Units 1 through 5 to November 10th to May 15th. The Board of Game's rationale was that beaver are generally abundant and under utilized, although additional harvest is expected, it would provide the opportunity for fresh meat in the spring and there were no public concerns.

The OSM preliminary conclusion is to support Proposal WP20-09.

Adoption of this proposal would provide additional harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users in Units 1 through 4, and align State and Federal trapping regulations for beaver. Adoption of this proposal is not expected to cause a conservation concern.

This concludes my presentation.

I thank you for your time and I'm available if there's any questions.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, questions for Ms. Oehlers from the Council.

Patty Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. What is a nuisance beaver permit?

MS. OEHLERS: Through the Chair. Ms. Phillips. You know I'm not sure how those are administered but that is if there's -- my understanding if there's an issue, you know, sometimes flooding near airports or roads or such, there's a process to go through to trap that beaver, so this would just, you know, eliminate the need to get that additional permit.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Other questions from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any thank you, Susan.

Do we have some consultation on this one, Orville.

MR. LIND: Mr. Chair. Council members. During the consultation session September 30th there were no questions or comments on Wildlife Proposal 20-09.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about Fish and Game, your comments.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ryan Scott with the Department of Fish and Game in Juneau. The Department supports this proposal. It does move in a direction that, you know, we all try to when we can, it aligns both State and Federal seasons. In addition it is likely to provide some additional opportunity without any detriment to, you know, what appears to be a pretty healthy beaver population across the region.

In addition to that, the Department would maintain the ability to issue nuisance beaver removal permits if needed, and those are often used, as Ms. Oehlers indicated, but they're also an important part of that is that they can be issued for the take of the animals out of season and potentially in places where other trapping activities are limited or restricted. So we have the ability to issue a permit to an identified trapper to address a specific, you know, property or safety concern created by damming streams, damming culverts, whatever it might be.

And, yeah, the State's neutral on this one.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ryan. Any -- okay, DeAnna.

MS. PERRY: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Mr. Scott, could you clarify, I think at the beginning you
mentioned that ADF&G supports and then I think your closing statement was that it was neutral, could you please clarify that for the record.

MR. SCOTT: Yes, Ma'am. Mr. Chairman, I misspoke. The Department supports this one. Neutral was on -- has been on the tip of my tongue recently.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Glad you're paying attention, DeAnna, probably the rest of us missed that. So thank you, Ryan. Any other questions for Fish and Game Department -- or any questions for Fish and Game Department on this one.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not seeing any, thank you, Ryan.

Other Federal agencies, DeAnna.

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Tribal comments.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Other Regional Councils.

MS. PERRY: Not on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: How about Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Subsistence Resource Commissions.

MS. PERRY: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Written public comments.

MS. PERRY: No written public comments received on this proposal.
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Public testimony, either on the phone or in the room.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: No public testimony. It's up to the Council, what's your wishes on this one.

Ms. Needham.

MS. NEEDHAM: Mr. Chair. I move to adopt Wildlife Proposal 20-09.

MR. SCHROEDER: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Got a motion and a second. So what's the discussion on this one, it's our own proposal so what do we have to say about it.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Just to move things along, I would support this proposal. It serves to align or homologize Federal regulations with State regulations, and that's a salutary task because it avoids possible confusion for people who do trap beavers.

I'd also note that harvest levels of beaver, at least as shown in the table on 214 have dropped off quite a bit and we've heard no evidence that there's a concern for beaver populations. Beaver, I believe are pretty important for a certain smolt survival in certain systems. So I think that this is almost a housekeeping proposal here so perhaps we don't need a great deal of discussion.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes, thank you, Bob. Yeah, as Fish and Game pointed out, wherever possible we do like to align our regulations so there's no confusion out there for the trappers.

So any other comments on this one.

Mr. Winrod.

MR. WINROD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My observation and I think the people that I know that
trap beavers in Unit 2, the population is down from
what it has been in past years but no conservation
concern.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Elijah.
Any other comments from the Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else --
no. Are we ready for the question.

MR. KITKA: Question.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question's been
called for. The motion is to support Wildlife Proposal
20-09 which lengthens the trapping season in Units 1, 2
and 3 except Mitkof Island, and Unit 4, yeah, it
basically lengthens the trapping season, there's
different dates for different areas, but in all cases
it lengthens the trapping season. So voice vote on
this one, all in favor of the proposal say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Is there anybody
opposed, say, no.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, motion
passes.

I think we're going to break for
dinner, or recess for the day, excuse me. Maybe one
quick question for Terry. Terry we got -- it's kind of
all the other proposals, except for one, are dealing
with customary and traditional use designations,
Proposal No. 12 is -- where is it -- that deals with
season dates and harvest limits for Unit 3, it says
that Robert Cross is going to present that, will he be
available tomorrow morning?

MR. SUMINSKI: Mr. Chair. If he's not
available we're prepared to present it.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you.
So we will go a little out of order here and we'll take
up No. 12 first and then that will leave just all the
customary and traditional use determination proposals that we can run through consecutively without, you know, interjecting something in the middle.

So that's our plan for tomorrow.

I'll remind everybody that we start with public testimony at 8:30 tomorrow morning and we are going to have a meeting of the working group on the Roadless Rule this evening. We're going to break for dinner and the working group can reconvene here in this room at 7:00 o'clock. And I'll say that, you know, we formed the work group at our last meeting so we could, you know, get together on the telephone, hash things out, but now that we're all here in the same place, if, you know, other members of the Council want to participate in our discussion this evening, even if you weren't on the original working group, I think that's fine.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Mr. Chairman. Is that committee meeting open to our student observers or others who may wish to be with us in this?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes, we did extend an invitation for the students that are here to come and participate as well, so I don't think we extended that to anybody else but the students are certainly welcome and it sounds like they're interested in attending.

MS. NEEDHAM: Staff. What about Staff?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Oh, are you asking about Staff?

MS. NEEDHAM: No, I'm asking about Staff.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Cathy. Cathy's asking.

MS. NEEDHAM: Mr. Chair. I also was wondering whether or not we want Staff available if we have questions, if the working group has questions, that they might be able to answer. Available, are they?
CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Well, I guess I
don't know what Staff are here that, you know, have
been specifically involved with the Roadless Rule. I
don't know, is there anybody you think ought to be here
Cathy?

MS. NEEDHAM: Can we call them if we
need them? I just know that when we do these working
group meetings sometimes we need to identify on the
record if we want to have Staff available or not.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I don't think I'm
going to ask any Staff to be here. I think -- I don't
know, Bob, do you have an opinion on that.

MR. SCHROEDER: I'm not sure that who
I'd get to come this evening, who would have useful
information. Although I would like to just ask Tom
Schumacher if the Department is pretty far along in its
comments on Roadless, or what the State is doing in
this area?

MR. SCHUMACHER: We got a, you know,
note for comments the same time you did and at this
point I don't know that the State has developed
comments yet and, you know, it's a statewide -- or it
involves a number of State agencies, so not only the
Department of Fish and Game, and the State does have a
position -- you know, the State's position on the
Roadless Rule is set by the Governor.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Patty.

MS. PHILLIPS: What about our

coordinator.

(Laughter)

MS. PERRY: What about me?

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Oh, I think that
was understood that the coordinator has to be here to
keep us in line, right, DeAnna?

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anything else to
hash out here -- yeah, go ahead DeAnna.
MS. PERRY: I did want to remind folks, Council members, that the Forest Service has provided some call-in numbers, it's just for the RAC Members to listen to their community meetings that are happening this week on Roadless. So for tonight, Craig, as well as Wrangell will be having public meetings and subsistence hearings and Raeanna Wood, who's my right-hand person at this meeting, has written those down for you so if you're interested in listening tonight, if you're not on the working group, she can give that to you. And then Thursday, Petersburg, anybody that would like to listen in on that, and then Friday, Kake, and I believe we have Cathy physically going to that meeting, hopefully if the weather cooperates. But, again, we will distribute all of those numbers for anyone interested in calling in. And, again, we'd ask you not to share that, it's specifically for the RAC members to be able to listen to their communities.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you, DeAnna. Anybody else have any questions or comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We'll recess this meeting until 8:30 tomorrow morning and see the working group back here at 7:00 o'clock.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)
CERTIFICATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )

)ss.

STATE OF ALASKA )

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered through contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SOUTHEAST FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II taken electronically on the 6th day of November in Ketchikan, Alaska; 

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

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 26th day of November 2019.

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