

1 WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5
6 VOLUME I

7
8
9 McGrath Native Village Council
10 Community Service Center
11 McGrath, Alaska
12 October 11, 2016
13 9:05 a.m.

14
15
16 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

17
18 Jack Reakoff, Chair
19 Fred Alexie
20 Ray Collins
21 Timothy Gervais
22 Jenny Pelkola
23 Pollock Simon
24 Robert Walker
25 Darrel Vent

26
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29
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31 Regional Council Coordinator, Zach Stevenson

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43 Recorded and transcribed by:

44
45 Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC
46 135 Christensen Drive, Suite 2
47 Anchorage, AK 99501
48 907-243-0668/sahile@gci.net

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(McGrath, Alaska - 10/11/2016)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to bring this Western Interior Alaska Regional Advisory Council meeting to order. So it's 9:05 on my watch. Our Council coordinator missed the airplane, Zach will be here at 11:00 o'clock, he'll probably be getting into the room at about 11:15, 11:20. So we're going to go over the first part of our agenda and the public tribal council things.

So call to order.

Jenny's our secretary, do you want to call the roll there, Jenny.

MS. PELKOLA: Robert A. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Here.

MS. PELKOLA: Donald V. Honea, Jr.

(No comments)

MS. PELKOLA: Not here.

Pollock Simon, Sr.

MR. SIMON: Here.

MS. PELKOLA: Raymond L. Collins.

MR. COLLINS: Here.

MS. PELKOLA: Jack L. Reakoff.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Here.

MS. PELKOLA: Darrel M. Vent, Sr.

MR. VENT: Here.

MS. PELKOLA: Timothy Peter Gervais.

(No comments)

1 MS. PELKOLA: Not here yet.
2
3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: He'll be on the
4 airplane with Zach this morning.
5
6 MS. PELKOLA: Dennis R. Thomas, Sr.
7
8 (No comments)
9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don't know about his
11 status, he may be on a charter this morning, don't
12 know.
13
14 MS. PELKOLA: Jenny K. Pelkola. Here.
15
16 Fred W. Alexie.
17
18 MR. ALEXIE: Here.
19
20 MS. PELKOLA: We have a quorum.
21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Jenny. Ray
23 is going to do the invocation.
24
25 (Invocation)
26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So thanks so much
28 Ray.
29
30 So we do have a quorum. And so we'll
31 welcome and introduce, first the people on the phone.
32 I'd like to know who's on the phone right now, if you
33 can state your name for the record.
34
35 MR. ESTENSEN: This is Jeff Estensen
36 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, fall
37 season manager for the Yukon calling from Fairbanks.
38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Jeff.
40
41 Anybody else.
42
43 MS. MONCRIEFF: Hi. This is Catherine
44 Moncrieff, Staff anthropologist for the Yukon River
45 Drainage Fisheries Association.
46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks
48 Catherine.
49
50 Anybody else.

1 MR. BORN: (Indiscernible) and Ray Born
2 with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. We had
3 hoped to make it up there today by airplane but it's a
4 little too windy down here in Bethel.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Ray.

7
8 MR. SHARP: Dan Sharp, Bureau of Land
9 Management.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did you say Dan
12 Sharp, we're having a little bit of a hard time
13 hearing. Say, again, was that you Dan?

14
15 MR. SHARP: Yeah, this is Dan Sharp,
16 BLM in Anchorage.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. We're
19 adjusting the mic distance so we can hear who's
20 actually on the phone.

21
22 (Phone technical issues)

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we lost the
25 phone so we'll continue with that when the phone comes
26 back up but I'll get the room here.

27
28 So we got the Council members.

29
30 We'll start in the back of the room and
31 stand and speak your name loudly because we got to pick
32 it up on the mic.

33
34 MR. PASKVAN: Hi. I'm Adam Paskvan.
35 I'm with TCC region.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks Adam.

38
39 MS. FARNHAM: Nicole also with TCC and
40 I'm from Fairbanks.

41
42 MR. MATHEWS: I'm Vince Mathews.
43 Subsistence Coordinator for the Kanuti Arctic and Yukon
44 Flats.

45
46 MR. CHEN: Aloha, Council members. My
47 name is Glenn Chen with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
48 Great to be back in McGrath and very good to see all of
49 you again.

50

1 MR. JENKINS: Good morning everyone. I
2 am Wayne Jenkins and I'm the director of the Yukon
3 River Drainage Fisheries Association and I appreciate
4 being here, good to see all.

5
6 MR. AYERS: Good morning. I'm Scott
7 Ayers, a new fisheries biologist with OSM, glad to see
8 you all this morning.

9
10 MR. PIERCE: Josh Pierce with Fish and
11 Game, area biologist here. I live in McGrath.

12
13 MR. BUE: I'm Fred Bue, US Fish and
14 Wildlife Service, Yukon River Fisheries Manager.

15
16 MR. WENTWORTH: Kevin Wentworth,
17 McGrath.

18
19 MR. PAPPAS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
20 George Pappas, Office of Subsistence Management, State
21 Subsistence Liaison and I reside in Anchorage.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks so
24 much.

25
26 I think we've got everybody in the room
27 here -- oh, yeah, we do have someone -- go ahead.

28
29 MR. LARSON: Yeah, good morning
30 everybody. My name is Robert Larson. I am the Council
31 coordinator and normally work with the Southeast
32 Council and I am up here and being pressed into service
33 as your Council member [sic] for this morning.

34
35 Good morning.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So are you acting as
38 our DFO at this point.

39
40 MR. LARSON: Yes.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. We have this
43 DFO, that's why we're lucky to have Robert here and so
44 we can actually hold this part of the meeting.

45
46 (Laughter)

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So that covers
49 everybody here and when that phone comes back up we'll
50 -- so we'll go into review and adoption of the agenda

1 because those people are going to have to call back in,
2 and so when they all come back on then we'll try and
3 catch them.

4

5 So I would like -- Robert tells me that
6 there's this Tongass Submerged Lands issue, which would
7 be Item H on this agenda. It has to have a time
8 certain hearing, all the Regional Councils are going to
9 be asked about this particular issue. Robert's going
10 to give us an overview of that.

11

12 With our Coordinator not being here and
13 so forth we're going to work through the first part of
14 this agenda, I would like us to break early for lunch,
15 probably 11:30 or 11:00, 11:30 so Zach can set up the
16 rest of our meeting here.

17

18 So this Tongass issue, I would like a
19 time certain at 1:00 p.m., and so Item H I'd like to be
20 right under Item 9 for time certain at 1:00 p.m.,
21 because we have to actually have an actual hearing on
22 that.

23

24 Another issue that I would like to put
25 into the agenda is after our fisheries proposals
26 there's Board of Game proposals for Interior and Arctic
27 and there are a couple of -- a few proposals that would
28 affect this region and so I would like this Council to
29 have the opportunity to comment on those Board of Game
30 proposals. The Board of Game Arctic Region, their
31 meeting is January 6th through the 9th and the Board of
32 Game meeting Interior Proposals is the 17th through the
33 25th. We'll be meeting in Fairbanks at that time but
34 we have to get our comments in before that Board of
35 Game meeting so this is our opportunity to talk on
36 various proposals -- State proposals. So I would like
37 that to be under -- it would be new business behind our
38 Federal fisheries proposals. We could go over a few of
39 the State proposals. So you're the Chair of the Middle
40 Kuskokwim AC, or is it middle or upper.

41

42 MR. COLLINS: McGrath.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: McGrath AC.

45

46 MR. COLLINS: The headwaters there.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh. So we --
49 there's probably a couple of proposals that I would
50 like for the Council to review and I have the Board of

1 Game book also so I can read those proposals to the
2 Council.

3
4 Any other additions or changes to the
5 agenda.

6
7 George.

8
9 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. If we're going
10 to be discussing Board of Game proposals would you like
11 to have a wildlife Staff available from OSM on line for
12 you sir.

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We should or could.
15 It would be good to have them.

16
17 MR. PAPPAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
18 I'll forward that.

19
20 Fred.

21
22 MR. BUE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
23 for my sake, we have three RACs that we attend and
24 maybe it was an oversight on the draft agenda, but
25 often we have a season summary prior to the proposals.
26 When I look at the other RAC areas they had a season
27 summary slot. We have a Fish and Wildlife Service
28 spot, lower under agency reports, but often the season
29 summary type works better ahead of the proposals.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's a great idea.
32 And so before we actually address the fisheries
33 proposals it would be good to go over the season
34 summary so we're all aware of what actually occurred.
35 So season summary would be Item A1 under New Business
36 for the Yukon and Kuskokwim.

37
38 MR. BUE: I'm not certain who from the
39 Kuskokwim would be speaking to that.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We have a fisheries
42 -- Scott is back there, so could you give us an
43 overview of the Kuskokwim performance this year.

44
45 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. Yes, that
46 would be the Refuge Staff that were on line.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so
49 much Fred.

50

1 Okay, so we got people back on line.
2 Who else is on line.
3
4 We had Catherine, Ray.....
5
6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We got Ken
7 Adkisson, Donald Honea and Zach Stevenson on the line.
8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don Honea.
10
11 MR. ALBERTSON: Lamont Albertson from
12 Bethel Alaska.
13
14 MS. WOODY: Carol Ann Woody from
15 Anchorage, Alaska, National Park Service.
16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm having a real
18 hard time hearing that last one, could you say your
19 name again.
20
21 MS. WOODY: This is Carol Ann Woody
22 from Anchorage, Alaska with the National Park Service.
23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.
25
26 Any one else.
27
28 MS. STICKMAN: This is Danielle
29 Stickman in Anchorage, Alaska with the Yukon River
30 Drainage Fisheries Association.
31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.
33
34 Anyone else on line that has not listed
35 their name for the Western Interior Regional Council
36 meeting.
37
38 MS. KLEIN: This is Jill Klein with
39 Fish and Game in Anchorage. I'll just be on a little
40 bit this morning. I know we have other folks from the
41 region on line as well and from various regions.
42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks Jill.
44
45 MR. CHASE: This is Ken Chase up in
46 Fairbanks with the Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk Refuge.
47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.
49
50 MR. CHASE: Calling in from -- I'm

1 trying to get a -- everything is really terrible as far
2 as the acoustics and stuff, I can't hear what your
3 meeting is saying but Jeremy is on his way from Galena
4 and I'm trying to get someone from the GASH to call in
5 but it's really bad, the reception.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

8
9 MR. ALBERTSON: So have we been cut off
10 from the meeting again.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, you're on the
13 meeting.

14
15 MR. ALBERTSON: Good morning, Kenny,
16 this is Lamont, how are you.

17
18 MR. CHASE: Good morning, how are you
19 Lamont, I haven't seen you for awhile.

20
21 MR. ALBERTSON: Yeah, good, since
22 January in fact.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're listing
25 people who are on the call.

26
27 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: We've had two more
28 people call in, could you please announce yourself.

29
30 MR. HILDRETH: This is Derek Hildreth,
31 Office of Subsistence Management. I'm the permitting
32 specialist.

33
34 MS. MAAS: Lisa Maas, wildlife
35 biologist, Office of Subsistence Management.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thanks, Lisa.

38
39 MR. GERVAIS: This is Tim Gervais with
40 the WIRAC. I'll be getting on a plane and arriving
41 around 11:00 a.m.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And we'll
44 note that Tim is on line. We called roll and so Tim is
45 a RAC member. Thanks, Tim.

46
47 And we have Zach, you're there also?

48
49 MR. HONEA: No, this is Don Honea in
50 Ruby. I'm trying to get a hold of -- Zach, are you

1 there, are we still.....

2

3 MR. STEVENSON: I can hear you loud and
4 clear, Don, I'm at the airport in Anchorage waiting for
5 my departure to McGrath.

6

7 MR. HONEA: Okay. I mean like -- like
8 Ken mentioned are we cut off again, what's going on
9 here.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You're not cut off,
12 you're on the call.

13

14 MR. STEVENSON: I'm contacting the
15 folks in McGrath to get an update just standby a
16 second.

17

18 MR. HONEA: Okay.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, Don, you're not
21 going to be able to attend the meeting?

22

23 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Zach, let me know
24 if there's anything I can do to help you, if I need to
25 make some phone calls from here.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I'm trying to
28 talk to Don Honea there, are you going to be on this
29 call for the entire meeting or just this morning or
30 what can you do for us Don.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I don't think
35 they're hearing me. So let's move that thing over here
36 by my -- let's put it right here. Let's just move this
37 thing right here. Where's the speaker on this thing,
38 so let's put that -- can people hear me better now that
39 I've moved this phone system closer to my mic and my
40 speaker.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 REPORTER: Hello, anybody there, can
45 you hear.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 REPORTER: Hello, anybody.

50

1 (No comments)
2
3 REPORTER: Are we muted here?
4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There's a mute
6 button there, no, that's on.
7
8 REPORTER: Hello.
9
10 (No comments)
11
12 REPORTER: We're as loud as we can go.
13
14 (No comments)
15
16 REPORTER: Hello, anybody there.
17
18 (No comments)
19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I don't hear anybody
21 anymore.
22
23 REPORTER: There's still people there
24 but they don't hear us.
25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can anybody hear us.
27
28 (No comments)
29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, that's a
31 bummer.
32
33 MR. LARSON: Let's hang up and call
34 again.
35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right.
37
38 REPORTER: Can we go off record a few
39 minutes.
40
41 MR. LARSON: Let's just take a few
42 minutes here and just do this.
43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.
45
46 MR. LARSON: We'll just take a few
47 minutes.
48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, let's take a
50 five, 10 minute break and get this phone back up.

1 Okay.
2
3 (Off record)
4
5 (On record)
6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We'll come back on
8 record again. How do the people there on the phone
9 call here us now.
10
11 MR. STEVENSON: We can hear loud and
12 clear, Jack.
13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I'm going to
15 leave my mic on, I got the phone right in front of me
16 and then I'm going to let -- my speaker should feed
17 back to the people on the phone also. And if you got
18 your phone on, if you can mute it unless you're
19 speaking to us that would be great because otherwise
20 we'll get background noise.
21
22 So everybody go on mute, and how do you
23 mute on this.
24
25 MR. LARSON: Star six.
26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Star six on the
28 mute.
29
30 Okay. So we're back to -- I would like
31 to skip over these tribal member reports and the Chair
32 report until we're back with all of our Council members
33 all here present at the same time.
34
35 But we can review and approve the
36 previous minutes.
37
38 Have the Council members read the
39 minutes which are on Page 5.
40
41 MR. COLLINS: Do we need a motion to
42 adopt the agenda.
43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, yeah, we weren't
45 finished with -- yeah, that's right we had some glitch.
46
47 MR. COLLINS: With the amendments.
48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, that's right,
50 we're back so clarify that Ray.

1 MR. COLLINS: I move that we adopt the
2 agenda as amended.
3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any additions to the
5 agenda.
6
7 MR. VENT: Second.
8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Motion and second.
10 Those in favor of adopting the agenda as amended
11 signify by saying aye.
12
13 IN UNISON: Aye.
14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so we have
16 quorum and so the agenda is adopted.
17
18 And so review and approve the minutes.
19 The Council has had the minutes. I got my book last
20 week, has everybody read the minutes from the previous
21 meeting. Any additions. Changes.
22
23 MR. VENT: Hey, Jack, I make a motion
24 to adopt the meeting minutes.
25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrel motions to
27 adopt the minutes from our meeting of March 9th, 2016
28 in Anchorage.
29
30 MS. PELKOLA: Second.
31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny.
33
34 Any further discussion.
35
36 (No comments)
37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none, those
39 in favor of adoption of the minutes signify by saying
40 aye.
41
42 IN UNISON: Aye.
43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we we'll come
45 down to public and tribal comments on non-agenda items.
46
47 Robert.
48
49 MR. LARSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
50 do have one announcement I think, prior to us getting

1 started is a reminder that there is a signup sheet over
2 on the table and I would appreciate it if everybody
3 could sign in. It's called a signup sheet but we
4 really don't mean it, what we mean is a printup sheet
5 so we could read your names. If you could just print
6 your names on there that would be great so we'll be
7 able to record that.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we have public
12 and tribal comments for non-agenda items every morning.
13 I don't see any public members here. Kevin was here
14 earlier and -- but I don't see anybody that would want
15 to make comments at this time.

16

17 So we can.....

18

19 MR. CHASE: Mr. Chair.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, go ahead.

22

23 MR. CHASE: This is Ken Chase up in
24 Fairbanks with the Innoko Refuge and I'm up here and I
25 can't be down there and I don't know what the agenda
26 is, the non-agenda items, two things in the public I
27 wanted to make are -- I'm in a meeting sometimes, take
28 time off to see if I can get on your guy's agenda or
29 time I could speak, it wouldn't take too long, sometime
30 today or whenever you have time on the agenda I can do
31 that.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we have a slot
34 here at the top of our agenda every morning which is
35 public and tribal comments. If you want to speak from
36 a tribal perspective at this time the mic is open.

37

38 MR. CHASE: It's not tribal, it's from
39 the Nowitna/Innoko/Koyukuk Refuge, RIT.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we have a slot
42 here for agency reports and -- which would be -- which
43 will probably come up tomorrow and so you can make your
44 agency report at that time when we go through the.....

45

46 MR. CHASE: Okay. Thank you, Jeremy
47 from the Refuge is coming over from Galena and he
48 should be there shortly and I'm trying to get someone
49 in from the GASH community advisory groups to call in
50 there on a couple of items but it's just kind of at a

1 disadvantage for me here being in Fairbanks, I'm the
2 coordinator, and so I appreciate your time and whatever
3 you can do for me.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, you can go on
6 the internet, go to OSM and then go to Western Interior
7 Council and then you can download the agenda and then
8 at least you'll have the agenda before you. And so if
9 you got internet in Fairbanks you can do that, or get
10 someone to do it for you. But you will have a chance
11 to speak when Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko Staff are giving
12 us an agency report. How does that work.

13

14 MR. CHASE: Okay. I will keep in
15 contact with Jeremy then, thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other tribal
18 comments from the phone.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: People on the phone.

23

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So hearing none, so
28 at this point.....

29

30 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair, this is
31 Zach.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, go ahead,

34 Zach.

35

36 MR. STEVENSON: I just want to make sure
37 you're aware that there was interest in having a
38 presentation provided by folks at Tanana Chiefs and
39 YRDFA.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, we have their
42 Staff here, and -- did we include them, I thought they
43 were in the agenda further down here.

44

45 MR. STEVENSON: I identified them under
46 7 and 8 in the agenda but I just wanted to make sure
47 that that was clear.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So yeah that
50 should have come up when we were adopting this agenda

1 but because they are here I do want to get those
2 reports so I will include them under this public and
3 tribal comment at this time. So I will get TCC and
4 YRDFA to do their reports, after that, then we'll do
5 this in-season updates for the Yukon and the Kuskokwim
6 and at that time we'll probably be getting close to
7 lunch and then I want to get our Council member reports
8 right after this Tongass Hearing because I want all of
9 the Council members to be in the room giving their
10 reports at the same time. So if you could be on the
11 phone after lunch, Don, for your Council member report.
12 I want Tim Gervais to be here. I want the Council to
13 be here when we give our Council reports and the Chair
14 report.

15
16 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17
18 MR. LARSON: It's after the motion so
19 you need to do this.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is there any
22 objections to modifying the agenda to include TCC and
23 YRDFA under public comments from the Council.

24
25 (No objections)

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is there any
28 objection to that.

29
30 (No objections)

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none. So at
33 this time we'll consider YRDFA and TCC -- TCC for sure
34 tribal comment and presentation, so we'll start with --
35 let's do TCC first -- or YRDFA, one of the two, well,
36 go ahead Wayne.

37
38 MR. JENKINS: Good morning. Thank you,
39 Chairman Reakoff.

40
41 I also -- I am Wayne Jenkins, I am the
42 director of Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: An I stop you here
45 for a second and ask how they're hearing on the phone,
46 can you hear Wayne on the phone.

47
48 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Not at all.

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Speak closer into

1 the mic or move the mic.....
2
3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I can hear him
4 talking but I can't understand a word he's saying.
5
6 MR. JENKINS: This is Wayne Jenkins,
7 director of Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.
8 How's that.
9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Could you hear that.
11
12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: A little better
13 but it's just echoing.
14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, it's echoing,
16 maybe it's too close, try that.
17
18 MR. JENKINS: Is that any better.
19
20 (No comments)
21
22 MR. JENKINS: And, Catherine, are you
23 on line.
24
25 (No comments)
26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Catherine, can you
28 hear him.
29
30 MS. MONCRIEFF: Yes, I can but like
31 they said it's kind of garbly, I can't understand what
32 he's saying.
33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, they're going
35 to adjust -- are we getting feedback.
36
37 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Can he use your
38 speaker Jack.
39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, we're going to
41 move the speaker close here. That's getting -- I hear
42 noise, so try that one. Go ahead, Wayne.
43
44 MR. JENKINS: Is this any better, this
45 is Wayne Jenkins with YRDFFA.
46
47 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That's better,
48 yeah.
49
50 MR. JENKINS: Much improved?

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll turn my mic off
2 and let him speak, go ahead, Wayne.

3
4 MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Chairman.

5
6 I appreciate this opportunity to
7 provide reports to you on some of our projects that are
8 funded by the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and
9 also other projects that may be of interest to you.

10
11 First off, we're very excited to
12 announce we have a new Staff member and I believe she's
13 on line, Danielle Stickman. Danielle was raised in
14 Fairbanks and Nondalton and she is Dena'ina and Koyukon
15 Athabascan. Her position is funded by the National
16 Fish and Wildlife Foundation and also charitable trusts
17 and Danielle will be working on education and outreach
18 to Yukon River communities for YRDFA and you'll
19 hopefully be meeting her and hearing more about her
20 work over the next year or so.

21
22 The first project I would like to give
23 you a brief description on is the preseason salmon
24 preparation meeting. The YRDFA preseason salmon
25 fishery prep meeting is funded by the Yukon River
26 Panel, has been hosted by YRDFA for the past six years
27 and has become an integral and important part of the
28 annual planning cycle for the subsistence and
29 commercial fisheries on the Yukon River.

30
31 Following the day after the YRDFA Board
32 meeting with an expanded attendance of invitees from
33 local communities the entire length of the Alaska
34 portion of the river, fishers, managers and researchers
35 and other stakeholders came together for a full day
36 designed to prepare everyone for the fishing season
37 ahead. This was April 28th of 2016, the meeting was in
38 Anchorage. We hosted 82 Yukon River fishers and
39 community representatives and 17 fishery managers and
40 Staff.

41
42 The aim of this years collaborative
43 efforts by fishers and fishery managers was to ensure
44 the meeting of escapement goals for Canadian bound
45 chinook and fall chum salmon and, if possible, provide
46 opportunities for some harvest of chinook salmon with
47 an emphasis on harvest of summer and fall chum for
48 subsistence needs and, in deed, this is what happened.
49 Canadian escapement goals were surpassed. Some
50 communities were less successful than others in their

1 subsistence harvest due to location and high water,
2 fishing time and debris in the river and other factors
3 and yet overall reports through the teleconferences and
4 other ways from the river communities reflect that
5 there was much gratitude for management approaches this
6 year and then, of course, continued hope that the runs
7 will continue to improve.

8

9 A post meeting evaluation indicated
10 that participants were pleased with the preseason
11 meeting, satisfied or very satisfied. Overall quality
12 of the event was 91 percent; felt that the meeting
13 value was increasing their understanding of the issues
14 was 86 percent; the scope of usefulness of the
15 information presented was 91 percent. The majority
16 felt that there was good balance of time spent
17 listening to presentations and for discussions and
18 networking.

19

20 The next program I'd like to give a
21 brief description of is the in-season Yukon River
22 Salmon Teleconferences. The Yukon River in-season
23 management teleconferences are funded by FRMP and the
24 Yukon River Panel and took place this summer, as usual,
25 June, July and August on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. This is
26 a communication tool that allows fishers the entire
27 length of the river to communicate with each other and
28 with the managers. For 2016 we had 857 total callers
29 during the total of 13 calls and that's an average of
30 about 66 callers per call. The highest numbers being
31 84 to 99 callers and that occurred in June early in the
32 runs reflecting the deep interest communities have
33 around chinook. In July as multiple chinook pulses
34 head past many lower and middle river communities call
35 ins drop off to around the 70s and by the last week in
36 August call numbers are in the mid-30s. This is the
37 typical pattern we see from year to year.

38

39 Our annual evaluation survey showed
40 that people feel the teleconference is a unique forum
41 that allows fishermen to be active participants in
42 management of Yukon River fisheries and that they have
43 a public voice in real time, it's not available through
44 any other means.

45

46 This year we also shared a post-season
47 evaluation with Yukon River fishery managers for ways
48 that we might improve the calls and we'll be working on
49 those suggestions over the next winter.

50

1 The next program I'd like to give you a
2 brief summation on is the Yukon River Community
3 Engagement Support for the BLM Resource Management
4 Planning on the Central Yukon and the Bering Sea
5 Western Interior Regions.

6
7 In July of 2014 YRDFA began assisting
8 Yukon River communities with engagement in the Bureau
9 of Land Management Resource Management Planning
10 Process. This work is funded by (Indiscernible)
11 Charitable Trusts. All Federal land management
12 agencies are directed by Congress, through the Federal
13 Land Policy and Management Act, or FLPMA, of 1976 to
14 create resource management plans for guiding the
15 natural resource management decisions and these plans
16 usually last 15 to 20 years. The planning process is
17 public and it seeks through direct engagement to gain
18 input on issues and concerns and any and all
19 information pertinent to the management of the public's
20 lands that the agency is responsible for.

21
22 In the US BLM which is within the
23 Department of Interior administers over 247 million
24 acres and over 72 million acres of that is in Alaska,
25 within eight planning regions. Three of these include
26 portions of the Yukon River. And they are in active
27 planning mode right now. The Eastern Interior, the
28 Central Yukon and the Bering Sea Western Interior
29 Regions.

30
31 YRDFA's community support work is
32 focused on the Central Yukon and the Bering Sea Western
33 Interior RMP process, and as useful as the process is
34 complicated, it is full of difficult to comprehend
35 jargon, BLM is short on Staff and local capacity to
36 understand and bring important issues forward are very
37 challenging due to the many issues and responsibilities
38 which already exist at the local level.

39
40 Early on tribal councils and
41 communities, after coming to better understand the BLM
42 planning process made it clear that their main concerns
43 were access to and the protection of traditional use
44 areas. BLM has a management designation called areas
45 of critical environmental concern, or ACECs.
46 Establishing an area of critical environmental concern
47 is a way to provide special management for fish and
48 wildlife resources and other important values on public
49 BLM lands. They're also created to conserve or prevent
50 damage to important historic, cultural or to protect

1 fragile landscapes and sensitive ecosystems.
2 (Indiscernible) Trust and YRDFA felt this designation
3 was a good fit for critically important areas that
4 local communities have depended on for thousands of
5 years, they presently use and that are necessary for
6 carrying the culture forward.

7
8 Requests were made to individual Native
9 communities with a million or more acres of BLM land
10 within 50 miles for meeting with tribal councils and
11 community members to discuss further protection of
12 these traditional areas. We met with the traditional
13 councils and the communities -- some communities on the
14 Yukon, these were mapped -- the traditional use areas
15 were mapped by watershed and once the watersheds were
16 identified they are overlaid on BLM managed lands and
17 then those areas are nominated by the tribal councils
18 for ACEC designation. Communities on the Yukon River
19 which have, to date, made ACEC nominations are
20 Marshall, Holy Cross, Koyukuk and Ohaugmuit, which have
21 nominated a collective total of 6.5 million acres in
22 the Bering Sea Western Interior BLM planning region.
23 Loudon, Ruby, and Huslia Tribal Councils have nominated
24 3.7 million acres so far with the village of Hughes
25 nomination in process on the Central Yukon BLM planning
26 area. Also the Yukon River villages of Anvik, Grayling
27 and Nulato have nominated ACECs working with Suzanne
28 Little (Indiscernible) field officer.

29
30 The desire of the tribal governments
31 and their communities in making these ACEC nominations
32 is to increase BLM's understanding of the importance of
33 these areas, request their protection through the
34 Resource Management Planning and ACEC process and as a
35 way to address the Federal government's trust
36 responsibility with tribal nations. We're interested
37 in working with other Yukon and Kuskokwim River
38 communities for improved engagement with BLM in the
39 planning regions that have been mentioned and if you
40 have an interest for your community you can contact me,
41 Wayne Jenkins, for details.

42
43 We also have a FaceBook Page, Our Land,
44 Our Voice, Our Future, which is getting increasing
45 traffic and attention.

46
47 So I'm now at the end of my portion of
48 the report but I believe Catherine is also on line.

49
50 I could take questions about any

1 portion of what I presented now or we could wait until
2 later after Catherine gives her.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll let the Council
5 question you. Any Council comments or questions on
6 Wayne's presentation.

7

8 Fred.

9

10 MR. ALEXIE: Yeah, Wayne is there a
11 time limit on that what you just read off there.

12

13 MR. JENKINS: The BLM.

14

15 MR. ALEXIE: Yeah, BLM.

16

17 MR. JENKINS: The ACECs can actually be
18 brought forward at any time. The resource management
19 planning, the 20 year plans is an ongoing process,
20 usually lasting -- the last three or four years, BLM,
21 of course, would like to get those and include them in
22 the RMP process as swiftly as they could, of course,
23 but they can come later. They can come at any time.
24 They can come from an individual. They can come from a
25 tribe. They can come from a community.

26

27 So we're continuing to reach out. I
28 need to, hopefully, set up some meetings with Kaltag
29 and Manley but if there are communities that have
30 concerns we're more than happy to speak with them about
31 how to move forward for themselves also.

32

33 MR. ALEXIE: Yeah, when you said
34 individuals?

35

36 MR. JENKINS: An individual citizen can
37 bring forward an ACEC nomination, I believe maybe Mr.
38 Collins has brought forth a sheefish ACEC or was that
39 this Council did it as a body; I'm not quite sure.

40

41 MR. COLLINS: Yes, I brought it through
42 at BLM hearings and at the Donlin Creek hearings and
43 they've done a study over there that, you know, 85
44 percent of the -- or 80 percent, at least, of the
45 sheefish that are in the Kuskokwim River spawn up Big
46 River so that's a critical area.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I also brought up
49 ACECs for dall sheep habitat, sheep migration movements
50 near our village and then another person also made ACEC

1 designations around where we live so individuals can
2 write up an ACEC proposal and send it in to whichever
3 BLM plan is being reviewed. You would be probably
4 close to Bering Sea area down there at Kaltag. The
5 Central Yukon would entail like the area where I'm at
6 and then the Eastern Interior is probably out of our
7 region. But individuals can make these ACEC, because
8 the BLM doesn't know -- that's where traditional
9 knowledge really comes in is where you can inform the
10 BLM about areas that are critical to fish and wildlife
11 habitats or to uses so that's what Wayne has been
12 talking about.

13

14 So any other questions for Wayne.

15

16 Darrel.

17

18 MR. VENT: Yeah, Wayne, I appreciated
19 you coming over to Huslia and mapping out all these
20 with the elders over there it was -- you know a lot o f
21 that stuff is what we use for traditional areas and
22 some of them wasn't included but I'm glad you went over
23 there and got more of the information that we needed.

24

25 MR. JENKINS: You're welcome.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So Catherine
28 are you on there, are you going to give us a report.

29

30 MS. MONCRIEFF: Yes, I am.

31

32 I'm going to provide an update on our
33 projects and I think that there should be a printed
34 handout hopefully in the room that provides a little
35 more information about some of our projects. So we
36 just wanted to give more of an update and a shorter
37 version orally.

38

39 So the first project I'd like to update
40 you on is the Yukon River in-season Salmon Harvest
41 Survey. This program is funded by the Fisheries
42 Resource Monitoring Program and through this program
43 YRDFA was able to hire 10 community surveyors who
44 interviewed fishermen for six weeks as the chinook
45 salmon were passing through their village this past
46 summer. The results of their surveys were reported to
47 YRDFA, to the managers and on the teleconferences.
48 This program is an opportunity for many fishermen in a
49 village to be represented. Our communities this year
50 were Alakanuk, Mountain Village, Marshall, Russian

1 Mission, Anvik, Ruby, Huslia, Tanana, Fort Yukon and
2 Eagle. We added three new communities this year, which
3 were Mountain Village, Anvik and Tanana and we had four
4 new local hires which were in Alakanuk, Ruby, Huslia
5 and Eagle.

6
7 This year we were able to bring nine of
8 the 10 surveyors to Anchorage for the preseason
9 planning meeting with the goal of preparing them with
10 as much information as possible about the upcoming
11 season to share with fishermen in their communities.
12 They also attended a training event while in Anchorage.
13 This was the first time that we trained people all
14 together since the beginning of the program in the
15 early 2000s, and they appreciated the opportunity to
16 network and learn from each other and to build
17 partnerships.

18
19 During the fishing season our surveyors
20 were able to interview 100 households in 10 villages
21 between May 30th and August 8th for a total of 375
22 interviews. This season the surveyors reported that
23 fishermen in their communities were disappointed in
24 their ability to fish on the early part of the chinook
25 salmon run or the closures on the tricklers before the
26 first pulse arrived. There were many reports up and
27 down the river, or requests, sorry, there were many
28 requests up and down the river to provide more
29 opportunity for fishing. Once the chinook salmon
30 arrived and the first part of the run had passed, most
31 fishermen reported ending the season with better
32 fishing than compared to the last two years.

33
34 A gear type question was added to the
35 survey this year so we were able to report weekly
36 information on the different gear types being used in
37 different villages. Our annual program evaluation
38 showed that the professional way that the surveyors
39 reported on the teleconferences helped set the tone for
40 others. And that the questions this year helped
41 managers know whether people were able to get their
42 fish within the opportunities provided.

43
44 The next program I'd like to tell you a
45 little bit about is the Community Helper Program.

46
47 Since 2013 YRDFA has worked with the
48 Alaska Department of Fish and Game to assist them with
49 their post-season harvest survey by hiring contractors
50 in 33 villages to provide local support to the Alaska

1 Department Fish and Game surveyor who are conducting
2 the annual subsistence salmon harvest survey. Work for
3 the local assistants is brief but very valuable.
4 Having the local knowledge of the assistants each year
5 makes the post-season survey more successful and
6 efficient. YRDFA appreciates the opportunity to
7 connect with people of the Yukon River, provide at
8 least short-term employment and ensure that they're
9 able to participate and be connected to the post-season
10 survey. And this project is funded by the Alaska
11 Department of Fish and Game.

12
13 Another project is the Customary Trade
14 of the Upper Yukon River Project which is funded by the
15 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

16
17 This project continues its partnership
18 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence
19 Division. Our project has been extended until June of
20 2017 so that we can include the additional community of
21 Venetie and to complete the analysis, community reviews
22 and final reporting.

23
24 Another project with an update is --
25 well, actually it's a new project since we've spoken
26 before your Council. This project is funded by the
27 National Science Foundation and it's a workshop with
28 elders from the Lower Yukon River to discuss chinook
29 salmon. This workshop will be conducted in Yup'ik and
30 will take place in Anchorage in late January. This
31 partnership with the Chalista Education and Culture
32 Group as well as the tribal councils in the Lower Yukon
33 River. Currently we are communicating with the tribal
34 councils and taking nominations for the selection of
35 the four to six elders who will attend the workshop.

36
37 The next project is our Value of Salmon
38 Project or how people of the Yukon River value salmon.
39 It's funded by the North Pacific Research Board and is
40 moving into its final stages and will be completed
41 within the next year or so. This summer I held a
42 workshop in Ft. Yukon to discuss their draft chapter
43 and revised it with their comments. The next step is
44 I'll be writing a chapter on Russian Mission and
45 holding a similar workshop there. And the final steps
46 will be to put the whole report together and draft a
47 shorter paper for a peer review journal and I also plan
48 to give some presentations on the project.

49
50 The final project I'd like to tell you

1 about is Traditional Knowledge in Federal Fisheries
2 Management, which is a paper. We're in the final
3 stages of drafting a paper in partnership with Kawerak,
4 the Nome area Nome area non-profit for a peer review
5 journal that examines ways that traditional knowledge
6 can be used in Federal fisheries management,
7 particularly the North Pacific Fisheries Management
8 Council. To get community feedback on our draft paper
9 we held workshops in both Golovin and Russian Mission
10 with knowledgeable fishermen and also met with the
11 North Pacific Fishery Management Council Staff. The
12 next steps are to incorporate the community ideas, the
13 Council and other feedback and finalize the paper to be
14 submitted to a journal in the near future.

15

16 And that's the end of my report.

17

18 I want to thank you, again, for the
19 opportunity to present this information and I will turn
20 it back to Wayne or take any questions.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does any Council
23 members have questions or comments for Catherine.

24

25 MR. COLLINS: I've got a comment that
26 fits in with what you were presenting to us.

27

28 I'm wondering if in these projects
29 you're actually getting tapes of stories from elders
30 because those can be a valuable source of information,
31 also place names. Because example, the Big River that
32 I mentioned here, the name of that river in Athabaskan
33 is Zigligizegashna (ph), which translates sheefish
34 harvest river. And then there's another stream above
35 Nicolai, the Tonzona, there's a place on that stream
36 that's (In Native) harvest place and that's where they
37 put in the weirs for king salmon in the past. So those
38 place names can be clues on past activities.

39

40 Now, the ones that told a lot of these
41 stories, also the timing of fish runs in one of Mr.
42 (Indiscernible) stories, he talks about the people in
43 the Upper Kuskokwim going to Tonzona for the first king
44 salmon, that's further up stream than Big River and
45 some of the other ones there and that came about
46 because he was provided with a tape recorder that he
47 could tell stories of things that he wanted to pass on.

48

49 So I'm hoping that you're not just
50 gathering information in English, but that you think

1 about place names and the elders that have that
2 knowledge are fast going. The ones that I have all my
3 information from are now gone in Nikolai. So I think
4 that's a critical thing now that we be getting stories
5 from elders of past subsistence activities and so on,
6 in whatever language they feel the most comfortable
7 with.

8

9 A couple suggestions.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You have a comment,
12 Catherine.

13

14 MS. MONCRIEFF: Thank you, I appreciate
15 that comment and I agree with you that those are very
16 important things and that the elders are quickly
17 disappearing. And I do want to assure you that
18 whenever I do an interview I always encourage the
19 person to speak in the language that they're the most
20 comfortable and bring an interpreter if they're
21 choosing their Native language. And also whenever I do
22 an interview I try to record it, if they'll allow me,
23 and then I try to archive those interviews at the
24 Rasmuson Library so that they are available with
25 permission for the future.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.

28

29 Any other Council comments.

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think that your
34 handout was with Zach and so it will get here when he
35 arrives.

36

37 MS. MONCRIEFF: Okay, thank you.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Just informing you
40 of that.

41

42 Any further comments.

43

44 Wayne.

45

46 MR. JENKINS: No, sir, Mr. Chair. We
47 appreciate OSM's support and we thank you for the
48 opportunity to share our work with you.

49

50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

1 Appreciate all the work that YRDFA is doing. Those are
2 all very worthwhile projects.

3
4 Thank you.

5
6 And so we'll have TCC come up.

7
8 Adam and Nicole.

9
10 George, you got a comment.

11
12 MR. PAPPAS: Yes, Mr. Chair, they're
13 setting up a PowerPoint presentation, it may take a
14 moment. I'm not sure if this is a good time to have a
15 cup of coffee or not, sir.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, we could take
18 a five minute break if they got to set up a PowerPoint
19 and so how long do you think it'll take.

20
21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Five minutes,
22 setting up a laptop.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Yeah, so
25 people can grab a cup of coffee, we'll just -- they'll
26 be ready to go here in a couple of minutes.

27
28 (Off record)

29
30 (On record)

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll call the
33 meeting to order.

34
35 (Pause)

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's time to watch
38 TCC's presentation, if you can come back.

39
40 (Pause)

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So TCC's going to
43 give their presentation.

44
45 Go right ahead.

46
47 MS. FARNHAM: Good morning, Mr.
48 Chairman and members of the Council. I'm Nicole
49 Farnham and I am with the Tanana Chiefs Conference. I
50 am the project fisheries biologist for the Henshaw

1 Creek Weir and I will be providing you guys this
2 morning with a brief overview about our project and our
3 fish numbers for the year.

4

5 MR. PASKVAN: My name is Adam Paskvan,
6 also with Tanana Chiefs Conference and I will be
7 talking about this years Henshaw Science Camp Project
8 that we did.

9

10 MS. FARNHAM: So the goals of Tanana
11 Chiefs, especially in our wildlife and parks division
12 is to preserve the cultural and traditional lifestyle
13 that remains in these regions and to advocate for the
14 conservation and sustainability of both the resources
15 and the traditional practices so that it may be
16 continued and passed down from generation to
17 generation. It is also to incorporate traditional
18 knowledge into current management systems to be able to
19 enable sustainable fisheries and wildlife resources.
20 We also want to develop partnerships with other
21 agencies and organizations to help achieve our goals.
22 We would like to hear your guys' thoughts and ideas on
23 ways to help conserve this lifestyle and the resources
24 that fuel our ideas. Please let us know what your
25 guys' ideas are at the end of this presentation.

26

27 So our current projects that we have
28 going at TCC are the Henshaw Creek Weir and the Henshaw
29 Creek Science and Culture Camp.

30

31 These two projects are funded by OSM
32 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and the Region 7
33 US Fish and Wildlife Services National Wildlife Refuge.

34

35 Henshaw Creek Weir has been operated
36 since 1999. In that year it was operated as a counting
37 tower. In 2000 with Fish and Wildlife running the
38 project it was turned into an adult salmon weir
39 counting station. In 2008/2007, TCC took over this
40 project and its goal was to allow people in the nearby
41 villages to help run this project. This project is to
42 determine the escapement and run timing of chinook and
43 chum salmon described demographic compositions, also
44 known as age, sex, length, ASL is what we use in the
45 fisheries world and to provide a platform for hosting a
46 youth summer science and culture camp with our partners
47 to help make this project a successful year, such as US
48 Fish and Wildlife providing us training, motorboat
49 safety practices, first-aid, CPR, bear safety and
50 firearm safety handling as well as the Kanuti National

1 Wildlife Refuge and Allakaket to provide logistical
2 support as well as ADF&G providing us post-season aging
3 analysis.

4

5 The 2016 results for the Henshaw Creek
6 Weir was we had a chinook, chum count of 1,354. The
7 chum numbers were 286,780 fish. The weir was
8 operational June 26th through August 1st. The first
9 king and chums did pass on June 26th, the date we got
10 our weir in.

11

12 So this graph provides the chinook,
13 chum result -- or excuse me, chinook results of past
14 years as well as this years data. You can see that
15 there is no data in 2006 or 2014 due to high flooding.
16 Looking at the graph the 2015 bar shows that it was the
17 highest run of kinds recorded in the Henshaw Creek
18 history.

19

20 This year for 2016 we are also well
21 above average as well. These escapements were only
22 made possible by the sacrifices made up and down the
23 river of the people who were not fishing.

24

25 Over the last five years there has been
26 a continued high trend in chum escapements. If you
27 guys see the black line on this graph you will notice
28 that the majority of these bars are well above our
29 average line. This year was the second highest
30 recorded escapement record, this year.

31

32 We are in the planning process of
33 developing a graduate program to provide an in-depth
34 analysis of both the chinook and chum time series data
35 so we can look at this data and compare it to the
36 weather patterns and why we may be increasing our fish
37 passage numbers over the years.

38

39 MR. PASKVAN: Hi. Now, I'm going to
40 start talking about the Henshaw Science Camp.

41

42 This camp is trying to place an
43 emphasis on teaching the youth the importance of
44 blending together both the Western Science and the
45 Traditional Knowledge by promoting an active
46 participation of conservation of the resources. And to
47 do this we had several elders come out, Kenneth and
48 Elise Bergman as well as Pollock Simon, Sr., and we
49 partnered with the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge, US
50 Fish and Wildlife and YKSD instructor and we -- and the

1 goals of this was connecting the youth with the nature
2 and inspiring the youth to become stewards and active
3 participants in conserving their lands and resources
4 and educating the youth in natural sciences and
5 traditional knowledge and techniques.

6

7 So we had multiple different lessons
8 for the children while we were out there.

9

10 We looked at fish identification, so
11 determining the sex of them. We put in a fish net so
12 we can catch several salmon and we built a drying rack
13 and smoked the salmon with them and Elise Bergman, she
14 cut the salmon and prepared it for strips and they also
15 had learned about traditional salmon skin tanning and
16 while we were out there we showed them how we will
17 sample the kings and chum salmon by putting them in the
18 trap and pulling scales, determining the sex and their
19 size.

20

21 So let's see, and while we were also
22 out there, the children got to learn about identifying
23 the different dragonfly species in the area.

24

25 And one of the instructors, Susan
26 Paskvan, was teaching the Athabascan language while we
27 were -- throughout multiple different lessons, she
28 would stop and tell them the story and what the words
29 were.

30

31 MS. FARNHAM: So -- oh, go ahead.

32

33 MR. PASKVAN: I thought it was really
34 nice, just like having all the kids there and they were
35 able to like go camping for five days and at one of the
36 points, one of the elders told Stewart to make a fire
37 and Susan had noticed the kid just kind of sitting
38 around trying, looking concerned and she asked what was
39 wrong and he had said, he didn't know how to make a
40 fire so my mom helped him to teach him how to make a
41 fire to keep the campfire going and let all the other
42 animals know that we're there.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MS. FARNHAM: So we would like to thank
47 everybody who has helped TCC in the past as well as in
48 the present, so Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Allakaket
49 Traditional Council, US Fish and Wildlife, Office of
50 Subsistence Management, the Partners Program, in

1 particular, as well as the Fairbanks Field Office from
2 Fish and Wildlife, the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge,
3 Alaska Department of Fish and Game and many, many more.

4

5 With that, we will take any questions
6 or comments.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does RAC members
9 have questions.

10

11 Go ahead, Fred.

12

13 MR. ALEXIE: Yeah, thank you on that
14 weir project.

15

16 You know, just in the past YRDFA
17 encouraged a lot of weir testing and it was done in
18 Kaltag very extensively for quite a few years and out
19 of that project I think some of our younger kids that
20 were counting the fish at that time, they went on to
21 make a career out of what they gathered as a young
22 person. So I just want to encourage Tanana Chiefs, you
23 know, to say, hey, put more weirs out there. I mean
24 it's for our benefit. The more we study the fish the
25 better off we're going to understand and the younger
26 kids are not going to be running in the water and just
27 wasting the fish or catching the fish, you know, and
28 throwing it off to the side. But I'd like the Tanana
29 Chiefs -- encourage Tanana Chiefs to say, hey, put more
30 weir projects out in the villages.

31

32 MS. FARNHAM: Thank you, we appreciate
33 that comment.

34

35 We are actually working on another weir
36 proposal for putting in a weir in the Nulato River, as
37 well as one up on the Black River as well. So
38 hopefully those will get funded within the next few
39 years. Nulato is in the process of getting reviewed
40 right now and we're working on the Black River one as
41 we speak.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Pollock was at the
44 Science Camp and I'd like to get Pollock's comments.

45

46 Go ahead, Pollock.

47

48 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd
49 like to see the continuation of this weir, it brings
50 work in for local people like Allakaket and Alatna.

1 They have -- out during summertime but they've been
2 working there and some of elders go out there during
3 the culture camp or science camp for five days and kids
4 come in from different villages and we tell them
5 stories, we show them how to cut fish and show them how
6 to set fishnets and all this. I think it's good for
7 our children to know that there's fish available in the
8 rivers like oreos, you know. So it's good for them to
9 know that. It's the first time some of those kids pick
10 up a knife and cut fish so I'd like to see that weir
11 continue into the future.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pollock.

16

17 My comment would be that I think that
18 -- I would appreciate the OSM funding the weir project
19 because the Henshaw Weir is now enumerating the largest
20 summer chum salmon return on the Koyukuk River and is
21 accounting for between 10 to 15 percent of the summer
22 chum run for the Yukon drainage, so it's a real
23 important stock to track. And I would hope that the
24 funding would continue for that weir with the Alaska
25 Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and
26 Wildlife, OSM funding sources.

27

28 I do think that these science camps are
29 important for local kids that can't get out of town and
30 learn how to make a fire or learn about the life cycle
31 of fish. A lot -- some people, they think salmon spawn
32 and go back to the ocean. I mean there's people who
33 have no clue what happens to salmon, they don't
34 understand some of the aspects. So kids have to
35 understand the life cycle of the salmon, that's
36 important. I've heard adults on teleconferences saying
37 that, I was like dumbfounded, I was like, what, they
38 don't understand they die, that's actually an important
39 thing for people to understand. And so I think the
40 science camp platform for kids going back telling the
41 kids back at home and at school what they saw and what
42 they did, that's a really, really important thing so
43 the science camps I would like to see continued funding
44 from the US Fish and Wildlife for those science camps.

45

46 If there's no weir in a Refuge system
47 conglomerate like Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko then there
48 should be other science camps, the systems put in place
49 by the Fish and Wildlife, I would like to see that kind
50 of incorporating local traditional elders being able to

1 mix with younger kids. Because some kids, they don't
2 have, you know, maybe their mom's working or, you know,
3 they're single family households or something so I
4 think these are real important things and I really
5 appreciate what TCC is doing with that and the
6 foresight that TCC has had in trying to maintain these
7 projects.

8

9 Ray.

10

11 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. I think it would
12 -- I wasn't clear whether those chums now, is that --
13 there's no harvest above there, that was escapement
14 numbers then at that weir.

15

16 MS. FARNHAM: Yes.

17

18 MR. COLLINS: It would be good if we
19 had harvest data, what was going on below that to track
20 that as you see whether that -- how that's reflected in
21 the numbers, too, just for more complete information
22 on.....

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, all harvest
25 for chum salmon occurs, except for Bettles, which is
26 hardly anything.....

27

28 MR. COLLINS: Right. Right.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:all chum salmon
31 occurs from below Henshaw Creek and below that on the
32 Koyukuk mainstem. Where I'm at, I'm not even allowed
33 to harvest salmon, period.

34

35 MR. COLLINS: Right. Right.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Bettles harvest
38 is like a few salmon, like, 10, five or hardly
39 anything. And all the salmon are harvested from
40 Henshaw Creek and below, you know, most salmon are
41 harvested below Henshaw Creek.

42

43 MR. COLLINS: Right but if that data is
44 available, again, it would reflect in this is the
45 escapement and this is what was harvested below, just
46 for a more complete one. It would really be
47 interesting to know from maybe talking to elders there,
48 how many they used to harvest when everybody had dog
49 teams. I don't know if we've got any data on that at
50 all. But I would guess that the escapement has gone up

1 since they stopped harvesting for dog food to human,
2 but just to get a complete picture of what's going on
3 with the fish.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You want to comment
6 on dog food Pollock.

7
8 MR. SIMON: What's that.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: He's talking about
11 how many salmon are used by dog teams on the Koyukuk
12 River -- well, there is still some harvest.

13
14 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But what Ray is
17 asking is how much less harvest is there now for dog
18 teams than there is now -- I know there's people
19 harvesting for dogs but not that much.

20
21 Go ahead, Pollock.

22
23 MR. SIMON: Fishing has always been--
24 like there's low numbers sometimes and -- warmer
25 months, you know, fish survive but it's been cold years
26 ago and salmon has -- numbers has gone down but we live
27 by the river for hundreds of years, if not thousands of
28 years and the salmon has always come up every spring
29 and we take as needed. We don't -- on the Koyukuk River
30 anyways. But that has always worked for us, we
31 restrict the fish and we take as needed and then the
32 State and Feds took over and we lost the king salmon.
33 But, yeah, there's sometimes -- elders told us that
34 1940, 1945 there was no fish but it's improving in '50s
35 and '60s there was plenty of fish, but, yeah, we always
36 just take as needed. That seems to work for us.

37
38 I think in the management of fish and
39 wildlife traditional knowledge should be used as a tool
40 to help manage because we've lived by the river for
41 years and we always respect the fish and fish and
42 wildlife, so that's all.

43
44 Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pollock.

47
48 I'll take Darrel and then Fred.

49
50 Darrel.

1 MR. VENT: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chairman.

2

3 Let's see when I first heard about, you
4 know, the information that you're providing and I think
5 we go through a program through TCC for our culture
6 camp where we're teaching kids how to, you know, cut
7 fish, the same things you guys are doing up there,
8 bringing elders out teaching them Native -- the
9 language, it helps but our funding is, you know, we're
10 not getting enough funding to keep operating this so
11 it's good to hear that you guys are doing that for
12 villages up there. And if you could, you know, maybe
13 in some way try to help apply this towards the village
14 of Huslia and other villages where they're trying to
15 teach their kids how to cut fish like we did when we
16 grew up that would be helpful.

17

18 And my question would have been on, you
19 know, we're seeing a lot more fish going up, I'm just
20 wondering about, you know, what's going on with the
21 hatch -- where they hatch their eggs and where they lay
22 their eggs there, I'm kind of wondering, you know, are
23 we getting high water or is the temperature right or
24 anything like that, I'm just, you know, trying to fish
25 for information on things like that that, you know, if
26 you guys can provide, documentation on that it'd be
27 kind of helpful too so we can really understand what's
28 going on with the fish.

29

30 And also to Jack's question there
31 about dog teams, I remember back in the '90s there'd be
32 like probably in the village of Huslia there'd be like
33 about 10 families with, you know, a bunch of dogs. Now
34 days, maybe probably only two. It's -- you know, we're
35 not catching as much fish as we used to. I remember
36 back when my grandpa and my dad used to run dogs, we'd
37 have four fish racks, we'd be busy all summer long and
38 it was -- you know, it wasn't weekends off, this was,
39 you know, morning to night, you're busy because you
40 have to get kings done and that's the way we used to
41 operate for running dogs but now it's not like that no
42 more. You got, you know, you got to have income in
43 order to support a dog team so it's way less than what
44 it used to be.

45

46 I think -- I had one more question but
47 I'll stop there for now. I'll let someone else go.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. You have a
50 comment Nicole.

1 MS. FARNHAM: Yeah. So back to like
2 collecting data and like why the numbers could be
3 increasing in Henshaw, there's a variety of different
4 ideas or what we'd call a hypothesis such as like we're
5 not fishing as much because we're trying to help the
6 fish populations increase. Again, with like the water
7 conditions, that was a great comment, Darrel, it could
8 be that the water is just like at that perfect spot for
9 allowing the eggs to hatch and just give us that great
10 abundance of having, as the fish spawn out, they just
11 have a high enumeration of the eggs surviving which
12 would be really, really cool. Unfortunately it's
13 really, really hard to study juvenile fish in those
14 systems and of course in the winter and the ice coming
15 out and all of that, but we have talked about doing
16 research up there in the winter and seeing if we can
17 figure out how the juveniles are doing.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There's been no
20 smolt out migration enumeration on that drainage.

21
22 MS. FARNHAM: Not that I know of.
23 Again, we've talked about it we just haven't gotten
24 around to it, we're slowly building the office.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Fred.

27
28 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29
30 First of all I really want to encourage
31 weir fishing. For years and years I've been talking
32 about a sonar, how could the management -- the managers
33 say, hey, this is what you're going to fish, this is
34 what's coming, and, you know, with a weir project,
35 maybe this would help out what information comes back
36 instead of relying on only one sonar down in Pilot
37 Station for the whole Yukon, the whole Koyukuk River,
38 the whole -- all the tributaries, how do we know where
39 that fish is really going. Maybe that weir system will
40 back that information up as to the sonar.

41
42 Okay.

43
44 As far as the fish that Ray was asking,
45 you know, about the dog fish use. There used to be
46 about 20 to 30 teams in Kaltag and just like Darrel was
47 saying, we stood on the bank 24 hours a day fishing,
48 six big fish racks, all dog salmon, all for dog food,
49 don't do it no more. The only fish we get is what
50 we're going to use, like the king salmon, silvers,

1 that's the only fish that I know that comes back to the
2 -- to our use, you know.

3

4 But I'd really like to encourage Tanana
5 Chiefs to put the weirs -- I'm glad to see that sonar
6 going on -- I mean that weir system going into Nulato
7 because Nulato is a big major spawning area for kings,
8 dog salmon, sheefish, everything goes -- everything
9 goes to the Nulato River.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There used to be a
14 historical weir on the Nulato River for several years
15 and when did that discontinue.

16

17 MS. FARNHAM: I'm not sure. But I
18 remember hearing stories about it.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I knew people that
21 worked at that Nulato weir several years ago and so it
22 would be good to maintain that data set, especially if
23 they start commercial harvest again on the -- as the
24 chinook run starts to increase there's going to be
25 pressure to commercial harvest.....

26

27 MR. ALEXIE: Yes.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:which is going
30 to suppress the summer run, summer chum salmon run so
31 it would be good to have some spawning data especially
32 to show where the -- like the Henshaw that's primarily
33 probably a quarter point passage, first pulse passage
34 is where a lot of that fish is actually coming from
35 because it's been under full protection. So, you know,
36 the restrictions on chinook actually has been allowing
37 chum salmon to return at optimum numbers and it shows
38 where they actually are going to at the volumes that
39 they actually -- and their apportionment in the run, so
40 this is -- you know, there's some real good data that's
41 actually been developed with the weirs during this low
42 chinook run for chums.

43

44 So I'm appreciative of that data,
45 recovery at this point.

46

47 But I do think that a Nulato weir is a
48 very important system and had historical data and it
49 could be compared to when there was significant
50 commercial harvest on the lower river. Plus if they

1 start heavy commercial harvest then that's going to
2 start suppressing the summer chum run again.
3
4 So I think we've covered that enough.
5 We're going to go to Fred with the performance for the
6 Yukon River. So I appreciate all of what TCC is doing.
7
8 Any further comments.
9
10 Did you have a comment, Jenny.
11
12 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.
13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: On the phone, yeah,
15 go ahead.
16
17 MR. HONEA: Yeah, I just wanted to
18 thank YRDFA and also TCC for their presentation and I
19 just wanted to throw in a pitch for the chum salmon --
20 the king salmon testing that they done, whether it was
21 done in Anchorage or within here in the villages. I
22 know that TCC has come in and trained some people and
23 they were able to use -- do that as an incentive and
24 also I think do -- the importance of the numbers -- I
25 think an important thing to remember is the numbers
26 that's coming off of these tests and also we get a
27 little bit of money for gas supplies to and from fish
28 camp.
29
30 So I just wanted to thank TCC and YRDFA
31 for that particular program. I am in full support of
32 it.
33
34 Thank you.
35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much for
37 those comments, Don, I appreciate that.
38
39 Anybody else on the phone have comments
40 on TCC's report.
41
42 (No comments)
43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, hearing none,
45 thanks so much.
46
47 MR. VENT: Tell them to mute their
48 phone.
49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Say again.

1 MR. VENT: Tell them to mute their
2 phone, it's loud.
3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, somebody on
5 the phone is shuffling papers and so if the people on
6 the phone, if you can mute your phone, star six, that'd
7 be appreciated, we're getting this background noise of
8 somebody messing around.
9
10 So Fred Bue is going to give us an in-
11 season performance for the Yukon.
12
13 Go ahead, Fred.
14
15 MR. BUE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
16 Again, my name's Fred Bue with US Fish and Wildlife
17 Service. I'm the Federal in-season manager for the
18 Yukon River.
19
20 We had some problems with the phone
21 this morning and so I'd like to ask if Holly Carroll or
22 Jeff Estensen are on the line with Fish and Game.
23
24 MS. CARROLL: Did anyone hear me.
25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, we got you
27 fine, I should have acknowledged you and I heard Jeff
28 come on.
29
30 Go ahead, Fred.
31
32 MR. BUE: Yeah, okay, thank you, Mr.
33 Chairman and welcome everybody. It's good to see folks
34 here again. Also this is kind of a pleasure to have
35 YRDFA and TCC go ahead of us. It shows a lot of
36 interest, there is a lot of interest beyond just the
37 agencies working on the Yukon River and I think from
38 your comments I can see that it's very well
39 appreciated.
40
41 Also the dynamics of our world these
42 days is that there's a lot of work to do, our budgets
43 are declining and we all need to kind of pull together
44 to do some of this stuff so it is appreciated, and I'll
45 leave it at that.
46
47 Also for the Yukon River I'm here
48 giving the presentation but please know that the Fish
49 and Game is also involved in management and they're
50 here telephonically and questions I can't answer,

1 they'll hopefully jump in and save me so I appreciate
2 that.

3

4 (Laughter)

5

6 MR. BUE: I'll try to keep this as
7 brief as I can. You had a lot of questions about the
8 Henshaw and that's just one little small tributary on
9 the whole Yukon, so it is pretty complex and I'll try
10 not to get bogged down on the details so you can follow
11 up with specific questions as you see fit.

12

13 Again, you all know that since '97/98
14 we had pretty serious salmon crashes, it wasn't just
15 chinook salmon, it was all salmon, coho was kind of
16 marginal but chum salmon went down also. The chum came
17 back but the chinook are still having some problems.
18 We progressed, we got stricter and stricter in our
19 management. 2009 is kind of the real turning point
20 where we took the precautionary approach and just plain
21 closed the first pulse of fish coming up the river and
22 since then things have just gotten stricter and
23 stricter. 2012, 2013 the runs came in even well below
24 what we projected and we needed to get more serious.
25 2014 we had nearly entire closure of subsistence on
26 chinook. But it kind of surprised us, the chinook came
27 back a little bit stronger than we anticipated. 2015
28 they came back a little bit better also. We're
29 certainly not out of the woods, we're still about half
30 of what historical levels were but it is encouraging
31 and we had some really severe restrictions and now
32 we're trying to find a balance, how to allow some
33 harvest while still conserving those fish and give them
34 an opportunity to rebound.

35

36 So with that, I think we're also seeing
37 some pretty strong summer chum runs. You saw Henshaw
38 Creek how it's booming up and that gets to be a real
39 challenge for management in how do you take advantage
40 or for those using summer chum and still protect
41 chinook, we don't want to withhold an opportunity that
42 people could really use when things are bad on chinook,
43 they need something and it's difficult to deny them
44 access to those fish but it is a tradeoff there.

45

46 And with that, we've worked a lot with
47 fishermen. We've learned a lot -- we've changed
48 regulations at the Board of Fish over the last few
49 years, got some new management tools and those are a
50 big part of it's the creativity of the fishermen, what

1 works in their area and how we can apply those things
2 and we're learning all the time and it's not perfect
3 but I think we're getting better and these meetings
4 help us get feedback and how to apply that in the
5 future.

6
7 Also, you know, the other side of
8 things is that we have a lot of uncertainty in
9 assessment early in the run before fish get into the
10 river but a lot of our harvest, everybody wants those
11 first fish up the river, those are the nicest ones, of
12 course, but that's where you have the least amount of
13 knowledge and ability to -- we can't really piece out
14 specific management until we get a bigger picture of
15 the run and that means the fish are further up river
16 and possibly beyond the fishermen, so just a challenge.

17
18 So getting into this recent season,
19 2016, the State published forecast for chinook of
20 130,000 to 175,000 chinook, drainage-wide. At the low
21 end of that run projection we would definitely need to
22 make some pretty serious conservation, to conserve
23 chinook that means withholding a lot of subsistence
24 fishing opportunity on chinook, we need to cut the
25 harvest down. At the upper end, on the other hand,
26 there should be some reasonable opportunity to catch
27 some chinook. It's certainly not like we used to catch
28 but there could be some ability and -- but we need, you
29 know, in this time of recovery we need some pretty good
30 certainty that we are in that range in order to make
31 some decisions about management and that is sort of the
32 case we're at.

33
34 We were looking at a run similar to
35 2015 at the high end, we saw from last year that we
36 could have harvested a few more fish for sure, but we
37 didn't know that until after the fact. It seems like
38 we're gaining this trend of slightly increasing and so
39 that's kind of where we went looking into this season.
40 We used these new tools, with the feedback from
41 fishermen are and we're going to apply that going
42 forward.

43
44 So, of course, every year is a little
45 different.

46
47 This year we had the Bering Sea ice
48 pack was way low, it didn't come down nearly to St.
49 Matthews, even, exceptionally small ice pack. The
50 river ice went out two weeks earlier than usual, very,

1 very unique. And then the first chinook into the river
2 was a good week earlier than the first chinook on
3 average, and so we were looking at a pretty early run.
4 Incidentally, the summer chum also came in really
5 early, right about the same time, and, yeah, they ramp
6 up a little bit slower but those first really good
7 summer chum are right there with the kings, right off
8 the bat and that is a challenge.

9

10 So our management approach this season
11 was to back off slightly on the subsistence
12 restrictions we had in 2015. What we did was rather
13 than going directly into six inch gillnets once the ice
14 left the river, we left the 7.5 inch restriction in
15 place until we started catching the first chinook. The
16 importance of that is that there's sheefish and other
17 fish moving and people want fresh fish once that ice is
18 out of the river, they want a change in diet just like
19 the birds coming back, they want fresh fish. And so
20 that's one place that we backed off on.

21

22 Then as those first chinook came in we
23 closed gillnet fishing but we allowed the selective
24 gear types, dipnets, beach seines, and, once again in
25 the middle river, fishwheels with all releasing chinook
26 alive, and the idea is so that you can catch those
27 other fish and still protect those early pulses of
28 chinook. We have in regulation that we have to protect
29 the first pulse of chinook but we're also protecting as
30 much as we need to.

31

32 So this sequence started at the mouth
33 of the river and moved on up stream.

34

35 With exception that the Koyukuk and the
36 Innoko Rivers were treated a little bit different, and
37 Subdistrict 5D was also treated different.

38

39 Essentially, -- so essentially we
40 closed those first two pulses but we did not -- in the
41 Koyukuk and the Innoko Rivers we only restricted them
42 to six inch gillnets and the reason is that they'd get
43 very few chinook there but there's also a lot --
44 proportionately there's a lot of summer chum in there
45 and so their chinook don't contribute as much to the
46 total run but their summer chum is very important to
47 them and so we left them be. There's not as much
48 fishing as there used to be historically, as been
49 stated earlier.

50

1 Towards midpoint in the run we opened,
2 in the Yukon, to six inch gillnets on a reduced
3 schedule. That was another place that we backed off.
4 In the past we had done these really strategic
5 precision type openings where you saw a pulse of
6 chinook and then you'd open in between the two pulses
7 to reduce the risk of fishing like that and so we'd
8 allow them to catch some chum and then completely
9 close, but the problem was, is that, there wasn't a lot
10 of foresight or warning of a subsistence fishermen out
11 in a fish camp, news doesn't get there that fast, they
12 have to make a pretty quick decision whether or not to
13 put gas in their boat and run down 20 miles to try and
14 drift. And so that was a difficult thing for
15 fishermen. And so what we did, we waited, you know,
16 maybe a little bit later in the run but we announced a
17 fishing schedule that people could plan around and we
18 still used six inch gillnets and that protected those
19 -- the larger females and also made sure that they were
20 pretty efficient in getting their chum, especially in
21 Districts 1, 2 and 3, if you put a six inch net out at
22 the peak of the chum run, you're just going to plug
23 with chum and you can't hardly catch a king. The
24 middle river the fish start to run and separate
25 different sides of the river and timing and some
26 fishermen know where to go to get a king, when there
27 aren't very many.

28
29 So about a week later we had that
30 scheduled fishing with short periods. The run was
31 looking -- we started gaining confidence that there
32 were a few surplus chinook in there and so we allowed
33 every area a short 7.5 inch gillnet period so that they
34 could be efficient in getting a few kings. They
35 couldn't take very many but they could go out there and
36 catch a few and they didn't have to plug their nets
37 with chums that maybe they didn't want. So that was
38 really important. It is -- you're never very certain
39 how many fish you're going to actually catch in those
40 so it is a little bit risky for management but we had
41 confidence that we could catch a few so we did it.

42
43 Around 80 percent of the -- when 80
44 percent of the fish had passed the lower river
45 districts, commercial fishing began with gillnets in
46 the lower river. We waited until pretty late in the
47 season and that was with six inch gillnets. And then
48 once the majority of the fish had passed, even through
49 District 4, subsistence was relaxed to five days a week
50 with six inch gillnets. You know they were on half

1 periods and then we relaxed them to.....

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did they fish six
4 inch gear or 5.5 in the commercial.

5

6 MR. BUE: In the commercial, District 1
7 fished 5.5 inch nets and those were additionally 30
8 meshes deep so they were not only a little bit smaller
9 net but they were also shallower and they tend to catch
10 really very few chinook when they're fished in that
11 fashion.

12

13 District 2 used six inch nets. The
14 deal there was in the past 5.5 was open in District 1
15 and District 2 just didn't fish very much more recently
16 so they didn't have that gear accessed to them and so
17 they maybe didn't get as much fishing time but we had
18 to let them use the gear that they had available. We
19 couldn't just flat out deny them and so -- but we did
20 wait until later in the run and I think that was the
21 compromise there.

22

23 But like I say in District 4 we did go
24 to five days a week towards the end of the run. Pretty
25 liberal fishing with six inch gillnets and that's still
26 -- we knew they'd catch some chinook with six inch
27 nets, fishermen are fishermen, they can do that but
28 they did have a -- we did end up being -- the smaller
29 males is probably what they caught most of. We also
30 did a similar thing in Subdistricts 5B, 5C and 5C
31 [sic]. In the past they hadn't used dipnets and beach
32 seines in those areas. The report was well they wanted
33 to try them but it wasn't very useful to them, the
34 concentrations of chum, once you get past the Tanana
35 River is very low and it just wasn't efficient and
36 worthwhile for most of those fishermen of the reports
37 we have so far.

38

39 In 5D it was a little bit different
40 situation, there'll be a proposal speaking to that and
41 so that's why I'm going into it with you, is that,
42 above the Tanana River they don't really get much for
43 summer chum, all they have is chinook. Those chinook
44 are also primarily bound for Canada and so they don't
45 have a lot of options. They're frequently the most
46 restricted fishermen on the river but they still need
47 fish. And so what we did with a lot of input from the
48 fishermen drainage-wide was to allow them to fish on
49 the trickle, the first fish when -- when they start
50 coming in the run just gradually builds and we allowed

1 them to fish on those fish but before the first pulse
2 got there. We closed them just prior to the first
3 pulse, but we let them fish on those fish with six inch
4 nets and so that does get them some fish early in the
5 run. Also they were allowed to use fishwheels, there's
6 a few fishwheels in that area and it's a really braided
7 river section so fishing is pretty difficult there. It
8 takes you awhile just to locate the channel that the
9 fish are using.

10
11 But then once that first pulse got
12 there we closed them flat out, they didn't have dipnets
13 and beach seines because there aren't those alternative
14 species to harvest. Then as it went on, we got
15 confirmation the fish were getting closer to the border
16 -- we got confirmation that the fish were moving to the
17 border as we expected, they were starting to build
18 there and so then we did announce a couple of short six
19 inch gillnet periods in 5D just to give them some
20 fishing in between pulses. Again, it was primarily
21 targeting those male component -- early part of the
22 run. If you get towards the later part of the run then
23 you tend to get more females too and so we want to
24 avoid that section if we could.

25
26 And then eventually we -- as we got
27 confirmation that we were closer to the upper end of
28 the escapement goal crossing the border, we're
29 projecting that we're going to make the escapement goal
30 and maybe exceed it and have some surplus and we
31 allowed a little bit longer fishing periods and they
32 were gradually extended into 5.5 day per week which is
33 half their normal -- or excuse me, three and a half
34 days a week, which is their normal schedule with six
35 inch nets and then we eventually relaxed it to seven
36 days a week when we were confident we were going to go
37 over the goal.

38
39 I also need to mention that at District
40 6 -- so the Yukon River harvest fish all the way --
41 everybody shares the resource so District 6, it's --
42 Federal managers don't have a lot of say there but it
43 is an important fishery for people there. District 6
44 was not managed nearly as intensively as the rest of
45 the Yukon this year, partly the genetics that we
46 collected at Pilot indicated that the Tanana was doing
47 a similar run as the Yukon. The Tanana stocks come in
48 a little bit later but the progressions gave us
49 confidence that we were going to do all right in the
50 Tanana. Also in the Tanana we had a lot of flooding.

1 High water through the entire season. The flood gates
2 on the Chena dam were closed -- or opened up twice and
3 diverted water out on the flood plains so with that
4 type of water there wasn't a lot of fishing and so we
5 really didn't mess with management there very much.

6
7 Subsistence fishing, we restricted them
8 to six inch gillnets during the regular scheduled
9 fishing periods.

10
11 Personal use fishing in the Fairbanks
12 area was restricted to six inch gillnets and live
13 release fishwheels, dipnets for the entire season.

14
15 Ray talked about the subsistence
16 harvest surveys and YRDFA also, is that they're still
17 in the process of doing that, they're still collecting
18 that data and that's a post-season type of information
19 that we get, it'll be real interesting to see how we
20 came out. We think from speaking with the public that
21 they did a little bit better than they did last year
22 and then that was our intent and hopefully things
23 worked out for them.

24
25 As far as commercial fishing, again,
26 there was no sale of chinook for commercial, even
27 during the directed summer chum as identical fish.
28 Dipnets and beach seines were used during most of the
29 summer season, which is very inefficient but it's
30 better than nothing and they do save chinook. Late in
31 the season when the gillnets were allowed incidental
32 chinook were taken home for subsistence. They still
33 weren't sold but they went into the subsistence harvest
34 and those will be reflected in the post-season report.

35
36 In all the District 1 and 2 commercial
37 harvest, the summer chum was 522,000 (ph) and it was
38 the second highest harvest on record. 181,000 summer
39 chum were harvested using those selective gear types,
40 the dipnets and beach seines and that's about one-third
41 of the commercial harvest and that was during the
42 middle of the run. Of those, 8,200 chinook were caught
43 and released from those selective gears. Once we
44 opened or once the State went to the gillnet commercial
45 fishery.....

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Say that number
48 again.

49
50 MR. BUE: 8,200 were caught and

1 released.

2

3

4 Under the harvest reports, on their
5 fish ticket they're required to write down how many
6 were caught and released on their fish tickets and so
7 we do get an accounting of that.

7

8

9 Same when they went to the gillnet,
10 they incidentally harvested 5,500 chinook during, you
11 know, the end of the summer chum run, they still landed
12 that. I think there was like -- like that includes
13 maybe 100 chinook that were harvested in the fall
14 season fishery but essentially gillnet harvested
15 chinook as that.

15

16

17 So then for the fall season the outlook
18 ranged early on -- the preseason we were looking at
19 around average to below average but based on the
20 performance of the summer chum, which gives an idea
21 what to expect for fall chum was a better than
22 expected, well, then we would expect better than
23 average fall chum and so that bumped up going into the
24 fall season we were looking at a run maybe around
25 900,000 which is above average. Therefore, we had no
26 concerns for subsistence restrictions for fall chum.
27 We did manage the -- with the commercial harvest went
28 to harvest surplus to that and make sure that we'd get
29 our escapement objectives but it wasn't on the backs of
30 the subsistence fishermen. So subsistence fish was
31 immediately relaxed to seven days a week in the fall
32 season. Once we hit that point most of the chinook are
33 out of the way. And the reason we also lifted the mesh
34 size restriction -- and a big part of that was to
35 compensate people for the lost opportunity during the
36 summer season, all the restrictions they had. Fall
37 chum are really good fish, people are doing other
38 things, it's not a replacement but it may supplement
39 what goes in the fishermen's caches and store for the
40 winter.

40

41

42 Again, we won't know the subsistence
43 harvest until post-season but we feel that with all
44 that opportunity, if the run timing worked out for the
45 fishermen and the weather conditions then they probably
46 did all right.

46

47

48 The commercial harvest fall chum was
49 467,000 and coho was 206,000. Both the coho and the
50 fall chum harvest were the highest on record for these
51 species.

1 I should apologize, during the break I
2 handed out two packets of paper.

3
4 One is the Fish and Game season summary
5 for the summer season and it has a lot of the details
6 in here and, again, like I said it's a big river with a
7 lot of specifics and there's some age and genetic stuff
8 in there.

9
10 Also I handed out another report, kind
11 of a briefer summary from Fish and Wildlife Service
12 that gives you a general idea of how the run went.

13
14 Of that report on Page 7 there's some
15 charts, to put things in perspective for you.

16
17 Page 7 it starts with the commercial
18 chinook salmon harvest in the US and you can see there
19 that there is no commercial chinook harvest anymore.
20 2007 was the last year that there was targeted chinook.
21 2008, and 2010 those were small incidental harvests
22 when they were allowed to sell chinook and sincethen
23 they're no longer allowed to sell.

24
25 The subsistence chart, the one in the
26 middle there shows you how the subsistence harvest has
27 declined.

28
29 2014/2015 were very restricted seasons.
30 And in 2016 we don't have the data yet. We think that
31 we're slightly better than 2015. To put that in
32 perspective it still represents a pretty significant
33 reduction in subsistence.

34
35 The bottom graph is our attempt at
36 total run reconstruction. There's no way we can count
37 every fish in the entire Yukon and -- but we do use the
38 post-season subsistence harvest survey that'll come in
39 later and so what we did was stack the harvest on top
40 of the post-season analysis for our escapement so that
41 gives you an idea the darker bottom of it is where our
42 escapements are and the upper part is where the harvest
43 is. For 2016, what we did was we put in the mid-point
44 of the projected outlook range. We think from what we
45 saw at the border, we think we're within that range and
46 so this gives an idea about where we ended up.

47
48 Looking at that, yeah, we are pretty --
49 we're decent by normal, in recent years, but we're
50 still only half of what the historical run might have

1 looked like.

2

3 Then there's a bunch of charts here and
4 you can look at them later but the next page you have
5 the Pilot Station sonar, how we compared to previous
6 years. And then one of the more interesting ones is
7 the bottom one is our Eagle sonar. What showed up and
8 crossed the border and that's kind of our report card
9 for the season overall. It gives us -- a big part of
10 the run crosses the border. We feel that what crosses
11 the border gives us a sense of what we did drainage-
12 wide and just ball parkish.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I see Darrel
15 wants to have a question.

16

17 The cafe wants to know how many people
18 are going to be having burgers so we got to get that on
19 the -- show of hands, how many people are going to be
20 eating lunch at the cafe.

21

22 So let's see.....

23

24 MR. BUE: Is there lunch here or we
25 have snacks here, I see or.....

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, I see they're
28 cooking here, this is also for the Council. So the
29 cafe wants to know how many people are going to eat
30 over there.

31

32 MR. WALKER: Are they serving us here
33 too.

34

35 MR. PAPPAS: Muffins and snacks but not
36 a full meal.

37

38 MR. WALKER: Okay.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So let's have hands
41 for -- if you're going to eat muffins and snacks --
42 who's going to eat at the cafe, let's get a count here
43 -- so ll -- okay, so we got that out of the way.

44

45 Darrel, you got a question for Fred.

46

47 MR. VENT: Yeah, thank you, Chairman.

48

49 I just wanted to, you know, I see the
50 graphs here that you got a lot of information on the

1 chinook salmon here, I just wanted to look and see if
2 you had anything on commercial fishing for the chum and
3 also the chum run size, if you had any graphs on those.

4

5 MR. BUE: No, I apologize. Like I say
6 we could present a lot of information, I don't have any
7 graphs. I think the Fish and Game report has the
8 harvest by period, I believe, in their -- well, it's
9 not harvest by period but it's the commercial harvest
10 tables in their report, and so you can see a little bit
11 of how the -- no, I guess they do have a harvest -- in
12 the Fish and Game report they do have harvest by period
13 for this season and so that's for this season.

14

15 The back of their report, it's Appendix
16 B, summer chum commercial harvest by district 2006-2016
17 so that gives you an idea, kind of about where they
18 are. As you know District 4 did not have their
19 fishwheel fishery by Kaltag this year.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does that answer
22 your question, Darrel.

23

24 MR. VENT: Yeah, it's a little easier
25 than trying to read all this information to how much
26 the run was, I see those graphs it makes it look a lot
27 easier.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And any other
30 questions for Fred.

31

32 Ray.

33

34 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, Fred, I'm wondering
35 how much buy-in you're getting from the villages on
36 these restrictions and releasing and so on because on
37 the Kuskokwim we finally, through meetings in Bethel
38 and so on, got good buy-in up and down the river on
39 really trying to conserve and we actually have closed
40 all the fishing early which is showing the results up
41 in the headwaters now. For the first time we're
42 getting numbers, jumped from 1,000 to over 6,000 in the
43 Pitka Fork, for instance. And those fish were fished
44 all the way up and they were the first ones in the
45 river. So it's really important to have buy-in.

46

47 The other thing, even with the size of
48 the nets we had reports out of Bethel where they only
49 used four inch and people were able to catch kings with
50 four inch nets by the way they hung them and so on or

1 something, dangling in there. So if you don't have
2 buy-in you'll still have some of that activity going on
3 no matter what size nets you have.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Fred.

6

7 MR. BUE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
8 Collins. Yeah, I think that is really important and I
9 think people on the Yukon have seen this and they've
10 seen what happens if people up and down the river don't
11 cooperate and work together and what happens is that it
12 just plain gets shut down because it's unmanageable.
13 And I think that's a big part of it. It's also people
14 are very concerned for their own resource and so I
15 think people are trying to do what they can in their
16 own way to take care of the fish. Still get what they
17 need for their familiar but it is really important --
18 this -- you don't have to tell anybody on the river how
19 important the fish are to them, they know and so I
20 think they all have a vested interest in this and it's
21 not just serving themselves, it's looking out for
22 everybody.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. My comment
25 is, my opinion is that the Yukon has had such great
26 problems for so long that there's been a lot of buy-in
27 on conservation. They're actually advanced over the
28 Kuskokwim who's been somewhat lagging a little bit, but
29 I think the Kuskokwim is starting to come around to
30 where they're also getting more buy-in on conservation
31 also. But I think the Yukon, because of '97/98 and on,
32 we've had so many problems, that there's a lot more
33 buy-in on conservation on the Yukon.

34

35 You got a comment there, Pollock.

36

37 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
38 just have some comments. My name is Pollock Simon,
39 Sr., I live in Allakaket, Upper Koyukuk River. We're
40 just subsistence users and I want to say the chinook
41 salmon is the main fish diet for our people along the
42 river. In the past years there's been a closure and
43 we've been restricted to taking king salmon, then what
44 happens is the people don't -- if they can't take king
45 salmon they don't go to fish camp or their nets --
46 maybe it doesn't -- fish camp for Allakaket but mostly
47 camps now are overgrown with brush and fish racks
48 falling into the river. If they can't take king salmon
49 they don't go fishing at all. So the crash of chinook
50 salmon has been a great impact for the local people on

1 the river.

2

3 I hope this is a good learning
4 experience for managers and subsistence users also, we
5 don't want to be restricted from taking king salmon.
6 We -- people along the river were restricted from
7 taking king salmon so we don't take out our nets at
8 all. If we restrict it to taking king salmon, I'd like
9 to see a cut across the board by high sea fishermen,
10 they have to take a cut also.

11

12 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You have a comment
15 on the Koyukuk management, Fred.

16

17 MR. BUE: I don't have a lot of
18 comment. We understand everybody uses the fish
19 different, in different ways up and down the river and
20 like I say, we didn't restrict the Koyukuk nearly as
21 much but we do see that your runs aren't that great,
22 they are improving, everybody's runs are improving and
23 we need to take care of everybody's runs. And I think
24 people there, like you say, there's -- if they're not
25 fishing then they kind of lose interest and they're
26 doing something else and we need to keep people engaged
27 so that they still value the fish. If you don't use it
28 then maybe you don't worry about it so much, so it's a
29 trade off there.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Chair will
32 recognize that Tim Gervais has arrived to the meeting,
33 he just flew in, so welcome Tim.

34

35 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And so Fred's got a
38 question there and then I got Robert.

39

40 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
41 Fred, what I'd like to say a fisherman from Kaltag, 4A,
42 with the relaxed season, was a good opportunity for us,
43 you know, we're being so restricted before when we got
44 into that relaxed season and a lot of our fishermen
45 there they never saw king salmon, the chum salmon for
46 four years. So they weren't really, really out there
47 to see what they can get, how many they can get, they
48 were real conservative. Our fishermen on the Yukon
49 were real conservative of how much they can get and
50 sticking by their quota per family.

1 Like all of our families along the
2 river, we got quotas, ourself, we set for our families.
3 And like my family, we just stuck to that quota and
4 whenever we reached that quota that was enough, we
5 quit, and let all the fish go by where up river
6 fishermen could get it.

7
8 Plus the high water and the drift on
9 the Yukon this year was just, oh, so terrible. So
10 terrible that a lot of our fishermen didn't get up
11 river from us, you know, didn't get quite that many.
12 But anyway I just wanted to say, hey, the agencies did
13 relax the season with the information they were given
14 from the fishermen along the Yukon. And, in turn, that
15 really helped us get our quota per family.

16
17 And, you know, just like Tanana Chiefs
18 was saying about the weir system, boy, I want that
19 information to be shared with the US Fish and Game and,
20 you know, better understand, you know, I don't like to
21 keep -- I don't like to keep hammering on that sonar
22 but, you know, information that we can get from the
23 weir systems that are going to come into place I'd like
24 to see that, you know, better use of that information.

25
26 Also with the increase in the king
27 salmon, and the chum salmon return this year, my
28 question, you know, it's still not there, but my
29 question is the bycatch. I'm always -- like Pollock
30 was just saying about the bycatch, you know, the
31 bycatch is always a big issue for us people on the
32 Yukon, that bycatch affects us, high seas really,
33 really does damage to our king salmon returning on the
34 Yukon/Koyukuk, wherever. But, you know, with the way
35 salmon's going, the number of king salmon that returned
36 this year, there is going to be a number of bycatch, we
37 all know that, we all know that. You know, maybe later
38 on we'll see a number, hopefully, not increased. But I
39 want to keep that bycatch number as low as we can get
40 that number, the better chances are we're going to see
41 an increase in our chum salmon, all our salmon, fall
42 chum, summer chum, everything return.

43
44 Okay, that's all, Mr. Chair.

45
46 Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Fred.

49
50 Robert, you had a comment.

1 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 Welcome Tim.

3
4 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you.

5
6 MR. WALKER: Fred, when you look at 4A
7 on the Yukon here from the marker below the Old Village
8 of Bonzilla, the Bonzilla River and there's like eight
9 side streams all the way up to Kaltag, a lot of them
10 are pretty decent wide, 30 to 40 feet wide streams that
11 come out of the west side of the river and last summer
12 I did stop at four of them just to look to see what
13 kind of activity there was and there was grizzly bear
14 tracks there so you know that they are fishing there.
15 So there has to be a number of either summer chums,
16 chinook salmon that are going in these side streams
17 that nobody doesn't know how much is going other. You
18 know if you just look at the Henshaw Creek Weir, just
19 what that has, that's indication that all these other
20 little side streams could be, that are not monitored,
21 that are really producing and we don't know. So this
22 is kind of like a hidden agenda, not only for the
23 Federal but for the State too. Nobody doesn't fish
24 there anymore and that's a long stretch, 140 miles that
25 nobody lives there, just Blackburn, and talking with
26 (Indiscernible) the Blackburn Creek, some years are
27 just plugged with fall chums and summer chums and they
28 do have some cohos that go up there too, and red
29 salmon.

30
31 So there is a lot of indication that we
32 don't really know, information that we could use,
33 somewhere along the line here in the near future to
34 indicate what it really -- and further up river, up in
35 5 and 6, I mean you say not very many chums get up past
36 Fort Yukon, well, they have to go somewhere and they
37 have to come from somewhere so that's just something I
38 wanted to throw in there.

39
40 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Robert.

43
44 MR. BUE: You want to cover the stream
45 surveys, aircraft stream surveys.

46
47 MR. BUE: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, I was --
48 again, the weather this year was really bum, you know,
49 most people on the river saw how high the water was but
50 it was -- it's not just the main river, the tributaries

1 and a lot of rainy cloudy weather so we didn't get much
2 aerial surveys this year. Aerial surveys are not a
3 precise estimate but they give us a sense of how -- if
4 they see a lot of fish then it was a pretty good run,
5 if they see fish on every bend in the river then it was
6 a good run versus just a couple of spots here and
7 there.

8

9 But, yeah, the Yukon is huge, you can't
10 count every river and so what we try to do is find
11 index areas. We have a East Fork Andreafsky River
12 where we have a weir and we use that to kind of
13 represent what is going on in that section of the river
14 and -- but there are big sections and our budget gets
15 cut and we can't see everywhere. We have Gisasa River,
16 Henshaw River.

17

18 I think on the -- the last page, Page
19 11 on this chart here, it gives you an overall sense of
20 what the summer chum did. What I did was going off of
21 the Pilot Station number I added commercial harvest
22 below there and the subsistence harvest and so it gives
23 you an index what the entire drainage-wide return is
24 and using that, comparing it to previous years, that
25 gives us a sense of how well overall we might have
26 done.

27

 We also did that with fall chum.
28 Again, fall chum was actually a really good total run
29 this year. And then coho also. But coho go
30 everywhere, you know, there's some little tributaries
31 and it's not even worth putting the weir out but all
32 those places add up, you know, and so that's important.

33

34 I think also we kind of got into a
35 discussion but I wanted to make sure that Holly Carroll
36 or Jeff Estensen had a.....

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's just where I
39 was just going to go, I wanted to include the State
40 into this conversation now. The Alaska Department of
41 Fish and Game and Jeff and Holly, if you have
42 additional comments.

43

44 My question is, with that high of fall
45 chum harvest of 467,000 and 206,000 coho, did the coho
46 on the Delta Clearwater meet escapement needs, did you
47 overharvest those, that's my concern is that there was
48 a huge record harvest of coho and a record harvest of
49 fall chum, are we meeting the escapement needs on the
50 tributaries.....

1 (Telephone interference)
2
3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:that do have
4 monitoring.
5
6 Jeff and Holly.
7
8 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, regarding the
9 coho, we did make coho goal last year at the Delta
10 Clearwater so we did make it last year. So far we
11 won't know until late -- mid- to late October whether
12 that goal was made or not. That's when sportfish does
13 their boat survey on the Clearwater. I will say that a
14 couple things right now that kind of give us indication
15 that we will probably meet that goal or we feel like or
16 anticipate that we will.
17
18 The first one is that the initial
19 survey was done, this is a boat survey by the Division
20 of Sportfish. And the number of fish they saw, which
21 was approximately 1,200, I think it was certainly not
22 one of the higher numbers but certainly wasn't a low
23 number as well and that indication right there says
24 that there's a good probability or good chance that we
25 will make the Clearwater goal.
26
27 The other thing, too, is just talking
28 with the fishermen in District 6, the subsistence
29 fishermen, also the folks that have been commercial
30 fishing and you just kind of get a feel for the number
31 of fish they're getting per unit effort and just kind
32 of getting more of a kind of a qualitative assessment
33 of what the run is. And I think from all the fishermen
34 that we've in the District 6 area, is that this is a
35 lot of coho and there was a certainly a lot more coho
36 than they saw last year.
37
38 So those indications right there kind
39 of give us a good feeling that we will make the Delta
40 Clearwater goal.
41
42 And actually looking back over the
43 previous years there's only been one year, that was two
44 years ago, we didn't meet the goal, so we always seem
45 to come in right at the lower end of it, but in
46 previous years there's only one year that we didn't
47 make the goal. So, again, last year we actually were
48 at the very upper end of the goal.
49
50 All indications this year was that

1 there was a lot of coho out there. But the fact that
2 we saw, you know, a lot of them harvested in the lower
3 river is an indication that there was a lot of them out
4 there but also that the passage that we had for coho at
5 the sonar, which I don't -- which is 100,000 (ph) fish
6 was certainly above the historical median so a lot of
7 good indicators right there shows that it's likely
8 there was a lot of coho out there, that we didn't
9 overharvest them and that the Clearwater goal will be
10 met.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And so did
13 you have any additional information that you would like
14 to add that Fred did not cover.

15
16 Holly and.....

17
18 MR. ESTENSEN: I don't think.....

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:Jeff.

21
22 Go ahead.

23
24 MR. ESTENSEN: I think Fred did a very
25 good job falling the fall season and I certainly
26 appreciate it and just appreciate the information we
27 got from the folks this season, especially the
28 subsistence really helped as far as verifying that fish
29 were moving up river and they were definitely seeing
30 the groups when they were getting there.

31
32 But that's all I have, thank you for
33 the opportunity to speak to you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much,
36 Jeff, for clarifying my question there on the coho
37 escapement and run strength.

38
39 Pollock had one question and then I see
40 Tim also has a question.

41
42 Pollock, you got a question -- no,
43 okay, I think we covered that.

44
45 Go ahead, Tim.

46
47 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
48 had a question for Fred or the State managers.

49
50 I saw some data from August that was

1 stating that the TransBoundary escapement for Eagle was
2 over 70,000 kings and I was wondering if you had any
3 comments about the quality of the escapement. We had
4 some proposals in that passed, sportfish meeting --
5 where -- how certain villages were interested in
6 retaining small kings, jack kings under 25 inches in
7 length and that failed at the Board of Fish meeting in
8 January, so I was wondering if you could comment on how
9 good the run was based on some older aged classes and
10 if there was a lot of -- abundance or over-abundance of
11 undersized fish that get counted into that Eagle sonar
12 count.

13

14 And then I have a followup question on
15 some Delta stuff also.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You got any data on
18 quality of Eagle sonar, they do test fishing there
19 also. And so we're -- I, too, would like to know what
20 the quality of that escapement, for many years, with
21 small -- with large mesh gear used there was just very
22 tiny little chinook passage into Canada, my concern and
23 Tim's concern and many people's concern is, is the
24 quality escapement will come around and bite you in the
25 butt if you're just letting jack kings go over the
26 border, that's not quality escapement. So I would like
27 to -- with this kind of closure we should be seeing
28 some real decent larger female chinook passage.

29

30 Anybody have data on that, Fred, Holly
31 or Jeff -- or Holly's summer season.

32

33 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, correct. Hi. This
34 is Holly Carroll, I'm the summer season manager for
35 Fish and Game here in Anchorage and I'll try to address
36 your questions and concerns.

37

38 What I will say is that if Fred did
39 pass out the season summary, the Fish and Game season
40 summary, it's a 20 page document there, there is a
41 section that details the escapement, the age classes
42 and proportion females at the Eagle sonar project this
43 year and how it compares to the past. So there is a
44 paragraph with that data contained in that document
45 there and I can review that now.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What page is that
48 now?

49

50 MS. CARROLL: That is on Page 10 under

1 the age and sex composition on the 2016 run there and
2 under fisheries if you look at paragraph three is where
3 it talks about the Eagle sonar ages.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.

6

7 MS. CARROLL: And so a couple of things
8 I want to point out about the Eagle sonar ages, is
9 that, you know, to address that question you just said
10 about smaller fish getting through over many years,
11 that's definitely not the case since at least 2005 with
12 the taking of ASL data and all age classes are
13 represented at that project. So I haven't got good
14 historical age data in that document that you guys have
15 there but we definitely don't have the problem of tiny
16 fish getting through, at least until five where we were
17 collecting good data. Before that it used to be a
18 fishwheel project run by Department of Fisheries Oceans
19 in Canada, their data doesn't show that either but I
20 will say that when they've had that fishwheel project
21 in place the fishwheel data tended to be biased towards
22 smaller fish because as many of you fishermen will
23 know, when you're fishing a fishwheel, especially for
24 chinook salmon, those fishwheels tend to catch the
25 smaller more shore based fish, so we do believe and
26 it's pretty generally well accepted that that fishery
27 -- that fishwheel project was biased towards smaller
28 fish. And so it looked like smaller fish were escaping
29 into Canada, but it may be more that that was a biased
30 sample.

31

32 And so since 2005, when we switched to
33 the sonar project, we've seen less of that bias and for
34 instance, this year we -- I mean I can read you that
35 bit from the season summary, but we collected 659 scale
36 samples and this year, and now they do fish all mesh
37 sizes there, they fish quite a large suite of mesh
38 sizes so that they're catching the smallest to the
39 largest fish there, and they had zero percent three
40 year olds so none of those very small fish that the one
41 gentleman was asking about. We did have nine percent
42 age four. And then the dominant part of the run was
43 the age five, that was 65 percent of the samples. And
44 then a quarter of the samples were six year old fish
45 and then just one percent were seven year old fish.
46 The females comprised about 33 percent of the total
47 samples that were sexed. I will say, though, that the
48 sexes are done visually there. That's not as accurate
49 as cutting the fish open but because it's an escapement
50 project technically we don't want to cut those fish and

1 so there is room for error there and fish can be
2 misidentified by sex even though they are a little bit
3 more different looking as they get closer to their
4 spawning grounds, there's a lot of room for error
5 there.

6
7 So the age three percentage was about
8 average. And then the age four, age six and age seven
9 percentages were below average. Just like I said, the
10 age five component of the run really dominated. And
11 that would explain why the percent female was slightly
12 lower than average this year. Five year olds do tend
13 to be more males.

14
15 But this age structure being dominated
16 by five year olds, this is what we'd expect because we
17 had a lot of four year olds last year. And it also
18 bodes well for next year because we would assume that
19 the age six component should be pretty strong next year
20 because of this age five component this year.

21
22 So I'm not sure if I answered your
23 question, I guess I'll standby to see if you have more
24 there.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim, with
27 your followup.

28
29 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, thank you, Jack.

30
31 Holly, what's the best case scenario
32 for the age class crossing into the spawning grounds,
33 do we really want to see it all be comprised of age six
34 and age seven. And I also was wondering -- it's my
35 impression that, like prior to 2000, the age seven
36 class should be a higher percent than we're seeing now
37 and wasn't there -- didn't there used to be an age
38 class eight that's no longer present in the run at all.

39
40 MS. CARROLL: Okay. Thanks for your
41 question. I really couldn't hear the first part of it,
42 I'm not sure if the Chair can maybe restate the
43 beginning part about the spawning grounds.

44
45 The part that I heard was about the
46 presence of the eight year olds. And one thing that
47 we've seen is that throughout the run there has been a
48 reduction in the number of eight year olds and, in
49 fact, we only saw eight year olds for a few years and
50 they were a very small percentage of the run. It's

1 hard for me to speak to what the cause of that would
2 be. There's even been some suggestion that for the
3 eight year old chinook salmon, because that age class
4 is rare in other chinook runs, not seen on the Yukon,
5 it could be that for a few years we had eight year olds
6 -- it could also be the slight changes in methodology
7 and reading the scales can affect that, but what I will
8 say is we haven't seen hardly any eight year olds in
9 many years, that is correct. And the seven year old
10 component makes up a very small proportion of the run
11 in most years.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

14

15 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16

17 Another question I had for the managers
18 is how -- what's their impression of the changes the
19 Board of Fish approved in January, they made some
20 pretty radical changes to the fishery by expanding the
21 harvest area. In the Yukon Delta they put some very
22 liberal gear length and depth measures into regulation.
23 So I'd like to know how the new area, the new gear
24 specifications, how that affected the harvest in those
25 -- in Y1 and if you had an opinion on if they're
26 detrimental to the fishery or to the -- or to the run
27 as we're used to managing it.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you hearing the
30 questions okay Holly.

31

32 MS. CARROLL: I'm not hearing them
33 great but that last question I heard something about
34 what were my thoughts on the Board of Fish has
35 liberalized gear length and depth. But I'm not quite
36 sure what gear we're talking about. I don't recall the
37 Board of Fish putting a new gear in place. I remember
38 that the recent Board actions that happened were more
39 just making the gear specifications more the same
40 across different areas.

41

42 So are you talking about gillnet gear,
43 depth and length?

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You want to move
46 closer to your mic, Tim, so she can hear you better.

47

48 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. Yeah, I'm talking
49 about the aggregate length for the set gillnet and I'm
50 talking about the beach seine length and depths,

1 specifications going into place.

2

3 MR. ESTENSEN: So this is Jeff here at
4 Fairbanks. I think the one thing you were talking
5 about was the aggregated amount of set gillnet gear
6 that could be used in the commercial fishery. And we
7 did basically -- that was just kind of a housekeeping
8 to kind of align current practices with regulation and
9 it just was kind of making sure that it was, both the
10 subsistence and the commercial gear was the same, for
11 the setnets; is that what you're talking about, Tim.

12

13 MR. GERVAIS: Well, the main thing I'm
14 talking about is beach seine gear going from
15 experimental fishery to going into regulation with very
16 liberal length and depth specifications.

17

18 MR. ESTENSEN: That's probably a
19 question that Holly could answer there. And then you
20 also had a question concerning the expansion of the
21 District 1 commercial boundaries.

22

23 MR. GERVAIS: Roger. That's correct.

24

25 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, I could probably
26 address that one real quick and Holly can answer the
27 one regarding the beach seine specifications.

28

29 But the reason, kind of the expansion
30 of the District 1 amounted to two different components,
31 one is that the -- I guess in this case the upper
32 boundary of District 1 was expanded to Point Romanof,
33 which is the northern boundary of the Yukon area total.
34 And then also the waters were extended from one mile to
35 three miles off shore in District 1. And I think that
36 the proponents put that in was to try to facilitate a
37 pink salmon directed fishery in District 1 in the years
38 when pink salmon are abundant there and this year we
39 had a very, very strong pink salmon run.

40

41 As far as actually -- and then also put
42 into place in regulations was also a pink salmon
43 directed fishery, or a pink salmon fishing management
44 plan, which provided provisions or gave the Department
45 the tools to have a pink salmon directed fishery. As
46 it turns out there was no such fishery at all this year
47 just because of the number of pinks that were being
48 caught incidentally to both the summer chum and the
49 fall chum directed fishery was sufficient for the buyer
50 to take care of their market needs for that.

1 As far as my understanding, and Holly
2 can weigh in on this as well of what she observed
3 during the summer season, but during the fall season we
4 actually did some flying around in the districts in
5 airplanes to look and what we saw was not really too
6 many people out beyond the one mile district that were
7 out there fishing, however, we did see a few people
8 that were utilizing or are now using that new boundary
9 from Kotlik that was going up to Point Romanof. But I
10 think the reality of it is, is that, without -- you
11 know, the idea is opening up that territory up -- or
12 expanding those boundaries was to be able to improve
13 the quality of the pink salmon. I'm sure that in terms
14 of commercial quality, you know, especially with pink
15 salmon that, you know, they turn pretty quickly and,
16 you know, probably do not retain their commercial
17 quality once they get in river so, you know, being able
18 to have people fish out a little bit farther out off
19 shore would certainly improve the quality of pink
20 salmon.

21
22 Without having a pink salmon directed
23 fishery or being able to sell what they were taking,
24 people just weren't, you know, necessarily going out
25 farther because obviously it takes gas money to get out
26 there and the more farther you're going, the more gas
27 you use the more overhead you have so in my mind when I
28 was out flying around I really didn't see a lot of
29 fishermen taking -- or using that new territory at all
30 but I think that the reason why -- you know the reason
31 why that was put in the proposal that was submitted was
32 to facilitate a pink salmon directed fishery if that
33 was ever -- you know if that was ever -- if that
34 management plan was put into place or was every used.

35
36 So I don't know if Holly has anything
37 she wants to add, or if she wants to address the beach
38 seine question.

39
40 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, I'd like to follow
41 up on that, can you hear me okay.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can hear you fine,
44 go ahead.

45
46 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, so for the beach
47 seine question, you were asking if the beach seine, if
48 liberalizing that gear could increase harvest but I
49 just want to sort of followup and clarify that we
50 didn't necessarily liberalize what that gear type was,

1 we just defined a max aggregate length and depth for
2 that so that it was more clear what the gear type was.
3 And I wanted to point out that very few people are
4 using beach seines, it's not a simple gear to use, it
5 often involves a motorized vehicle or two and many
6 people. And so it's not a gear that people are
7 choosing to use. For instance, this past year there
8 were eight permits using beach seines for the entire
9 river. And it is a selective gear type, which means
10 that they can fish for summer chum but they have to
11 release all king salmon alive to the water. And to put
12 the harvest from that gear type into perspective, just
13 under 3,400 summer chum were caught in beach seines
14 this year and that was less than two percent of the
15 total commercial harvest caught in the selective gear
16 fishery and it was less than one percent of the total
17 harvest.

18
19 So while it's a gear that is available
20 to fishermen, it is not being used very often to
21 harvest summer chum salmon. It's essentially a drop in
22 the bucket. So hopefully that answers your question.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.

25
26 And so I think we've covered the
27 performance report fairly thoroughly. I appreciate
28 Fred's presence and Jeff and Holly being on the phone
29 there.

30
31 My personal perspective is, I think,
32 that the Department and the Fish and Wildlife did a
33 great job, even though the fishers had to conserve, I
34 think we're seeing the border passage and the spawning
35 ground escapement needs being met. I'm a little bit
36 concerned about seeing zero age three jacks, that's an
37 indicator of a poor stock of that age class. I'm a
38 little bit concerned about that.

39
40 And so Fred's raising his head, go
41 ahead, Fred.

42
43 MR. BUE: Yeah, Holly, or -- I don't
44 want to get off the subject but a lot of our optimism
45 right now is based on, Katie Howard, a biologist with
46 Fish and Game, is doing some research in the near shore
47 waters trawling and what they're looking at are those
48 out migrants and what she's seen is pretty good
49 numbers, more increase numbers of juveniles in the near
50 shore and it looks like the survivability is increasing

1 there.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. That's good
4 information.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 But I do appreciate the performance on
9 the spawning grounds, you know, as Henshaw showed what
10 I saw, it was decent escapements on the spawning
11 grounds and so I was -- and I was happy that people
12 caught some fish and so that's -- I think it was a very
13 hard ball to stand on and the Department and the Fish
14 and Wildlife did a great job staying in the middle of
15 that thing. So I'm real happy with the way the
16 performance was this year.

17

18 We are going to have to go to lunch.

19

20 Zach Stevenson has now arrived and so
21 he's got to set this up further for -- and we have --
22 for Zach and Tim, who just arrived, we have a time
23 certain hearing on the Tongass marine water issue and
24 so that's at 1:00 p.m.

25

26 So we'll break for lunch. We'll be
27 back on record for the hearing at 1:00 p.m.

28

29 You got a point there, George, go
30 ahead.

31

32 MR. PAPPAS: Yes, Mr. Chair. As
33 discussed earlier, following the time certain
34 presentation, we should have Kuskokwim fisheries
35 managers from the Refuge available on line to make a
36 presentation just like Fred did.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, that would be
41 great, George. Thank you for that reminder.

42

43 So we're going to break for.....

44

45 MS. CARROLL: Mr. Chair. Could I have
46 you repeat what George said, I was unable to hear it
47 and it sounded like it might involve the managers.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: George was saying
50 that after the hearing at 1:00 p.m., then the Council

1 would like to have the in-season performance of the
2 Kuskokwim and so we would like to have Kuskokwim Staff
3 on the phone also. That's what he stated.

4

5 MS. CARROLL: Thanks very much.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I think you're
8 off the hook.

9

10 MS. CARROLL: We'll share that.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You're off the hook.

13

14 MR. WALKER: Can we leave our books and
15 stuff on the table.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can we leave our
18 books on the table here.

19

20 MR. LARSON: Yes.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes. Okay, so we're
23 breaking for lunch. We'll be back on record at 1:00
24 p.m., time certain for that hearing.

25

26 (Off record)

27

28 (On record)

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to
31 bring this meeting back to order and we're time
32 sensitive on this Tongass Submerged Lands issue, which
33 Robert Larson's going to give us an overview. So this
34 has specific times that it has to occur at, so it has
35 to happen before the rest of our RAC members actually
36 get here, it's time sensitive.

37

38 So we're at 1:01, I'll turn the floor
39 over to Robert, so go ahead Robert.

40

41 MR. LARSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42

43 This discussion of the Tongass
44 Submerged Lands Act begins on Page -- well, let's back
45 up. So my name is Robert Larson and I work for the
46 Forest Service and live in Petersburg, Alaska. One of
47 my duties is to act as the Council coordinator for the
48 Southeast Council and so I'm familiar with the Council
49 process. I'm here today to talk about the Submerged
50 lands issue. If you could turn to Page 147 in your

1 Council book I'll provide a review of how it got here,
2 at that point there'll be an opportunity for public
3 testimony, and Council -- and subsequently a Council
4 discussion.

5

6

On Page.....

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CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So are you on the
record as far as the hearing goes at this point, or do
we start -- do I start the hearing now or what.

MR. LARSON: Mr. Chair. I think that
that would be appropriate for you to open the public
meeting at this point.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So as Chair of the
Western Interior Regional Advisory Council I open the
meeting to a public hearing. The overview is going to
be given by Robert Larson and it's for the benefit of
the public but primarily for the Council, as he's going
to state.

So having said that, go right ahead
Robert.

MR. LARSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As stated in the proposed rule, as
written in the Federal Register, dated June 8th of
2016, Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils
will hold public meetings to receive comments on the
Proposed Rule. They will make recommendations to the
Federal Subsistence Board. The Board will discuss and
evaluate proposed regulatory changes during a public
meeting in Anchorage in January of 2017.

The Federal Subsistence Council
Advisory System have a substantial role in reviewing
this Proposed Rule and making recommendations for the
Final Rule. The Federal Subsistence Board, through the
Councils, will hold public meetings on this Proposed
Rule at the following locations: And that's on Page
148 and it specifies that Region 6 will hold their
meeting on October 11th, that is today.

The Board will discuss and evaluate
submitted comments and public testimony on this
Proposed Rule during a public meeting scheduled for
January 2017 in Anchorage, Alaska. The Federal
Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Chairs or their

1 designated representatives will present their
2 respective Council's recommendations at the Board
3 meeting.

4

5 Well, let's talk about how we got to be
6 here.

7

8 The Peratrovich case is the basis for
9 this discussion and it dates back to 1992 and has a
10 long and involved procedural history.

11

12 The plaintiffs in that litigation
13 raised the question of which marine waters of the
14 Tongass National Forest, if any, are subject to
15 jurisdiction of the Federal Subsistence Management
16 Program. In its May 31, 2011 order the U.S. District
17 Court for Alaska stated it is the duty of the
18 Secretaries, that is Agriculture and Interior, to
19 identify any submerged lands and the marine waters
20 overlaying them within the Tongass National Forest to
21 which the United States hold title. It also stated
22 that if such title exists, it creates an interest in
23 the overlying waters sufficient to make these marine
24 waters public lands for the purposes of the subsistence
25 provisions of ANILCA.

26

27 When the United States took over the
28 Subsistence Program in Alaska in 1990, the Departments
29 of the Interior and Agriculture stated in response to
30 comments on the scope of the program during
31 promulgation of the interim regulations that the United
32 States generally does not hold title to navigable
33 waters and, thus, navigable waters generally are not
34 included within the definition of public lands. That
35 position was changed in 1999 when the subsistence
36 priority was extended to waters subject to a Federal
37 Reserved Water Right following the Katie John
38 litigation. The Board identified certain submerged
39 lands that did not pass to the State and, therefore,
40 where the subsistence priority applied. However, the
41 Board did not attempt to identify each and every small
42 parcel of submerged public lands and thereby marine
43 waters possibly subject to the Federal Subsistence
44 Management Program because of the potentially
45 overwhelming administrative burden.

46

47 In its May 31, 2011 order the Court
48 stated that the petition process was not sufficient and
49 found that concerns about costs and management problems
50 simply could not trump the Congressional Policy that

1 the subsistence lifestyle of rural Alaskans be
2 preserved as to public lands. The Court acknowledged
3 in its order that inventorying all these lands could be
4 an expensive undertaking but that is a burden
5 necessitated by the complicated regulatory scheme,
6 which has resulted from the inability of the State of
7 Alaska to implement Title VIII of ANILCA.

8

9 The Bureau of Land Management Affairs
10 and the USDA Forest Service started a time and resource
11 committee review of hundreds of potential prestatehood
12 withdrawals to the marine waters of the Tongass
13 National Forest. Both agencies are reviewing their
14 records to identify dock sites, log transfer sites and
15 other areas that may not have passed at statehood. The
16 review process is ongoing and is expected to take some
17 time.

18

19 If you look on Page 151 under Section 3
20 -- subpart A, Section 3, you will see a list of the
21 submerged lands that have been identified under this
22 Proposed Rule there's 26 paragraphs.

23

24 In reviewing these locations it appears
25 that each and every one of them are part of the system
26 of navigational aides that were in place prior to
27 statehood. Regarding maps. The only map that we have
28 available to us, as Staff, and to the Council, is the
29 map that is on the back wall that generally shows the
30 locations where these lands are located, it does not
31 provide a detailed explanation of exactly how big they
32 are or where the precise boundaries are in a map
33 format.

34

35 At this time, that completes our
36 introductory remarks.

37

38 Yes.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My question about
41 the map is the white areas are delineated as the lands
42 in question and the waters extending from the white
43 areas.

44

45 MR. LARSON: Mr. Chair. That is not
46 correct.

47

48 The areas under consideration are
49 covered by those black dots. Some of these areas are
50 actually quite small. You'll see in the descriptions,

1 it may be several hundred feet in one direction and
2 several hundred feet in the other direction. These
3 appear to be navigational aides with the exception of
4 the withdrawal in the Makhnati Island area, that is a
5 military withdrawal that is on the causeway where they
6 filled between the islands at the time that -- during
7 World War II and they were putting in the airport in
8 Sitka. So that's the only exception to that
9 generalization.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I misinterpreted the
14 legend at the bottom of the map. Thank you for the
15 clarification.

16

17 Is the Council following his
18 presentation.

19

20 Continue Robert.

21

22 MR. LARSON: Mr. Chair. That completes
23 the information that's contained within the Proposed
24 Rule and we are ready for public comments.

25

26 That completes my presentation.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any public
29 member, would they like to make comment on this
30 Proposed Rule, which affects Southeastern marine
31 waters.

32

33 Robert.

34

35 MR. WALKER: Thank you. Mr. Chair.

36

37 Robert, this is all pertaining to the
38 saltwater, right, nothing that has to do with
39 freshwater here, right.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Robert.

42

43 MR. LARSON: Mr. Chair. That is
44 correct. And if I could follow up on that, this is the
45 first of the Proposed Rules that we have seen. As I
46 referenced in my opening remarks, that the Forest
47 Service is continuing to work on other locations where
48 there could be fills, or item -- or pieces of land that
49 were not transferred to the State, we have not seen
50 that list as of yet.

1 This Proposed Rule and this public
2 meeting and the topic under consideration for this
3 Council is only on these 26 parcels that have been
4 identified.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So this is a
7 continuing process that will be brought before the
8 Federal Subsistence Board periodically as the
9 Department of Agriculture identifies additional areas.

10
11 MR. LARSON: Mr. Chair. That's my
12 understanding. I know that there are Staff working
13 within the Forest Service on a similar list. I have no
14 knowledge of when that list will be finalized and
15 available for a future Proposed Rule.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And is there any
18 Interior Department Staff that would have a similar
19 consideration of the same issue under a court order.

20
21 (No comments)

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing no -- do we
24 have any Interior Department Staff on the call that can
25 answer that question.

26
27 (No comments)

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The main question
30 for this Council is, can this affect this region in the
31 future? Are there submerged waters that weren't
32 conveyed like say at McGrath or something like that
33 that weren't conveyed to the State, that's what this
34 Council would primarily be concerned about, is the
35 primarily -- and Interior Department submerged lands
36 that may be affected by this Court order.

37
38 So if that can't be answered at this
39 point, at some point this Council would enjoy a letter
40 from the Interior Department on that issue. But we're
41 just dealing with the Proposed Rule that Robert has
42 brought out.

43
44 So I don't see anybody in the room that
45 would like to make public comments.

46
47 So this Council has been apprised of
48 the Proposed Rule. The hearing was for public
49 comments. So we close the hearing at this point and
50 then this Council goes into our comments to the Federal

1 Subsistence Board. That's the way I understand this
2 Robert.

3

4 MR. LARSON: Yes, Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So at this point I
7 don't see any public member -- did you want to make any
8 comments, Kevin, as a public member.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I don't see anybody
13 in the room that would like to make public comments. I
14 see no hands. So the hearing is closed.

15

16 At this point this Council can make a
17 comment to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding this
18 issue because the Court has ordered the Federal
19 Subsistence Board to ask every Council, including our
20 Council today, at this time, what we think about this
21 issue, so as Chair I open the floor to comments.

22

23 Darrel.

24

25 MR. VENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26

27 The thing I'm worried about is, you
28 know, once we put this in place it has to include
29 people from also the Interior because before when they
30 made a rule like -- like for instance, commercial
31 fishing they set a fish trap all the way across the
32 river a long time ago and that affected us up there in
33 the Koyukuk River area. We couldn't -- we got people
34 that got their nets taken away because of this ruling
35 and our area is different, the water rises and drops
36 real fast so when you put that net it's halfway across
37 but when the water drops it goes all the way across and
38 we got caught on that. And they had a ruling on that
39 so, you know, people got in trouble for it.

40

41 So what he's talking about, you know,
42 high water mark, low water or whatever that is, you
43 know, that affects us with high water marks so, you
44 know, I have to you know look into this to see if I can
45 find more information on this before they put this into
46 a ruling.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Darrel.

49

50 My question is, what did the

1 Southeastern Regional Advisory Council do, how did they
2 deal with this, since it's their region, their -- under
3 their jurisdiction, .805 of ANILCA, any issue that
4 affects subsistence, how did they react and what was
5 their comments to the Federal Subsistence Board.

6

7

Robert.

8

9

MR. LARSON: Mr. Chair. Recognizing
10 that I haven't finished their letter yet, I did make
11 some notes regarding what they would wish to put in
12 their letter.

13

14

They had several items that didn't seem
15 to be covered very well in the Proposed Rule.

16

17

First of all was, in order to aid their
18 discussion they wished to know what were the proposed
19 lands actually being used for. Is there some special
20 use. Why did these -- why are these lands identified
21 as lands that there could potentially be Federal
22 jurisdiction for subsistence fisheries. It was not
23 clear. I am familiar with each of these sites,
24 including Makhnati Islands and, you know, it's clear to
25 me what they are but it's not clear in the record what
26 these lands are or why they would be identified, you
27 know, in this way. They wanted to have that explained.
28 Why these.

29

30

They also would like to have an idea of
31 the extent of these and frankly they did not feel that
32 the description of the areas was adequate to really
33 describe the impact of having Federal jurisdiction for
34 subsistence in submerged or intertidal waters, is it --
35 these look like fairly small places but they would like
36 to see some maps that identified clearly where the
37 boundaries are and how much land we're talking about as
38 much of the discussion talks about up lands that is --
39 they're already Federal public lands, so what is the
40 additional land we're talking about. Is it just, you
41 know, as big as this room, or is it as big as this
42 building, you know, what -- where is it exactly. They
43 were having a difficult time with the descriptions
44 provided.

45

46

And they wanted to know if these lands
47 were tidal or are they submerged. It seemed like it's
48 a reasonable question to them and they wanted to know
49 how much of which kind of lands are we talking about.

50

1 And they wanted to know about, you
2 know, what sort of structures would qualify them as
3 having Federal jurisdiction and not being transferred
4 into the State.

5
6 So the questions that the Southeast
7 Council had really did not pertain to whether or not
8 they would be -- it was appropriate for these lands to
9 be transferred or appropriate whether or not the
10 Federal jurisdiction would be appropriate, they wanted
11 to know what they were looking at in this Federal
12 Register.

13
14 Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I appreciate their
17 question, as that's what I was trying to figure out on
18 that map there, which is fairly broadstroke. I would
19 like to know a little more detail but I don't need to
20 really realize all that, I just -- I feel that,
21 especially near Sitka or someplace like that, that the
22 submerged lands should have a subsistence priority.
23 That's my personal feeling.

24
25 And so I'll state on the record as a
26 Western Interior Regional Council member, that the
27 lands should -- the submerged lands should have a
28 priority for subsistence if there's severe restrictions
29 for a fishery for halibut or herring or whatever the
30 fishery might be, I would feel that the submerged lands
31 should have a priority, if the Court feels that. The
32 Court seems to think that those lands have -- should
33 have a subsistence priority that's why they're putting
34 this question out there, I feel that if this evolves
35 into the Interior Department, developing a list of
36 various submerged lands in the Interior of Alaska, that
37 we should have subsistence priority. Maybe it's near
38 Galena. Maybe those Air Force Base lands around Galena
39 have submerged lands, I don't know. But in the future
40 we might want a subsistence priority there.

41
42 And so I will state that for the record
43 from my point of view.

44
45 So other Council members could make
46 comments.

47
48 Tim.

49
50 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1 Robert, I had a question. So in your
2 presentation you said that it's clear to you why these
3 lands are selected, I'm not understanding that in the
4 discussion, is there sort of like traditional harvest
5 areas here or what's so special about these small very
6 widely scattered parcels.

7
8 MR. LARSON: Mr. Chair. As a long-term
9 resident of the region, I'm familiar and I've been to
10 all these places. All these places have an aide to
11 navigation. There's day markers or navigational lights
12 that -- and I believe that these places were all in
13 place prior to statehood, and that would be the reason
14 why they were selected, however, there's no place in
15 this Proposed Rule that says that. The only exception
16 was Makhnati where there was a military withdrawal
17 because of the construction of the fortifications and
18 the airport in Sitka Sound where they connected the
19 causeways -- the islands with a road but, no, that's
20 just my personal feelings just because I know that's
21 what they're describing.

22
23 Thank you.

24
25 MR. GERVAIS: So you're saying because
26 the Federal government had built or constructed an aide
27 in navigation in these locations that the area around
28 these aides to navigation were never conveyed to the
29 State of Alaska even though the majority of land in
30 that location is State land; there's just a little
31 inholding there.

32
33 MR. LARSON: Mr. Chair. There was a
34 process to finalize the boundaries of the Tongass
35 National Forest as the up lands, not to include the
36 waters that were tidal so that was clear, tidal waters
37 belong to the State, submerged lands all belong to the
38 State, up lands inside of the Tongass National Forest
39 belong to the Tongass National Forest. Jurisdiction
40 for fisheries -- or for subsistence uses is only on
41 Federal public lands and waters now -- and that was
42 then, now, we have as a result of this litigation there
43 is, in fact, several places where the Federal
44 government has an interest in those lands and because
45 of that interest in those lands the Court felt that
46 there was -- they should be treated like Federal public
47 lands and subsistence activities would be allowed
48 according to ANILCA. Now we're going through a process
49 to identify those lands.

50

1 Let me make sure that I'm not getting
2 ahead of myself here and -- oh, on Page 154 there's a
3 -- the public comment period on this issue closed on
4 August 8th. The State of Alaska submitted a public
5 comment and did not contest any of these 26 locations
6 except for Makhnati Islands, and there was a discussion
7 here in their comment letter on Page 154, that talks
8 about why they would contest including the waters under
9 Makhnati Island as Federal public lands and waters.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any further
12 questions.

13

14 Darrel.

15

16 MR. VENT: Yeah, the reason, you know,
17 there's a village called Hughes and they have their
18 airport right next to the river so the State has
19 jurisdiction on that area because that's State land
20 there, but then you're talking about subsistence uses.
21 Well, I know for a fact they set nets, they seine there
22 and that would affect them if, you know, if that
23 happened -- if that got affected the way we got
24 affected with the nets across the creeks.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, the question
27 that this Council would have is that the Interior
28 Department at our next meeting bring forth whether
29 there are any of these types submerged lands that are
30 within this region. And so the Interior Department can
31 develop that, there may not be any, it might be zero.
32 But I do know that there are fairly large Federal
33 military reserves in areas like, Sparava, and various
34 places like that, there are places where the military
35 had reserves. And so this question is before this
36 Council.

37

38 I would -- just having read ANILCA a
39 lot, I feel that Federal public lands have a
40 subsistence priority and I've stated that on record
41 just now, but I also think that this Council, since the
42 Court's feel that the Department of Agriculture and
43 Interior should question the Councils, this Council's
44 question to the Interior Department is, are there any
45 such waters within the Western Interior Region so that
46 would be my comment also.

47

48 Robert.

49

50 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 That would have been my comment too. Because when you
2 look at Yukon River and Kuskokwim River, there are
3 Federal lands and who would enforce it if it did come
4 to that, submerged would be turned over to the Federal
5 government because all lakes, waterways and everything
6 belongs to the State, even though it's on Federal land
7 but Federal waters only fall up above Galena somewhere,
8 if I remember right, now how would this work. Because
9 the asked a question what is this, on saltwater only or
10 freshwater. So the freshwater would be a question that
11 would probably open a lot of other doors or windows or
12 whatever.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Apparently the
15 Court, U.S. District Court would like the Interior
16 Department and the Agriculture Department to identify
17 those submerged lands and so this Council has been
18 asked by the Court specifically to comment to the
19 Federal Subsistence Board, this comment returned to the
20 Federal Subsistence Board, are there any submerged
21 lands in the Western Interior Region, and the comment
22 -- my comment from myself, from one Council member's
23 perspective is that there should be -- maintain a
24 Federal subsistence priority on Federal public waters.

25

26 So that's my comment.

27

28 I don't know if any other Council
29 members would like to affirm my comments.

30

31 Tim.

32

33 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I will. I'll
34 affirm it. I'm just curious to you or to other people
35 in the meeting, hasn't like the -- the various
36 mainstems of the Kuskokwim, Yukon River, hasn't that
37 changed definition over a few different times in the
38 last couple decades on what's Federal water. Like I
39 remember in the '90s I thought it had to have Federal
40 land on both sides of the river for it to be Federal
41 water, and then I feel like it's considered -- like up
42 by Ruby, if you have the wildlife Refuge on one side of
43 the river and private or State land on the other side
44 it's still Federal water. So I don't -- I would like
45 some better clarification from somebody on what's
46 Federal water and how is that different from the
47 submerged lands.

48

49 It's like a legal point here but I'm
50 not understanding the nuances enough to be able to make

1 much of a comment.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think that there
4 are questions that the Council has regarding a review
5 of how Federal waters are determined associated to
6 conservation units for management which the in-season
7 managers would be in charge of those.

8

9 We also would like to question OSM as
10 to whether the Interior Department is evaluating the
11 submerged waters that were not conveyed to the State of
12 Alaska.

13

14 And so I think we've covered this issue
15 enough. We got fisheries proposals and we got a lot of
16 other stuff to do and I think -- is that enough comment
17 from the Council, Council members.

18

19 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Has that covered the
22 issue.

23

24 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ray.

27

28 MR. COLLINS: In terms of the question,
29 Katie John was not saltwater and so on, so there
30 already was a ruling on Federal lands on some of the
31 freshwaters there in that case. But I'm wondering what
32 about like the lower Kuskokwim which has the Refuge on
33 either side, do they already have jurisdiction around
34 the mouth of the Yukon there, because they were coming
35 in with regulations that were different than the State.
36 And what about Big River, let's say, where the sheefish
37 spawn up there, there's BLM lands I think on either
38 side, so it isn't just where there's already Federal
39 Reserves, is it, it's where there's Federal land
40 adjacent to the river. And as you said we need to know
41 which of our waters are affected or could be affected.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, apparently the
44 Federal government did not convey certain submerged
45 waters to the State of Alaska in 1959 so these are
46 unique little parcels of -- and from my perspective,
47 Galena was an Air Force Base, there could be the same
48 type of waters there, so my question to the Interior
49 Department is, are there waters there that actually
50 would fall under this category.

1 I do think that we should make a motion
2 to have the Department of Interior identify such
3 submerged waters so that this is actually a point of
4 record for this Council.

5
6 So the Chair will entertain a motion to
7 have the Department of Interior identify waters that
8 may fall under this submerged water issue.

9
10 Do we have someone who will make that
11 motion.

12
13 MR. VENT: This is Darrel, I'll make
14 the motion.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrel makes a
17 motion to have those submerged waters.....

18
19 MR. COLLINS: I'll second it.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:identified.
22 Seconded by Ray.

23
24 Further discussion.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Call for question.

29
30 Those in favor of that motion signify
31 by saying aye.

32
33 IN UNISON: Aye.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed, same
36 sign.

37
38 (No opposing votes)

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you on the call,
41 Don.

42
43 (No comments)

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don Honea's not on
46 the call.

47
48
49 So I think we've covered this issue
50 enough. I think that the comments will be conveyed to

1 the Federal Subsistence Board in their January meeting.

2

3 Go ahead.

4

5 MR. STEVENSON: Mr. Chair. This is
6 Zach Stevenson, just for clarification who was the -- I
7 know Ray seconded that, who initiated that.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrel.

10

11 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Darrel.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I couldn't get
14 anybody to call the question so I did.

15

16 (Laughter)

17

18 MR. WALKER: Question.

19

20 (Laughter)

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so
23 much Robert.

24

25 MR. WALKER: What do you want from me.

26

27 (Laughter)

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So George.

30

31 MR. PAPPAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As
32 we discussed earlier before lunch and at the beginning
33 of the meeting about having the presentations from the
34 fisheries managers prior to discussion of the pending
35 Federal subsistence fisheries proposals to the Board,
36 this might be a great time to discuss the Kuskokwim
37 fisheries issues. And I wanted to see if Ray Born and
38 Ken Stahlnecker from the YK Refuge is on line.

39

40 Are you on line gentlemen.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Maybe you need to
45 get a little more volume out of there.

46

47 REPORTER: Say again, please.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You on line there,
50 Ray.

1 MR. STAHLNECKER: Okay, yes. Yeah, we
2 can go ahead with a report.

3
4 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you,
5 Council members. This is Ken Stahlnecker, I'm the
6 Refuge Manager for Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
7 and I do have Ray Born here, our Deputy Refuge Manager
8 with me. Ray served through the 2016 Kusko fish season
9 as the in-season manager and so I've got him here with
10 me and he can take time to speak, he can bail me out.

11
12 Basically I'll give kind of a brief
13 rundown on the program, including a series of special
14 actions that we incurred and then close out with just a
15 couple of what we see as, highlights, of the season.

16
17 Basically the preseason chinook salmon
18 harvest, or run forecast appeared to be lower than
19 normal and as a result the Refuge met with the
20 Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fisheries Commission and
21 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the in-
22 season manager set escapement and harvest objectives
23 and escapement objectives of 100,000 chinook salmon and
24 a harvest objective of 40,000 chinook salmon preseason
25 which helped us set the stage for decisionmaking
26 throughout the course of the season.

27
28 We decided this year to use gear type
29 restrictions and season openings and closings to manage
30 the harvest as opposed to issuing permits as was done
31 in 2015.

32
33 So the first special action occurred
34 June 1st, 2016 when the Federal in-season manager
35 closed the Federal public waters in the Kuskokwim River
36 drainage within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife
37 Refuge to the harvest of chinook and chum salmon by all
38 users except the residents of the Kuskokwim River
39 drainage and the coastal villages identified in the
40 Section .804 subsistence user prioritization analysis.
41 Two days later, the 3rd, Refuge waters along the
42 Kuskokwim were closed to the harvest of chinook and
43 chum by Federally-qualified users. And in that special
44 action we recognized that fishing openings, closing and
45 fishing methods to Federally-qualified subsistence
46 users would be announced by subsequent actions after
47 conservation coordination with the Kuskokwim River
48 InterTribal Fisheries Commission and the Alaska
49 Department of Fish and Game. At that point we
50 initiated a series of weekly in-season management

1 meetings using what we called an objective based
2 stakeholder involved decisionmaking process. This gave
3 us a framework around which to make weekly decisions
4 based on inputs of data as the season went on that came
5 from, particularly ONC helped us a lot in gathering
6 harvest data from the users in the village, in some of
7 the surrounding villages and aerial user numbers that
8 we were -- Fish and Wildlife Service was collecting, we
9 were able to plug that information in on a regular
10 basis and make informed management decisions week by
11 week.

12
13 So the first opening occurred June
14 12th. There was a 12 hour harvest opportunity provided
15 for chinook and chum for Federally-qualified users.
16 Gear types including set and driftnet gillnets with six
17 inch or less mesh, not exceeding 45 meshes deep and
18 within the Refuge boundary from the mouth of the
19 Kuskokwim up to the Johnson River nets were limited to
20 300 foot long and from the Johnson River on up within
21 the boundaries of the Refuge, nets were limited to 150
22 foot long.

23
24 So the first 12 hour harvest
25 opportunity occurred, four days later, June 16th, we
26 opened a second, but this time it was a 24 hour harvest
27 opportunity and, again, holding these regular weekly
28 meetings we were able to plug in effort and harvest
29 information and the third season opener was determined,
30 it occurred on June 21st. And also on June 21st, based
31 on public input and recommendations from the
32 InterTribal Fish Commission, the section of the Federal
33 public waters on the mainstem of the Kuskokwim in the
34 salmon tributaries from a line just down stream of
35 Kalskag at the south edge of (Indiscernible) Slough,
36 which ran across the river due east and up river from
37 that line to the upper Refuge boundary there was an
38 opening until further notice of that section of the
39 river, again, based on public input and recommendations
40 from the InterTribal Fisheries Commission. The 21st,
41 we also opened a 72 hour season opener on the remainder
42 of the river down stream of that Kalskag line to the
43 mouth of the Kuskokwim.

44
45 Final season opener occurred on June
46 29th and it was another 72 hour opener for all
47 qualified -- Federally-qualified subsistence users.
48 And on July 7th the Federal manager rescinded all
49 previously issued special actions, which included
50 opening the drainage to all Federally-qualified users

1 and all non-Federally-qualified users and uses.

2

3 Highlights of the season that we
4 identified were, one, there was a high degree of
5 harvest satisfaction this year recognizing, of course,
6 that harvest limits were nowhere near the historic
7 levels, but there seemed to be, as I said a high level
8 of satisfaction.

9

10 The second highlight to point out, as
11 was mentioned earlier, during the Yukon River
12 discussion, based on a lot of buy-in from the villages
13 up and down the river, there was extremely high
14 regulatory compliance this year.

15

16 The third thing worth pointing out,
17 was, we celebrated the signing of the memorandum of
18 understanding this year between the Kuskokwim
19 InterTribal Fisheries Commission and the Fish and
20 Wildlife Service and the implementation of the first
21 year of this historic working relationship. And all in
22 all we found that relationship to be very effective, in
23 particular, when we included input from the Alaska
24 Department of Fish and Game, again, throughout the
25 season on these weekly meetings, just seemed to work
26 out very well.

27

28 The fourth highlight worth pointing out
29 is, again, we went through another year of implementing
30 this objective based stakeholder involved
31 decisionmaking process as a basis for making these
32 joint fisheries management decisions for the river and,
33 again, it provided a format for all stakeholders, Fish
34 Commission, Fish and Wildlife Service, Fish and Game
35 come together using this framework to help make these
36 weekly decisions.

37

38 I do want to point out that the use of
39 the data from the weirs throughout the Kuskokwim River
40 were particularly valuable to providing information to
41 making our decisions, in particular, providing post-
42 season information that led to -- post-season run
43 reconstruction, evaluating success of overall salmon
44 management and supporting research to refine
45 understanding of factors that influence salmon
46 productivity and we would like to encourage the RAC to
47 support continued funding of the operation of those
48 weirs into the foreseeable future.

49

50 And, finally, we'd also like to

1 encourage the RAC to support efforts to monitor the
2 abundance of harvest of whitefish, I know I'm getting
3 off topic a little bit but I'll take this opportunity.
4 To support the abundance of harvest of whitefish in the
5 Kuskokwim River drainage. Research conducted by Fish
6 and Wildlife Service Kenai Fisheries as well as public
7 commentary raises concerns that whitefish may currently
8 be exploited at levels contributing to loss
9 productivity in these (indiscernible).

10

11 So that's what I have as my report.

12

13 I can entertain any questions.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does the Council
16 have any questions of the Kuskokwim report.

17

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don't see any.

22

23 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Say again.

26

27 MR. PAPPAS: George Pappas, OSM. Yes,
28 at this time we'd like to offer the State of Alaska, I
29 believe their managers are on line too to see if they
30 have further information to add to the discussion, sir.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is the State on
33 line.

34

35 MR. POTTER: Yeah, Mr. Chair. This is
36 Aaron Potter, the Kuskokwim area management biologist
37 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have any
40 additional comments or inclusions into the report,
41 Aaron.

42

43 MR. POTTER: Yeah. I can give you a
44 real brief, very brief overview of what the State's
45 roll in management was this season.

46

47 I think Ken did a real good job
48 describing the actions that were taken and I can speak
49 a little bit to what the State did up stream of Aniak,
50 which is where we focused most of our management action

1 and activities.

2

3

4 So the State of Alaska actually
5 implemented some early season restrictions to the
6 subsistence fishery drainage-wide prior to the initial
7 special action that was taken by the Federal
8 government, which set the tone for management of the
9 subsistence fishery for the season. The Board of
10 Fisheries, in January, adopted a regulation to provide
11 early season closure through June 11th, the starting
12 date which will be decided annually through input from
13 user groups such as the Kuskokwim River Salmon
14 Management Working Group, that's the State's in-season
15 advisory group on salmon and fisheries related issues
16 on the Kuskokwim. So through that process and that
17 advisory group, as well as the Fish and Wildlife
18 Service and Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish
19 Commission, a set of restrictions specifically geared
20 for more so towards gillnets and the removal of all
21 those in the early season. We still allowed use of
22 fishwheels, dipnets, beach seines and those types of
23 gear that could be utilized to harvest fish for
24 subsistence while releasing fish that we're concerned
25 about, king salmon specifically.

25

26

27 As Ken mentioned, when the initial
28 special action was taken, the State focused our
29 management approach up stream of Aniak, those waters of
30 the Kuskokwim and tributaries there. Again, it was
31 closed through June 12th. Beginning June 12th we
32 provided a 48 hour subsistence fishing opportunity from
33 Aniak to the Holitna River, specifically with six inch
34 mesh gillnets for subsistence fishing opportunity and
35 from the Holitna River up stream to the Kuskokwim River
36 headwaters we removed our subsistence fishing
37 restrictions. We felt that based on the forecasted
38 run, 125,000 to 219,000 chinook salmon, that we could
39 provide that opportunity from the Holitna River to the
40 headwater based on the amount of area populations and
41 historical harvest.

41

42

43 After that 48 hour opportunity from
44 Aniak to the Holitna we were closed for a little bit
45 longer, we reopened the subsistence fishery a few days
46 later until further notice from Aniak to the Holitna.
47 We provided about -- just about as much opportunity as
48 we felt we could based, again, on what the forecast
49 was, historical harvest and the run timing.

49

50

 We did put together a preliminary

1 season summary. Our preliminary run reconstruction for
2 chinook salmon specifically was done and we come up
3 with an estimate of approximately 186,000 chinook
4 salmon returned to the Kuskokwim River this year. We
5 got a confidence interval associated with that of
6 141,000 to 245 so fairly broad confidence interval.
7 What that looks like as far as escapement and harvest
8 is that we were using the 40,000 harvest metric that
9 Fish and Wildlife Service moved forward with as far as
10 a harvest target for this coming season and because our
11 harvest information won't be compiled completely until
12 after our subsistence surveys are done and those are
13 being done as we speak. So that basically means that
14 146,000 in our escapement estimate and we got
15 confidence intervals with that as well.

16
17 So I think really what the take home
18 message was with preliminary numbers is that we could
19 have provided more harvest opportunities. The last two
20 years the Kuskokwim has seen depressed runs of chinook
21 salmon, you know, we have had to be precautionary in
22 our approach but we've also exceeded the drainage-wide
23 escapement goal for (indiscernible) in a row now. And
24 to me what that says is there's fish that can be
25 harvested. We could be managing to get a little bit
26 closer, if not achieving ANS for the drainage on
27 chinook salmon. Of course, we would all like to get
28 back to historical harvest levels and at least meeting
29 ANS to begin with, Ken did mention that, there did seem
30 to be some harvest satisfaction this season and
31 hopefully when our final numbers come back we will see
32 that we did harvest considerably more chinook than we
33 were able to in the 2015 season.

34
35 Ken did mention, he talked a little bit
36 about the futility of the weirs and, you know,
37 encouraged the RAC to continue to support funding for
38 those programs.

39
40 (Telephone interference)

41
42 I agree that the weirs are a really
43 good report card for what happens in the drainage in a
44 particular season. The State has been moving forward
45 with feasibility on a drainage-wide mainstem sonar
46 project down at -- in between Bethel and Kwethluk. I
47 would support the -- I would recommend to the RAC to
48 support funding for continued feasibility and operation
49 of the sonar program as we feel it will provide a much
50 more timely information on what our chinook salmon are

1 actually doing in a timeframe to where we could
2 actually make more precise management decisions and
3 providing that harvest opportunity that we seem to be
4 foregoing based on the current management approach,
5 based on our current assessment approach. So that's
6 one thing that I know the State of Alaska is very
7 interested in moving forward with, is getting more
8 precise information and looking at restructuring our
9 program so that we can do that and manage more
10 precisely.

11
12 That's about all I have as far as the
13 Kuskokwim goes.

14
15 I'll be happy to entertain any
16 questions you may have.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does the Council
19 members have questions for Aaron.

20
21 (No comments)

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none, thanks
24 so much Aaron for your input.

25
26 Okay.

27
28 I think we've covered the Yukon and
29 Kuskokwim reports. We did skip over some agenda items
30 while we were waiting for Tim and Zach to arrive.
31 Those agenda items are Council member reports and I
32 wanted to have all the Council members present for
33 those reports because it's how the Council interacts
34 with one another.

35
36 The Chair's report.

37
38 And then before we go into these
39 fisheries proposals, we have the draft nonrural
40 determination policy that we should cover also.

41
42 So at this time I'd like to go into
43 Council member reports.

44
45 So Darrel had to step out for a phone
46 call real quick so maybe we'll start with Robert Walker
47 down here on the end.

48
49 MR. WALKER: Me.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, your Council
2 member report. This is where you express your views
3 and opinions about subsistence in your portion of the
4 region.

5
6 Go ahead, Robert.

7
8 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9
10 I've been to our four village meeting
11 which we have yearly or twice a year in the Tanana
12 Chiefs subregion, the Lower Yukon subregion. One of
13 the issues that was brought up here was that why are we
14 being misled by OSM, why are we being left out by OSM
15 on government to government or, you know, consultation
16 meetings or even discussions, or even some of the
17 planning that has to do with our area. I mean this is
18 kind of like we're a forgotten tribe here, it's not
19 only us but I think it's just the whole region, the
20 whole state is being -- government to government is not
21 working with OSM. It's somehow we're like being --
22 like treated colonists almost, I mean it's a derogatory
23 word, yes, but it's true. I mean we don't get
24 recognition, even though we are a government entity, I
25 am the Second Chief for our Tribe and I don't do
26 anything, but I do talk to our First Chief Carl before
27 I do anything so I told him I was going to make a
28 statement of this issue, which was okay with him.

29
30 But there's no consultation with our
31 government in our subregion. We kind of like feel like
32 why is this happening. Why. I mean we're people too.
33 It just seems like.....

34
35 (Telephone interference)

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm getting -- let
38 me stop you there, Robert, I'm getting back feed out of
39 the phone, put your phone on star six so we don't get
40 you talking and so forth in the background.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 Go ahead, Robert.

45
46 MR. WALKER: And -- thank you, Mr.
47 Chairman. I guess I lost my concentration there
48 somewhere, I had it all lined out, too, in my head.

49
50 The other issue here is where the

1 Federal government on the lands here, it don't seem
2 like we're being -- have enough wildlife game wardens,
3 Federal game wardens here to come out and do patrolling
4 because we do find moose that have been taken and just
5 the antlers have been taken and the State is so
6 stretched thin that nothing ever gets done.

7

8 So these are issues here where Federal
9 and tribes are -- even myself here, being here 15 years
10 and I've watched and I've listened and I went to like
11 four different Chairmans but the same as you, we've
12 talked and talked and talked until we're blue in the
13 face and nothing ever gets done, why. Why is that.
14 That's an issue that I want to bring up in my Council
15 comments also. Why. Why are we being treated as
16 second class people. Why are we being treated like
17 colonist. Why are we being neglected, you tell us one
18 thing and we're here for you on subsistence, and on the
19 other hand they put their hands behind their back and
20 cross their fingers and say, this is public lands for
21 everybody. So these issues here will be lingering on
22 after I'm off this board, yes, but I want to say this
23 before I do get off.

24

25 And our other things that we have too,
26 is we have a really good working relation with the
27 State, but, still, sometimes, you know, we frown at the
28 but we are very grateful that we got king salmon, we
29 don't have to go out and be poaching anymore, or
30 stealing in the middle of the night, we can do it
31 legally now, which I won't be afraid to say, because we
32 do eat salmon every year, that's part of our diet. And
33 this is, again, going back to show that is the State
34 and Federal government using this as a weapon against
35 the indigenous people, food. Is this starvation that,
36 you know, the food that we were raised with, I mean
37 good grief, I mean who has priority. Does the fishers
38 have priority or do the indigenous people have
39 priority, it seems like we don't have priority here,
40 we're always like coming out second best and we don't
41 like to lose but, you know, we don't want to raise a
42 big stink about it, too, because if you do, then you
43 get branded as a troublemaker and I can be branded as a
44 troublemaker now because I am going to be a little more
45 outspoken.

46

47 But, again, like I said we are grateful
48 that we had fish too.

49

50 I don't want to leave this place as

1 hard feelings for me, I want to leave it as a positive
2 because we did positive things here in the last 15
3 years that I've been here.

4

5 So thank you for that, Jack. Board
6 members I'd like to congratulate them for being here,
7 I'll really miss -- it's going to be a whole new world
8 for me when I see you guys going -- again next spring.

9

10 Thank you, Jack.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Robert.

13

14 My question for you, is would you like
15 to have the tribal consultation issue put on our annual
16 report, which this Council sends out the annual report
17 of issues that affect subsistence, and would you like
18 that included as a topic on the annual report.

19

20 MR. WALKER: Yes, that would be a good
21 start, I think, because I do bring my report back to
22 our tribes and when we do have a meeting, we do have
23 four village meetings, I do bring this up with our
24 tribal leaders, and they are grateful for this, too.

25

26 Thank you, Jack.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're still getting
29 a lot of noise on the phone, people shuffling papers
30 and stuff. I would request again that you push star
31 six so that you mute your phone and we won't be getting
32 this background noise over the top of us.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 Yeah, so we can put that, to put the
37 tribal consultation issue on the annual report from the
38 Council, is that an affirmative.

39

40 (Council nods affirmatively)

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I see affirmative
43 from the Council by headshake. Of course we'll address
44 that by motion later.

45

46 The law enforcement issue, that's the
47 Refuges. When the Refuges come before, and the
48 agencies come before the Council we can discuss this
49 law enforcement issue with each specific agency, that
50 they're going to have to step up to the plate as the

1 State retracts more and more enforcement funding.

2

3 So, Pollock, you have a Council member
4 report.

5

6 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm
7 Pollock Simon, Sr., I live in Allakaket, Upper Koyukuk
8 River.

9

10 The moose population has been low the
11 last few years and the State shot some wolves so for
12 three years, so hoping the moose would come back to the
13 area. It showed some improvements after they killed
14 some wolves, last winter there were more moose tracks
15 and the caribou hasn't come back within 10 years so if
16 we don't get moose then -- sometimes we'll get caribou
17 but the caribou doesn't come back every winter so
18 sometimes there's meat shortages.

19

20 The king salmon population crashed. So
21 I said earlier it's the main fish diet for our people
22 along the river. But they're doing a lot of studying
23 this year on it so hopefully it will bring back the
24 king salmon. So sometimes up river in the Koyukuk
25 River area they're having some tough times because we
26 aren't getting king salmon and we aren't getting moose
27 and not getting caribou.

28

29 The Interior villages have lived off
30 that river for many years, take the fish as needed.
31 The salmon come up river every spring, we take what we
32 need, that works fine for us, we respect the fish and
33 wildlife and sometimes there's plenty of fish but then
34 the State and the Feds come in and took over management
35 and then we lost the king salmon. The last few years
36 we're restricted to cut back on taking king salmon and
37 once there was a closure so our people in the village
38 didn't want to go out and take king salmon, we wanted
39 to fish but we can't take (indiscernible) hours, our
40 subsistence take is always small and I think the State
41 kind of -- and the Feds have kind of overfished some
42 areas and so that's the cause of the crash of the king
43 salmon.

44

45 But I think the chum salmon population
46 has gone up quite a bit, there's plenty of chum salmon,
47 but the chum salmon fish is not as good as the king
48 salmon.

49

50 We have whitefish, we eat whitefish but

1 it's not as good as eating king salmon.

2

3 Sometimes people back home talk about
4 why we have to not fish but like being good citizens we
5 have to abide by the regulations and laws so hopefully
6 in the future there's more fish for everybody.

7

8 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pollock.

11

12 I think that there were less
13 restrictions on the Koyukuk River this year. I'm not
14 sure that the villages are actually getting the notice
15 that there are less restrictions on the Koyukuk River.
16 And so it kind of would seem that there needs to be
17 more information, maybe calling the tribal councils,
18 that this is the current, you know, the Federal and
19 State managers need to call the communities on the
20 Koyukuk, the Innoko, say there's seven day a week
21 fishing, it's six inch gear or whatever the regulation
22 is, each tribal council then could pass the word out.
23 I don't think that there's -- not everybody's listening
24 to the call, I think there's some kind of
25 miscommunication problem going on. Maybe YRDFA could
26 help out with that also. I'm sort of getting the idea
27 that there were less restrictions but people didn't
28 realize that this year.

29

30 So that's one of my comments.

31

32 Fred.

33

34 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35

36 I would like to report the fishing for
37 us at 4A, Kaltag, was good king salmon fishing this
38 year. So what does that mean. That mean we didn't
39 have to go after the fall chums. Normally, if there's
40 low chums then we're being restricted so bad then we're
41 forced to go out to -- to go after fall chums and this
42 year the people of Kaltag probably with the exception
43 of two fishermen that went after the fall chums, two
44 families went after the fall chums because of the
45 debris and the high water in the river. And like
46 myself, you know, I said earlier a lot of our fishermen
47 there in Kaltag they got their quota earlier and what
48 that meant was that after that first pulse went by,
49 immediately went after that second pulse, and that
50 second pulse we noticed that you get the good fish, you

1 get the males, the third -- the end of that second
2 pulse, the third pulse you get the big females and we
3 don't go after that -- the end of that second pulse at
4 all unless we really have to. But that's the way the
5 fish are coming into Kaltag when we fish. We know
6 which ones to go after and when to fish them.

7

8 Okay, the other one is the climate
9 change this year was so bad, I'll tell you most of our
10 hunters in Kaltag, Nulato and down river, they got a
11 lot of the small moose, why, because the climate
12 change, the warmer weather kept all the big moose up in
13 the mountains, high up in the mountains, they didn't
14 come down until the very end of the season. So, you
15 know, going after a 60 inch plus moose we never heard
16 of it this year, nobody really got no 60 inch moose or
17 better, why, because of the climate change. And I
18 think the rules are written specifically by the State
19 when to go after -- when to go hunting, it's got
20 certain dates set on there and I think we're going to
21 have to have a hard look at that issue later on.

22

23 Antlers wasted, I mean moose wasted,
24 antlers, I found one myself, another hunter -- two
25 other hunters found two dead moose with just antlers
26 gone. Boy that is against -- that is strictly against
27 our way of hunting, our way of protecting the land and
28 the resources.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Was the entire moose
31 left with the antlers cut off.

32

33 MR. ALEXIE: Just the antlers gone.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And did people take
36 pictures of that and report those.

37

38 MR. ALEXIE: I don't know if they took
39 pictures of it or not, I'm going to have to ask them.
40 But, you know, I mean I didn't have no camera myself,
41 you know, but I witnessed one.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, and
44 continue.

45

46 MR. ALEXIE: Okay. At any rate, you
47 know, when we notice that, when we -- like trappers, we
48 know where to go, we just look for that -- that dead
49 moose, we go back there for trapping because all that
50 little game go to that area because the odor left over

1 from that -- even though the moose is gone, eaten up,
2 we go back there and go trapping right there in that
3 little area.

4

5 Also I would like the Department to
6 keep up their predator control on both bears and moose
7 -- I mean wolves. What was the last report, the bear
8 was the most detrimental to the cows and calves, I
9 forgot that percentage but it was really high compared
10 to the wolf, the wolf take.

11

12 But at any rate, overall, I'd just like
13 to comment, you know, that the fishing was so good for
14 us, fall chums, the managers did a good job of
15 reporting and to give us more liberal opening, what was
16 it, five days or something like that in our area. But
17 that really gave us -- we normally set the Department
18 up, or criticizing them, you know, not giving them any
19 leeway but myself, and, you know, fishermen from
20 Kaltag, you know, we'd just like to say, hey, you know,
21 gee, thank you, we got all we need, you know, so good
22 season.

23

24 But like, you know, the antlers being
25 taken off of the whole moose and it's -- you know, for
26 me and my grandchildren, it is a crime for my
27 grandchildren -- my six year old and eight year old
28 grandson to see a dead moose. It is not our practice.
29 I don't like to see my grandchildren see that.

30

31 But any rate, that's my report, thank
32 you, Mr. Chair.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, like I've said
35 at other meetings, I always carry a camera around when
36 I'm going out and you can have little, iPad, anything,
37 cell phone, even cheap cell phones -- Pollock's got a
38 cheap cell phone, prepaid phone that's got a camera in
39 it, I always tell people in rural Alaska, you carry a
40 camera with you, you go out -- maybe not take a picture
41 of anything, but if you see wanton waste and that's a
42 State statute that is a severe violation, if you can
43 get the pictures for the enforcement of bullet wounds,
44 the animal with the head cut off, the human tracks in
45 the sand, how they got there, all those kinds of things
46 and you call up the enforcement and tell them, the Fish
47 and Wildlife Protection or the US Fish and Wildlife,
48 whoever it is, oh, they love to get those pictures
49 because they all have a time date stamp in it, they can
50 take those pictures, they can start tracing out and the

1 sooner you find it and the sooner you turn that stuff
2 in the better. I keep telling all the villages, I
3 don't care where I'm at, you take a picture.

4

5 I see people doing stuff, I catch --
6 I've caught guys doing things, I walk right up to them,
7 I take a picture of them, I say you're getting a
8 ticket, I'm taking a picture of you, your car, where
9 you're at, what you're doing, the features around
10 there, I turn those over to the Trooper, the Troopers
11 love that. They get a ticket just like that. They can
12 go to those guys and write them a ticket. You take a
13 picture of their airplane, their boat, them, all that
14 kind of stuff, they got a real airtight case. We got
15 to start telling the people in these communities, you
16 got to carry a camera. We're not enforcement, but the
17 Troopers and the real enforcement can use those photos
18 to a huge degree to make real strong cases.

19

20 So I encourage you, get a cheap cell
21 phone that's got a camera in it. Go down here and buy
22 them in Walmart for like 26 bucks and something, you
23 can buy a junk cell phone that's got a camera on it and
24 it'll take the pictures that they need to get -- and so
25 the local people have to start helping, because the
26 funding's going away, we can't keep relying so much on
27 the State of Alaska, we're part of the enforcement.
28 And it is a State statute, it's not a rural crime, it's
29 a State crime to leave everything from the back of the
30 head to the distal joint and everything in between,
31 you're supposed to take all -- they're supposed to take
32 every last scrap of meat. You see heavy boning, you
33 know, some of these guys bone out stuff, there's like a
34 little slice of meat off the neck, if they're not
35 taking the meat right down to the bone, take a picture
36 of that, you know, on the Koyukuk you got to bring the
37 head out. In the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area you got
38 to bring the head out.

39

40 And so I'll get off my pedestal, but I
41 keep telling people, everybody's got to start carrying
42 a camera, even a junk camera.

43

44 Darrel.

45

46 MR. VENT: Okay. The first issue I'm
47 talking about is way back about 1974, '76 we used to
48 have -- in the early '70s we used to have caribou
49 running through our village, there was, you know,
50 abundance of resource then moose, fish, whatever you

1 needed to take. Now, you know, come to days like now we
2 haven't seen caribou for awhile. We have to go way
3 over past Shungnak, go up to the Selawik River and try
4 to catch something and it takes a lot of fuel and, you
5 know, this is -- this is something we rely on and it's
6 something that we've used all our life. Now, we're
7 starting to see things that we have to -- we have to
8 shift our subsistence use, that's what we're doing,
9 just to satisfy the State. Because, you know, a lot of
10 our food is not being taken care of, managed.

11
12 We're having a tougher time taking
13 moose because we're looking in an area, and me and Jack
14 talked about this and it's -- they go in there and they
15 take these big bulls, these big 'ol horns, you know,
16 and they bring them out, well, those are what we call
17 breeder bulls and when you take those big breeder bulls
18 out we have a big high cow, you know, calf ratio but
19 that doesn't help because those cows don't have the
20 strength to survive predator attack. So the predators
21 just have a meal on them and they get more abundant and
22 more abundant and we notice that.

23
24 That really affects us.

25
26 Because when you go out there and we're
27 hunting a moose and you see a bunch of cows and calves,
28 we know what's happening there, we understand it,
29 that's because we live there, we know, you know, this
30 is what we see and we complain. Still, you know, it's
31 always critical to us to try to protect our food and
32 that's the main reason why I'm bringing this all up.

33
34 We survive on this moose and caribou
35 and, you know, this high percentage food that we use,
36 we use it throughout the year compared to Fred's area,
37 you know, they got a lot of fish down there and Jenny,
38 in Galena, they got more fish -- they use more fish
39 than us, we don't have an abundance of fish that they
40 do, I mean they relied on fish and they're hurting too
41 now, everybody's being affected by all this management
42 that we need to try to address. It's critical to our
43 people to survive. It doesn't matter to some people
44 outside, they don't have to survive on this food, we
45 rely on this food, this is critical to us.

46
47 You know, I always stress about these
48 breeding bulls and, you know, predator management. The
49 thing that they leave us with is we have to rely on our
50 own money or taking care of predator management and

1 what have they done for us, there's no giving us any
2 kind of leeway to make some money just to buy gas to
3 hunt these predators, they tell us to cut the horn on
4 the moose, that degrades us, we lose like seven or \$800
5 on that moose because we have to split the horn in
6 half, that hurts us. You know if you got to go out to
7 hunt predators you'd be hurting too. I mean if you buy
8 a snowmachine and it cost you \$1,100 for a part, where
9 are you going to get that from. It makes it really
10 tough on us out there. We're trying to learn how to
11 adjust to what is being brought to us but this, you
12 know, this is something that's brought up by probably a
13 lot more than me, it's just, you know, other villages,
14 but nobody is really learning how to address these
15 things.

16
17 So I'm just explaining to you, you
18 know, from my understanding of how we have to live in
19 the village. I mean the price of food in the store is
20 four times higher than the city so it's -- you know,
21 it's not any easier and, you know, you're having more
22 people rely on the Federal government for food instead
23 of relying on their lands for the food and it's making
24 it harder for those people in villages and a lot of
25 them are moving to the city and we don't want that but
26 that's what's happening. And then they get in trouble,
27 they go to jail and, you know, we don't see them for
28 awhile, it just keeps recurring and that hurts us
29 because, you know, we're a community and we're people
30 that want to live there and this is what's happening
31 with us. So I'm just giving it to you right down to
32 the detail of what's going on there.

33
34 We need to try to start addressing all
35 this stuff with the management.

36
37 Whether it's if we have to go to the
38 State and have an MOU or the Federal government and
39 have a MOU with our food, it's, you know, a tribal
40 thing now, it's an issue that I think we're going to
41 have to really deal with. Whether I have to go to a
42 different level just to try to keep our people there in
43 the village that's what I will do.

44
45 So that's part of, you know, what's
46 going on with what's happening in Huslia, and around
47 Hughes.

48
49 Because we're having people rely on us
50 for this moose and they come from Hughes, they come

1 down around the cutoff, long channel area, and they
2 hunt moose around there because there's no moose up
3 there in their area, they got affected by Allakaket.
4 Allakaket got cleaned out of moose and that affected
5 Hughes. Hughes used to go up that way and rely on the
6 moose and caribou that way but that doesn't happen no
7 more.

8

9 So now we're getting hit pretty hard.

10

11 The Lower Yukon, we haven't -- you
12 know, we noticed that there's been less and less
13 hunters, well, there's no more big bulls up there, they
14 know that, they're going elsewhere, now we're hearing
15 where the problem's going. I heard it from these guys,
16 they're finding moose -- the same thing we used to see
17 up there. Well, the trick with them is that they'd
18 catch a moose for the horn, but they don't have to keep
19 that horn if they see a bigger horn, they can throw
20 that horn in the water and grab that bigger one and put
21 it with their moose, a moose is always sitting in a
22 boat, heck with that moose laying on the bar, that's
23 the way they operate, you know, it's tricky. We know
24 how they operate because we watch them before but we
25 never document it. But that's the way it works.

26

27 And that's just one of the ordeals that
28 you'll find out, they'll have the meat and everything
29 and they'll have a horn, but they found a bigger horn,
30 hey, what's that little horn going to do for them, you
31 know. Heck, us, we wish we had something like that we
32 could have more fuel, but we don't do that, that's
33 waste. That's something we don't, you know, that's our
34 food. That's our priority.

35

36 Now, we're having to depend on other
37 species but we're having a tougher time. Like we used
38 to rely a lot on beaver when we don't have a lot of
39 moose or caribou. Well, we had a tough time that one
40 year because the water got so high and now you're
41 seeing that this year, the water is real high out
42 there and all the beaver lost their feed piles and then
43 it didn't -- it didn't snow a lot because all the
44 moisture was already down here, it didn't snow a lot
45 that year and the ice froze real thick, well those --
46 we used to see beaver around every bend up the river,
47 and I think it went down like probably 80 percent -- 80
48 percent of those beaver were gone by next year. When
49 we came out there to check there was hardly any beaver
50 houses, they all died off. Predators got full because

1 the beavers were coming out of the holes trying to find
2 food and the predators were right there waiting for
3 them.

4

5 So, you know, it's hard on us up there.
6 You know these are issues that we have to deal with.
7 I'm just giving you insight to what I feel, you know,
8 what the people are telling me.

9

10 Appreciate your listening to us.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, that's what
13 these Council comments are about. Council reports is
14 to understand about what's going in every area.

15

16 The Western Arctic Caribou Herd has
17 declined from 490,000, thought to be at 200,000 or
18 less. Teshekpuk used to be like close to 70,000 and
19 now they're down to 32,000. Less than.....

20

21 MR. VENT: Okay. The reason I brought
22 that up, you know, these herds used to intermingle,
23 there used to be the Eastern and the Western, they
24 would go back and forth in there because there was so
25 many, well, the problem we had was the pipeline kind of
26 cut off that corridor to our area, that was right above
27 Hughes. They used to come right in there by the
28 thousands, that didn't happen anymore after they put
29 the pipeline in. They promised us, oh, no, it won't
30 affect you, well, I beg to differ on that.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, I live over
33 there by the pipeline and we had zero caribou in our
34 valley this year, mainly because the increased harvest
35 of cow caribou into July 1 on the Haul Road. That
36 basically lets those hunters kill all those leads cows
37 and stop the mig -- deflected the migration into the
38 Chandalar, East Fork of the Chandler, Arctic Village,
39 they eat Central Arctic Caribou.

40

41 The Teshekpuk went through Anaktuvuk
42 Pass this fall but last year those didn't go that way
43 and they didn't have any Central Arctic Caribou. So
44 Anaktuvuk Pass was in real hardship last year.

45

46 We haven't seen a caribou in the Dalton
47 Highway area at all, hardly any moose.

48

49 And so that Haul Road and the hunting
50 pressure, it's the hunting pressure that causes that.

1 They have jet boats, air boats, they put those in the
2 rivers on the North Slope, they pound those caribou.

3

4 So Zach tells me the Western Interior
5 -- or correction, Northwest Arctic RAC wants to have a
6 joint meeting with us this spring to have discussion
7 with Northwest, North Slope and Seward Penn with the
8 Western Interior on caribou, you know, we'll have to
9 talk about that when we talk about our RAC schedule
10 this coming spring.

11

12 But the northern part of the Western
13 Interior is fairly reliant on caribou and so we do need
14 to talk about caribou. I mean they affect Kaltag,
15 Huslia, Hughes, the upper part of the Koyukuk River. I
16 do want to talk about caribou. I don't know if we want
17 to get into a multiple day meeting. Last spring
18 everybody felt like flies, I was the last one standing
19 at that meeting, hardly anybody else was around there
20 and so I don't want to get into a multiple day meeting.
21 I do want to have a little overlap and discussion about
22 caribou with those other Regional Councils, but I don't
23 know that I really want to go to a multiple day meeting
24 with those Councils. So we do have overlap issues on
25 caribou, but I don't know that that -- I don't want to
26 add a whole bunch of time onto that, but we're not
27 going to get into that right now.

28

29 Fred, do you want to have one quick
30 statement on this thing.

31

32 MR. ALEXIE: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
33 Chair. You brought up a good question. You mentioned
34 that airboats and hovercrafts, the issue.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, you know, it's
37 the high power boat traffic that can get into the upper
38 drainages that affect those caribou migrations. The
39 other is the aspect of air taxis dumping off of hunters
40 in the middle of -- in the front of migrations, and so
41 this whole caribou discussion is kind of necessary with
42 these other RACs. There are going to be Mulchatna
43 Caribou problems in the southern part of this region
44 because the Board of Game has just increased the bag
45 limit to two bull caribou. That caribou herd has
46 barely started to recover. They were at a range of
47 between 28 to 35,000 caribou and the management
48 objective is just barely being met. The east end
49 portion of that herd was barely getting to a bull/cow
50 ratio of 32 bulls, but primarily younger bulls, and

1 Darrel and I are on the same sheet of music, you got to
2 have adult bulls for breeding. They barely started
3 getting their bull/cow ratio back and the Department
4 has opened up the season to fork-two bull caribou. The
5 guides now got a proposal in the State book to have
6 non-residents under draw permit for bull caribou for
7 Mulchatna so we're going to start to see that again in
8 the lower part of this region. Caribou is a management
9 problem in our region so we're going to be talking
10 about that later.

11
12 Let's move down this line.

13
14 So we're going to have Ray give his
15 Council member report. Go ahead, Ray.

16
17 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, report some
18 positives.

19
20 We worked for a long time to get
21 predator control out here, they had to study who was --
22 what was killing the calves off because we were getting
23 low calf survival and so on and then finally when it
24 was approved we had to remove bears during that season
25 because they were about 60 percent on the calves and 30
26 wolves and, of course, the problem with wolves is they
27 hunt all year round so whatever's left, especially the
28 younger animals, depending on the snow they can impact
29 them too. But as a result of that predator control out
30 here, and we closed the area to 20 miles around
31 McGrath, no hunting, so hunting wasn't a factor and we
32 turned it around in this area and now we have lots of
33 young moose coming in. And a lot of the harvest is of
34 younger moose because they're more available but every
35 time you kill a young bull their sisters are out there
36 breeding, so the breeding population is growing.

37
38 The result was this fall -- I was out
39 with my son, we got one moose, we passed another one up
40 because we had enough, but my grandson took that so we
41 ended up with two moose and we only needed one. I
42 tried to give a moose away in town, everybody had meet
43 and that doesn't happen very often. But it was a good
44 harvest here locally, basically because of the predator
45 control that the State had and the management program
46 that was put into effect. People that wanted to hunt
47 in this immediate area have to register before they get
48 a permit for 19D so it limits the number of others
49 hunting. There's no non-resident hunting. They have
50 to come in and register before the hunt season so we

1 know how many is out there and so that's limited people
2 from around the state just, you know, flocking in.

3

4 But anyhow it turned around.

5

6 And weather-wise, yeah, we had the same
7 problem with the high water that affected the fishing
8 here. But the management scheme they put into place,
9 they finally protected those early pulse of kings. The
10 last time they had a weir on the Pitka Fork Salmon
11 River up here back in the early '90s they put it in for
12 one year or something like that, they only had about
13 1,200 kings through there, it jumped the last two
14 years, it's been over 6,000 kings have been spawning up
15 those tributaries. It was 6,400, I think last year and
16 about the same this year and the year before we didn't
17 have one in but the early closure was in effect.
18 Before those fish were fished all the way up the river
19 but now by having rolling closures up there that early
20 pulse is protected and as a result they can lighten up
21 on the restrictions up here because we don't take very
22 many kings in Nikolai and McGrath and so on so they
23 don't need to be as restrictive. And I hope they'll do
24 something like that at Allakaket, they're at the end of
25 the run. If those fish are protected when they get up
26 there it's only that small local population that's
27 doing it so they need in the regulations to regulate
28 and be more liberal as you approach the headwaters, I
29 think.

30

31 But there was good return on kings this
32 year. If we get a couple more years then those three
33 year olds now will start coming back, four and five
34 year olds and so on and so on and so we'll start,
35 hopefully, seeing an even greater increase over the
36 next few years. We'll know if we can keep it going for
37 at least two more years then we'll have that
38 information of five years of spawning and see what the
39 long-range effect is. But there's been buy-in by the
40 people down river and they paid the price because they
41 prize those early kings, better weather for drying and
42 they're some of the bigger fish, richer fish. Just
43 like the Yukon the ones headed for Canada are some of
44 the richest fish so they have so far to go that they
45 wouldn't make it if they didn't have a lot of fat and
46 they're richer than the ones in the Kuskokwim.

47

48 But if I seem a little distracted,
49 there's a funeral going on about now for Nikolai for a
50 very close friend and Betty Patruska, and I'd like to

1 acknowledge her, once I developed the alphabet up there
2 for the writing system she was one of three people that
3 I trained to read and write in the language and she
4 taught in the schools and has done most of the
5 translation of the text that we gathered from elders
6 and there's a lot of valuable information in those
7 texts. In fact there's a collection of tapes by
8 (Indiscernible) that's unique in the state, usually an
9 informant comes in and asks, tell me a story about this
10 or that, he was provided with a tape recorder so in his
11 later years he told the stories he wanted to tell and
12 there's no other collection like that in the state and
13 he made a whole series of tapes that he told. And in
14 that is -- well, there's stories about Salmon River and
15 the sheefish there, there's stories about walking the
16 hills and hunting. All kinds of information about the
17 earlier practices for hunting are in those tales and
18 Betty is the one that did the basic translation and
19 then I worked on the English version of it, some of
20 which is in the Nikolai history -- the history that I
21 wrote, it was funded by the Denali National Park. And
22 that's available on line, the National Park Service
23 printed copies for people in the village but it's
24 available on line Dichinanek' Hwt'ana, the people of
25 the Upper Kuskokwim, and you can find that on line with
26 some of those stories in it by Googling my name and
27 look at Nikolai and Telida history and it'll come up
28 and it can be downloaded on line.

29
30 But anyhow she made a major
31 contribution. I was hoping it would stabilize the
32 language the lange there but it didn't. Her first
33 students were speaking the language at that time, back
34 in the early '70s and she taught for a few years, the
35 younger ones, to read and write, but they continued to
36 shift towards English and pretty soon they had kids
37 coming in that were no longer speaking but
38 understanding the language so it didn't result in
39 boosting the language that way, it still shifted.

40
41 So I was able to go up and visit
42 yesterday and say goodbye and my wife is up there today
43 and so I'm a little distracted. But I'd already
44 committed to putting on a supper today here because we
45 raised money for the school kids and it'll go to NYO,
46 Native Youth Olympics this year, the donation. So I'll
47 give you the information towards the end of the meeting
48 here and I'd like a number to figure out how many are
49 coming over, so I think we'll have enough food. I've
50 already cooked some and I've got my daughter coming in

1 to help.

2

3

That's all I have right now.

4

5

I think the Kuskokwim River, the Salmon Management Working Group, that I'm part of, has been doing a good job with State and Federal involvement in that. But there is concern that this Tribal group that they put into place in the lower river with each of the tribes involved and consultation with the Federal government, because Lamont Albertson, I think who is on line, gave me a call and he said that the Refuge down there is thinking of turning over management to the State of salmon and I hate -- doesn't happen because I don't know how it will impact that consultation with the tribe and the dual management, co-management, so we need to watch that and maybe we'll hear some more in a moment when that comes up.

19

20

That's all I have right now, thank you.

21

22

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much, Ray. My condolences on Betty's passing. Elders are an important part of the lineage of knowledge and so it is important to get these tapes, these oral history tapes and transcribe them.

27

28

MR. COLLINS: Well all the people that I got stories from are now gone and I've lost most of my peers in Nikolai over the last couple of years, people that I've hunted and trapped with and so on when we came in '63. So we've lost almost all the elders in Nikolai and now we're working down to younger people than myself. I find my -- and I guess I mentioned before that they recognize me with honorary tribal membership, my wife, and that was a real privilege.

37

38

39

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Wow. Well, thanks so much.

40

41

Jenny.

42

43

MS. PELKOLA: Thank you.

44

45

46

At this time I would just like to say a little prayer for Nikolai.

47

48

(Prayer)

49

50

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

1 MS. PELKOLA: Okay. It's pretty hard
2 to follow when you hear you lose a friend or a strong
3 person from the community. We just lost one last week
4 in our village of Koyukuk and I know the feeling.

5
6 I just want to thank all the Council
7 members for your reports. Many years I've sat on this
8 Board, I've never really take notes of what the members
9 said but this time I'm taking, act like I'm a secretary
10 over here.....

11
12 (Laughter)

13
14 MS. PELKOLA:writing down what
15 you are saying and many of you brought up very good
16 things.

17
18 I like what Robert said about why are
19 we being left out by the OSM, there's no government to
20 government contact, or whatever we call it, whatever
21 that word is, you know what I mean. But you said some
22 goodthings, and Robert, I hope you would reconsider
23 being on the Board again.

24
25 Was that a smirk.

26
27 (Laughter)

28
29 MR. WALKER: No. But I think 15 years,
30 I'll have to rethink that maybe I'll feel better after
31 a couple of years -- I'm kind of like, you know, let me
32 think about that, thank you I appreciate that from you
33 Jenny.

34
35 MS. PELKOLA: Okay. And Pollock,
36 you're talking about the moose in your area, not much
37 moose, and you just heard what Ray said how they worked
38 with their moose in their area down here. But I know
39 there's always waste of moose, as Fred brought up, and
40 I think we need to take Jack's advice and take our
41 cameras along, like we all have these little things we
42 carry around in the woods and there's cameras on them,
43 you can take pictures with that.

44
45 Darrel, you did a very good -- gave a
46 very good report on how we used to live long time ago.
47 I remember when I was little, watching my parents
48 struggle and work hard to try to get food on the table
49 for us, it's a very tough life, but I want you to know
50 that we are a very tough people. I feel like no one is

1 going to stop me from getting my fish or getting my
2 moose, if I need it I'm going to take it. I might have
3 to go to jail but you can serve only a couple of days
4 in jail and they'll let you out anyway, they don't want
5 to watch you.

6

7

(Laughter)

8

9

MS. PELKOLA: And, Ray, being on the
10 Board for so long, he's very -- he knows what he's
11 talking about and he's contributed so much to this
12 Board, I've learned so much from just listening to him
13 talk and how he interacts with different people land
14 different agencies and I really appreciate that.

15

16

We didn't get to Tim yet but I've met
17 Tim before and you are very strong on this Board, too,
18 you contribute a lot.

19

20

I just want to thank all of you.

21

22

This year we lost a lot of our bank in
23 Bishop Mountain and I spent most of my time there. I go
24 down in June and I didn't get back this year until
25 September 18th, so I spent the majority of my time at
26 my fish camp, back and forth to Galena, but mostly in
27 my camp. But we lost a lot of land. We had to move a
28 couple of houses back. My brother's house and we're on
29 the verge of moving my niece's next year. And in
30 losing all our land, we lost our eddy at our camp. And
31 Bishop Mountain used to be one of the best places that
32 I know -- I don't know Kaltag, and I don't know down
33 river, but in our area, one of the best places for king
34 salmon, we had a good spot and we lost our eddy due to
35 high water. I think that erosion has something to do
36 with it, climate change. And then losing one eddy we
37 got another eddy across the river but that didn't last
38 very long and the high water came up, with all the
39 debris in the waters for the drift, we had fish net
40 problems right after another and in our fish camp
41 there's only myself, my husband, my brother and his
42 wife. My brother is in his '80s and I'm not too far
43 behind. And we don't have the workers that we used to
44 have so we have to work for ourselves at the fish camp
45 because all our kids are grown, grandkids are grown and
46 they're all in college and the younger ones don't want
47 to stay in camp anymore so we have to fish for
48 ourselves.

49

50

But in moose hunting we didn't have to

1 hunt this year. I didn't hunt last year. Because I
2 think people see that we're getting older, I guess, and
3 they're giving us meat now so we got our moose meat.
4 But I still hear of wanton waste. I think I saw
5 something this summer but I wasn't too sure, I was in a
6 rush, too, my fault, got to Galena and all I saw were
7 legs hanging in a boat and horns. And like Jack said,
8 they should have had the whole moose, but I don't know
9 if I could have looked in their boats, I don't know.

10
11 And last year I was going to report,
12 someone was doing something illegal there and I started
13 to take a picture on my camera, nothing, it wouldn't
14 happen, it didn't work for me, so I didn't get that
15 picture.

16
17 But anyway we had a really wet season
18 as I'm sure everybody did. High water. And that
19 really affected our fishing also, what little fish we
20 got. We didn't get as many fish as Darrel thinks that
21 we did, due to all the problems we had. And I'm
22 jealous of Kaltag that they got all the kings, but we
23 have some kings, you know, we'll live, we won't die.

24
25 So I just want to let you know that
26 this year we had a little more problems than normal,
27 and it's probably just for this year but next year is
28 another year. And I do have the fish that I need right
29 now, there's just my husband and I at home. I have a
30 granddaughter in college in Madison that wants fish so
31 I have to send her fish.

32
33 Thanks to all of you again and this is
34 a very good meeting.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Jenny,
39 appreciate that. We always value your comments. Jenny
40 and I were talking last night, Jenny's the only woman
41 on this Council now and I would like to get more women
42 on the Council because they spend time doing different
43 types of subsistence than the men so I would like to
44 get more women Council members on the Council and I
45 would like to get some more Council members from the
46 Kuskokwim especially because we do need Kusko
47 membership for the InterTribal Group, et cetera.

48
49 Tim, go ahead.

50

1 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2

3

4 Thanks to other members for their
5 reports. Also special thanks for putting up with me
6 arriving a few hours late this morning. It was a big
7 deal for what I was doing to not travel yesterday
8 during the day.

8

9

10 As far as our fish and wildlife stuff,
11 the success stories for the Yukon and the Kuskokwim are
12 great to hear. Special thanks to the managers and
13 YRDFA, Kuskokwim Working Group and the users for all
14 working hard and making big sacrifices to keep these
15 runs at a level where they could make a comeback. We
16 still have a lot of work to do but this is two years of
17 TransBoundary escapement is -- is real huge, real good
18 news. The best trend I've seen since whenever, back in
19 the early '90s. So hope it continues in that way.

19

20

21 I want to bring up, it's kind of old
22 news but I wasn't present in the March meeting and the
23 Board of Fish meeting that occurred for AYK in January
24 2016, the comments that this Board made a year ago at
25 our Galena meeting, they weren't received on time and
26 so they were put in the booklet but they never were up
27 for review in committee or anything like that and so we
28 lost some voice. I realize the issue was probably we
29 had a transition with change in advisers and stuff, but
30 I hope that we can, in the future, when we're making
31 comments and voting on proposals that we can get those
32 comments to the Board of Fish or North Pacific Council
33 on time so they can be added to the record.

33

34

35 I feel like the general summary of that
36 Board of Fish meeting was kind of tragic for the mid-
37 and up river users. I don't know exactly what
38 occurred, I wasn't there. But we have a lot of -- we
39 have a lot of similar comments from the middle and up
40 river groups where we were opposing these adding gear
41 types or putting in the generous proposed length
42 definitions and depth definitions of the net and
43 expanding the regions out, you know, from one to three
44 miles and expanding the area further north on the
45 Delta, and to me those are all -- even though Holly
46 said there wasn't 'much use and harvest out of there, I
47 think all those provisions and now they're State
48 statute, you know that's a lot of harvest power there
49 and I feel that the -- the current state of our
50 fisheries on the Yukon is -- it doesn't justify
51 expanding gear types or adding fisheries or expanding

1 area so I think we should just stay vigilant on what
2 the effects of these proposals are, and I feel like as
3 these user groups Districts 1, 2 and 3 learn more about
4 how to fish these gears and they invest more capital
5 into it it's going to skew the harvest for subsistence
6 and commercial a lot more towards the Delta, I mean
7 it's just sad. I'm looking at the ADF&G summary on 19
8 where they -- the summer season summary and I see on
9 the lower Yukon River that there was 435 permitholders
10 delivering fish and then for Districts 4, 5 and 6,
11 there was one. So that's just real unequitable.

12
13 I know this Council generally deals
14 with subsistence but as far as commercial fishing on
15 the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, I feel like these
16 styles of commercial fisheries they lend themselves to
17 a subsistence lifestyle and families such as myself
18 have had to switch and fish in areas in other parts of
19 the state and it's affected our entire life and it's
20 affected our subsistence use and it's affected our
21 communities because we're gone for months and months in
22 other parts of the state and instead of being able to
23 fish right off my front porch, I'm traveling hundreds,
24 sometimes a thousand miles away to conduct a fishery
25 just to turn a livelihood.

26
27 So I hope in the future Board of Fish
28 actions can -- and with the help of YRDFA to, when we
29 put in new proposals for other gear types or expanded
30 areas or fishing time that it can be more equitable and
31 be the same regulation throughout the entire watershed.
32 Right now it feels like the Board of Fish, it just
33 feels like everything has to be -- commercially has to
34 be focused on the lower Yukon River because they have
35 Kwik'Pak down there, that's a subsidized processor from
36 the CDQ groups and I don't want to get into what CDQ is
37 but it's subsidized money that's thrown into these
38 coastal communities that are within 100 miles of the
39 coast. So it gives them an advantage there to have
40 that kind of processing capacity down there, but as far
41 as being Alaskans or being subsistence users, people in
42 Eagle and Beaver, Stevens Village, Tanana, Galena,
43 Kaltag, Holy Cross, Marshall, Emmonak, everybody should
44 have the same opportunity to catch what they can catch
45 by working hard and thinking about how they're doing
46 it. But right now everything is skewed towards the
47 lower river and then this last Board of Fish meeting in
48 January just threw a whole bunch more harvesting power
49 down that way, which may not be getting utilized but
50 it's in statute and it's going to come into play.

1 Later in the meeting we're going to be
2 talking about the Memorandum of Understanding between
3 the Federal and State managers and I feel like that's
4 going to be an important issue that we need to cover
5 because that comes into play where we can have the
6 State acknowledge that what we're doing as a Regional
7 Advisory Council is important and we're bringing in ia
8 good point of view because we have a consensus of a
9 broad area. And so I hope we have some success with
10 getting that Memorandum of Understanding with good
11 language and good intent.

12
13 Under the Parnell Administration, kind
14 of in response to the low chinook abundance in Norton
15 Sound, Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers they have the chinook
16 research initiative which generally so they're going to
17 start a bunch of research initiatives or a bunch of
18 research projects and try to figure out what's going on
19 with these king salmon, well, it was kind of obvious at
20 the time that they wouldn't be able to maintain the
21 funding on a lot of those research projects and most,
22 if not, all of those projects are unfunded and not
23 happening. I would like to see this Council draft a
24 letter to the Governor and to Commissioner Cotten
25 asking, you know, what kind of plans or what kind of
26 information they need to -- we still need to be in this
27 salmon recovery, chinook recovery mode, and we might
28 suggest some things the State can do, even when they
29 say our low budget, it doesn't have to be a money deal,
30 I mean they can use their seats on Board of Fish and
31 North Pacific Management Council to take conservative
32 management approaches that allow us to continue this
33 chinook recovery just by staying away -- and I can't
34 remember the exact term but this maximum sustained
35 yield, that's like a big term that they use on the
36 North Pacific Management Council, like we got to always
37 stay on this razor's edge of most amount of money made,
38 but if you don't know all the science in what's going
39 on in the ocean and nobody does, then they have to give
40 that maximum sustained yield a buffer because they
41 don't have the knowledge or the information to say
42 exactly what's going on, so hopefully we have time to
43 do something like that letter to the Governor and
44 Commissioner Cotten saying, hey, we're in -- we have
45 some bright spots in our chinook recovery but we need
46 their help and their commitment to keeping it going.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Say, Tim. Tim.

49
50 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There are Fisheries
2 Resource Monitoring Funds, and so this Council can
3 identify Fisheries Resource Monitoring Projects, but
4 your request to the State is you would like assistance
5 in identifying fisheries projects. The Fisheries
6 Monitoring Program can actually be the funding source
7 but this Council needs to identify fisheries monitoring
8 issues. But you're requesting the State to identify
9 some additional issues or funding research projects, is
10 that what you're requesting for the Commissioner of
11 Fish and Game.

12
13 MR. GERVAIS: Well, what I wanted to
14 communicate in the letter was that the Parnell
15 Administration had put together this Chinook Research
16 Initiative and then in subsequent years a lot of those
17 research projects have gone unfunded and are not
18 happening anymore, and that Chinook Research Initiative
19 was supposed to be like the basis where, okay, we're
20 going to study all these things, figure out what the
21 problem is, and then put together an action plan based
22 on that. Well, now the Chinook Research Initiative is
23 just a shadow of its former self, that we need to come
24 up with a new strategy on maybe more conservative
25 chinook management or more conservative bycatch levels
26 for the North Pacific Council side of things.

27
28 But I'm just saying with this Chinook
29 Research Initiative unfunded, let's develop a new
30 strategy to keep our chinook recovery going and not
31 just say, oh, well, there's no more money and so now we
32 have to go back to another decade of poor or no salmon
33 harvest because -- just can't blame it on money. I'm
34 saying there's ways -- there's things the Board of Fish
35 can do and the Governor's office can do and the
36 Commissioner of Fish and Game can do to support chinook
37 recover that doesn't require a lot of funding and I
38 want either us to suggest what we know about it or have
39 them come back to us with what their new strategy is in
40 this era of low budget, low State budget.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I don't see where to
43 plunk that into an agenda item. Would you like to make
44 a motion to that effect, that a letter be generated to
45 the Commissioner of Fish and Game regarding
46 strategizing, laying out strategies, low budget
47 strategies to enhance Yukon River chinook recovery.

48
49 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. I would like to
50 make a motion that we communicate a letter, a

1 combination letter to the Governor and to Commissioner
2 Sam Cotten regarding that due to a lot of lack of
3 funding in the previously proposed Chinook Research
4 Initiative, that we need to develop new strategies to
5 continue the chinook recovery, and not just for the
6 Yukon, it can be all of Kuskokwim, Yukon, and Norton
7 Sound. The Nushagak at this stage seems reasonably
8 healthy on what they're doing with kings and out of our
9 -- that's out of our region also.

10

11 But just a way of like reevaluating
12 what the State's management strategy and technique is
13 now that there's not excess money around to do all
14 these things that were originally proposed with the
15 Chinook Research Initiative.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There are some State
18 projects like this smolt -- in ocean -- smolt out-
19 migration analysis and survivorship, there are some
20 State projects. We should also request that we get
21 some updated information from the Department, so that
22 we're aware of what the projects that they actually are
23 doing in conjunction with strategizing for additional
24 steps to be taken, and so we can request that in the
25 letter.

26

27 And do we have a second on that motion.

28

29 MS. PELKOLA: I'll second that.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny.

32

33 Any further discussion or inclusions
34 into that letter that'll be generated, that's an action
35 item for this Council.

36

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 MR. VENT: Call for question.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question called by
43 Darrel. Those in favor of that motion signify by
44 saying aye.

45

46 IN UNISON: Aye.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

49

50 (No opposing votes)

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim.
2 Continue with your report.

3
4 I figured we might as well just do it,
5 so continue.

6
7 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. Just a few more
8 items here.

9
10 So Council members are probably aware
11 in the Federal waters there's two main management areas
12 for pollock trawling, there's -- it's called BSAI,
13 Bering Sea Aleutian Island, and then the second area is
14 the Gulf of Alaska. And the North Pacific Management
15 Council has put in salmon protection measures in
16 different levels for these two areas and they both have
17 hard caps. And an interesting event happened this past
18 January with the hard cap in the Gulf of Alaska for the
19 pollock trawlers, they were not catching very much
20 pollock and they were catching higher than normal
21 amount of king salmon so the fleet voluntarily agreed
22 to stand down from fishing for two or three weeks to
23 try to wait for the pollock to build up or for these
24 kings to migrate elsewhere and then they started
25 fishing again later in February and they kept catching
26 the kings and they reached their hard cap and that
27 fishery was closed.

28
29 So that was the first time that I know
30 of that these chinook bycatch caps had actually closed
31 a pollock fishery in the state. So that's kind of a
32 historic event.

33
34 It was also a really expensive event
35 for the pollock trawlers, they lost millions and
36 millions of dollars by not being able to catch their
37 pollock quota. So they're upset about it and they're
38 interested in changing the regulations so it doesn't
39 happen again.

40
41 So we need to just pay attention to
42 what kind of actions get introduced into the North
43 Pacific Council process and make sure that we don't
44 lose the chinook protection that was in place just
45 because it happened to close down some of the fishing.

46
47 Another item, I'm down doing some sea
48 cucumber harvesting around Kodiak and Chignik now and I
49 was just looking at my logs from 2008, and at this time
50 in 2008 the water temperature was 45 degrees and the

1 water temperature now in 2016 eight years later is 54
2 degrees so it's a nine degree temperature difference in
3 the Gulf of Alaska which is a huge difference.

4

5 So that's all I'm going to say about
6 it, just letting you know that nobody knows how things
7 go with global warming but I'm just saying from my log
8 books that there's a huge change in that and it could
9 affect several different things. So just something to
10 be aware of, the ocean temperature is skewed extremely,
11 eight degrees to the warmer side in this short amount
12 of time, nine degrees.

13

14 And then my final item, since we've
15 been going over these obituaries some here, Lorraine
16 Honea of Ruby died at age 96. I moved to Ruby in 1996
17 and got to know her really well, she kind of became my
18 Indian mom and she taught me how to set net, and cut
19 fish and smoke fish and her late son, James, taught me
20 how to fish with a fishwheel. She and her husband
21 trapped up on the Slutna River, which is off of the
22 Slatna River and they were one of the last couples to
23 lead that old time trapping and fishing lifestyle in
24 the Ruby region. She was a great, great resource for
25 all of the -- all the history of the last 96 years in
26 Ruby and Cochranes and it's interesting to me, like
27 people think of Alaska as a place but, to me, it's more
28 than just a place, it's the people and the culture and
29 stuff and she was just a real significant part of
30 subsistence lifestyle in the Nowitna/Slatna Region and
31 I was real fortunate to have crossed trails with her in
32 my life.

33

34 That's all I have.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim.

37

38 Yeah, I think everybody in this room
39 has had some elder that was a mentor for, you know,
40 many, many -- many elders or -- I've had many elders
41 that taught me a lot of good, cool things about
42 different things, so it's always a bummer, it's like
43 losing a relative when you lose your mentors like that.

44

45 So appreciate all your comments.

46

47 I'll give my Chair report.

48

49 I couldn't attend the Federal
50 Subsistence Board meeting but I was on the call going

1 over those wildlife proposals with the Federal
2 Subsistence Board this last April.

3
4 I also participated in the Special
5 Action Request for the .804 closure to non-subsistence
6 users on the Kuskokwim River, I was on that, working
7 with Greg Roczicka on discussing that .804 thing this
8 last June.

9
10 I was on that Sheep Work Group last
11 winter and I went to three different sheep meetings
12 with the Board of Game and 42 members of different
13 Advisory Committees, Fairbanks Advisory Committee was
14 over represented and they basically had three members
15 under various hats but they were all the Fairbanks
16 Advisory Committee and talked for the Fairbanks
17 Advisory Committee, their objective was to kill any
18 kind of planning process. That work group is at a
19 standstill. I don't know that the Board of Game is
20 actually going to utilize that method. There were
21 several Board members at those meetings on dall sheep
22 management. The primary thing that the Board of Game
23 did for dall sheep was that they closed it to spotting
24 dall sheep with an aircraft during the sheep season.
25 There were several proposals last spring meeting to
26 repeal that, they denied those proposals, there's
27 another proposal in the proposal book to do that again,
28 that has had a huge affect on how the hunting guides
29 use aircraft to hunt sheep. And that one issue, not
30 allowing them to locate dall sheep, during the sheep
31 season, from August 10 to September 20th, has reduced
32 the amount of flying that the guides are doing, it's to
33 reduce their effectiveness to hunt down every last
34 legal sheep in an area so I'm starting to see better
35 survivorship the last two years because the Board has
36 implemented that.

37
38 I would like this Council to oppose the
39 proposal in the proposal book to repeal that. There's
40 another proposal to repeal that. I feel that just that
41 one simple issue makes it a misdemeanor for a hunting
42 guide to use aircraft to spot sheep. If somebody whips
43 out their iPhone and takes a video of them flying
44 around with an aircraft spotting sheep and they land
45 that plane and go after that sheep, they're going to
46 get a ticket. Right now, previous to that, they had
47 ethics violations, which are a slap on the wrist.
48 That's had a big effect on how the hunting guides,
49 which have an unending supply of money and gas, to fly
50 and hunt down every last legal animal.

1 I spent a lot of time on that sheep
2 work group. I'm unwilling to go into any more meetings
3 with that work group because it's a dead end. They
4 have no intention of changing anything. But the
5 Board's closure to spotting dall sheep has made a big
6 difference in how the adult rams can survive. Because
7 the hunting guides got a lot of money, they got 15 to
8 20,000 bucks for each hunter and they're booking lots
9 of hunters, there's an unending supply of hunting
10 revenue for them. I see better adult ram survivorship.

11
12 I see way fewer caribou are utilizing
13 the Central Brooks Range, primarily because hunting cow
14 caribou on the North Slope of the Brooks Range with
15 airboats, jet boats, bow hunters en masse, there's
16 hundreds and hundreds of hunters that go on the Dalton
17 Highway. They're deflecting the Central Arctic Herd
18 off to the east. The Teshekpuk Herd and Western Arctic
19 Herds have declined. The smaller the herd the less
20 they'll migrate so we're seeing less influence of
21 caribou migrating. I'm concerned about Mulchatna,
22 increasing the bag limit to two caribou, starting to
23 allow drawing permits, proposals for drawing permits.
24 Mulchatna, in my opinion, and I was concerned that when
25 we reviewed data that was presented to this Council
26 last fall on Mulchatna, that the Department is not
27 giving OSM data on time. I know that the Nushagak
28 Advisory Committee received data last fall on Mulchatna
29 Caribou and this Council and the Federal Subsistence
30 Regional Advisory Councils were not receiving the data
31 in a timely manner on Mulchatna. Mulchatna, their
32 population got killed off to 14 bulls per 100 cows in
33 2007, they went to one large bull per 100 cows and they
34 caused reproductive failure of the Mulchatna Caribou
35 Herd falling from 200,000 to 28,000 and took nearly
36 eight years for it to recover to over the management
37 objective of 30,000. For this region, the people of
38 our lower portion of our region, they used to use
39 caribou out of Aniak and Crooked Creek and Chuathbaluk
40 and some of those villages in the southern -- because
41 the Mulchatna was migrating into the Kuskokwim
42 drainage, they've reduced that herd so small it doesn't
43 want to migrate anymore. I feel the management
44 objective is too low for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.
45 That the two bull limit is going to start to increase
46 the number of air taxis that will be attracted to that
47 area again. Guides are wanting access to that herd.

48
49 I want this Council to be aware I'm
50 real concerned about Mulchatna.

1 If they bring that bull/cow ratio down
2 low again that herd will further, it'll drop down to
3 6,000 animals, and once you get it below the predator
4 threshold on the calving ground, you can't build it
5 back. It takes decades to get that herd back again.
6

7 Our region was benefitting from that
8 high population of 200,000 animals. I feel our region
9 is not receiving the benefit of that herd. They've
10 reallocated the resource to basically affluent sports
11 hunters that can fly over from Anchorage and hunt that
12 herd, the local people have to travel a long ways from
13 Dillingham and other communities and can hardly
14 harvest, and the harvest has been low, because the herd
15 is too small and doesn't migrate.
16

17 I'm concerned about Mulchatna.
18

19 Our hare population is increasing in
20 the Brooks Range and so I'm starting to see a lot of
21 the more younger wolves around. Our wolf population
22 has been relatively low but we're going to go to a high
23 hare population in 2018 and that affects the number of
24 wolves, they can raise big litters of pups when there's
25 lots of rabbits.
26

27 And so I want the Council to be aware
28 of my concerns with our populations.
29

30 And our annual report and the
31 discussion of the Memorandum of Understanding between
32 the State and the Federal Subsistence Board, I think
33 that Tim is right, we have to look very closely at that
34 MOU on how the State is going to -- I don't want to see
35 the Federal government subservient to the State Board
36 of Fish and Board of Game because those are politically
37 appointed boards and they have a maximum use in their
38 management objective. Federal management is for
39 scientifically valid and maintaining healthy fish and
40 wildlife populations, those are almost two divergent
41 management strategies.
42

43 And so I do not -- previously this
44 Council requested in previous annual reports management
45 plans to maintain healthy bull/cow ratios and healthy
46 management objectives, those -- this Council was
47 informed that there's a Federal subsistence priority
48 and if there's a problem, well go to that, no, that's
49 not what ANILCA says. ANILCA actually is a directive
50 to the agencies that there will be healthy management

1 to maintain the least detrimental effect on the
2 subsistence users. Trying to recover a population
3 causes hardship on all the subsistence users until that
4 population recovers.

5
6 So I think we need to look closely at
7 that management plan as Tim has indicated.

8
9 So that's my Chair report.

10
11 And we've been sitting here for awhile
12 so we're going to go to a break for about -- whatever,
13 it's about 3:30 -- so are we going to go through 4:30,
14 what's our time here.

15
16 MR. STEVENSON: Until 5:30.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Until 5:00 o'clock.

19
20 And so we'll go to a 15 minute break
21 and then we're going to come back and do this draft
22 nonrural determination policy and then we're going to
23 go to the fisheries proposals, and so that's on our
24 agenda here. So we'll go for a 15 minute break and
25 we'll be back on record at about -- let's call it 3:45.

26
27 (Off record)

28
29 (On record)

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're going to bring
32 this meeting back to order.

33
34 George is going to give us an overview
35 on the draft nonrural determination policy of the
36 Federal Subsistence Board. So the RAC is being seated,
37 go ahead George.

38
39 MR. PAPPAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
40 Members of the Council. My name is George Pappas,
41 Office of Subsistence Management. I am pinch-hitting
42 today for Carl Johnson, who could not make the meeting
43 for family reasons.

44
45 I'd ask you to please turn to Page 17
46 of your manual and that contains the policy for
47 nonrural determinations for the Federal Subsistence
48 Board and I have a very brief presentation. It is
49 going to require you to take a closer look at some of
50 the steps here if you want to contribute at this point.

1 There's been a lot of questions that have come up with
2 this.

3

4 So starting on Page 17 you'll see the
5 front page and we're almost to the finish line with
6 this rural/nonrural process. In November of 2015 the
7 Final Rule changing the rural determination process was
8 published. The Final Rule states that the Federal
9 Subsistence Board determines which areas or communities
10 are nonrural. All other communities and areas are
11 therefore rural. That's a bit of a shift in policy and
12 direction.

13

14 In January of 2016 -- and you can see a
15 timeline, if you look on Page -- well, let's see here
16 -- we'll get to the process of timelines on how
17 proposals will be put forth later on. But in January
18 2016 the Board directed staff to create a nonrural
19 policy that outlines the administrative process for
20 future nonrural determinations. In July 2016 the Board
21 approved a draft nonrural policy to be presented to the
22 Regional Advisory Councils for your feedback, and that
23 policy is on Page 19, it lays out the policy with the
24 first paragraph; the second paragraph is the process.

25

26 And today we're presenting you the
27 draft of this nonrural policy. We want you to focus on
28 the process section and the policy timeline. You'll
29 see right in the middle of the page there's a process,
30 making a nonrural determination.

31

32 For proposals seeking a nonrural
33 determination for a community or area, it is the
34 proponents responsibility to provide the Board with
35 substantive, narrative evidence to support the
36 rationale of why a proposed nonrural determination
37 should be considered.

38

39 So if someone wants to come forth and
40 call McGrath, submit McGrath as a nonrural area, they
41 would have to come up with serious justification and
42 it'd be up to whoever puts the proposal in to justify
43 it to the point where the Board would make that
44 determination.

45

46 It appears to me that if somebody just
47 put in a proposal to make McGrath nonrural, that
48 wouldn't be an acceptable proposal or format because
49 that could tie up the entire process, if somebody sat
50 down with the maps of Alaska and submitted every

1 community there was, they'd actually have to have some
2 substantive information per area.

3

4 So submitting a proposal. To file a
5 request you must submit a written proposal in
6 accordance with the guidelines provided in the Federal
7 Register with the call of proposals to revise
8 subsistence taking of fish and shellfish regulations
9 and nonrural determinations. In addition to the
10 threshold requirements set forth below, all proposals
11 must contain the following baseline information.

12

13 So there's a list at the bottom of Page
14 19 going through the top of Page 20 which are the
15 threshold requirements.

16

17 The Board will accept proposals to
18 designate a community area as nonrural only if the
19 Board determines the proposal meets the following
20 threshold requirements. It's based upon information
21 previously considered by the Board, provides
22 substantive rationale for determining the nonrural
23 status of a community or area that takes into
24 consideration unique qualities of the region and
25 provides substantive information that supports the
26 provided rationale that the community or area is
27 nonrural instead of rural.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: George, does
30 that.....

31

32 MR. PAPPAS: Sir.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does this include
35 the eight criteria that they used to use, direct
36 dependence on the resource, all of those that used to
37 be in the determination process. I don't see it there,
38 have they eliminated the eight criteria.

39

40 MR. PAPPAS: It appears on Page 21, for
41 the decisionmaking process, it describes the process on
42 a case by case basis based on determination change,
43 determination information, reasonable defensible
44 nature, makes nonrural determination based on
45 comprehensive application considered presented in the
46 proposal, has been verified that the Board is accurate
47 and it appears to me that the eight criteria are not
48 involved. And I believe I have Dr. Jennifer Hardin
49 from OSM and possibly the policy coordinator Ameer
50 Howard on the line if that's the case. But at this

1 time I do not believe the eight criteria are linked to
2 this process at this time.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.

5

6 MR. PAPPAS: So you see the
7 decisionmaking process is laid out there.

8

9 And what I've been asked to look for is
10 feedback, do you see any holes in the process that we
11 need to address and all of your comments and questions
12 will be taken into the process to finalize this. And
13 one of the larger issues that I'm supposed to point out
14 here is on Page 23. It lays out a very descriptive
15 process of when proposed nonrural determination cycles
16 will come through. It looks like it'll be on even
17 years. They'll put the nonrural proposed rule in
18 January which goes out in the Federal Register and
19 advertised for comments, or asks for proposals,
20 proposals would come in, like what, April and they'll
21 be validated. If you look in the olive colored right-
22 hand column there, that lays out the steps of how this
23 process will be finalized and followed. So you can
24 predict what will happen from here on out until
25 regulations change.

26

27 And on Page 22 it lays out the general
28 process timeline which is illustrated in graph -- or
29 table format on Page 23, Page 22 has it in verbal
30 format.

31

32 And that is about what I have, Mr.
33 Chair.

34

35 We're all ears. We'd appreciate if you
36 build the record if you have information to offer or if
37 you see if there are problems with this that need to be
38 addressed, are there holes that need to be fixed now
39 instead of causing issues 10, 12, 15 years from now.
40 This is a lot of effort that's been put into this.

41

42 We also have the Regional Advisory
43 Council coordinator, Robert Larson, here, who has
44 visited this at the Southeast Council previously last
45 week and he could provide some input from what they had
46 indicated, if interested.

47

48 Thanks, Mr. Chair.

49

50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, George.

1 In the decisionmaking process it says
2 consider recommendations of the appropriate subsistence
3 Regional Advisory Council, there's no deference to the
4 Council, you know, under -- under hunting and fishing
5 proposals there's deference provided to Councils. The
6 Federal Subsistence Board weighs heavily what the
7 Council recommendations are, this says considers
8 recommendations.

9

10 MR. PAPPAS: That is -- it says
11 consideration. The following paragraph, the second
12 half; the Board will look to the Regional Advisory
13 Councils for confirmation that any relevant information
14 brought forth to the nonrural determination process
15 does accurately describes the unique characteristics of
16 the affected region, however, deference to the Councils
17 does not apply.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, I see, there
20 it is.

21

22 Okay.

23

24 Another somewhat of a concern is that
25 biannually there will be a proposal period provided for
26 any individual or organization. So we used to go
27 through these 10 year reviews, any individual or
28 organization, the Alaska Outdoor Council, or anybody
29 who doesn't particularly care for nonrural subsistence
30 or rural subsistence could be making all kinds of
31 proposals continuously and inundating the Board process
32 with proposals to eliminate communities when they got
33 lots of time to come up with all kinds of reasons why
34 they would do that.

35

36 Why did the -- you know I know this was
37 in draft language before, but didn't realize this was
38 going to be a recurring, biannual recurrence of the
39 proposal process. It would seem that it should be more
40 of a -- the rural communities and the rural individuals
41 and the Regional Advisory Council's concerns with
42 nonrural or rural status, not just any individual or
43 any organization because as we all know there are
44 plenty of organizations that don't like rural, a
45 subsistence priority. So that would be one of my
46 concerns is the any individual or any organization
47 would have -- just basically swamp the process with all
48 kinds of proposals to eliminate all kinds of various
49 communities on road systems or whatever because they
50 don't particularly -- or you know they want to

1 eliminate as much rural priority areas as they possibly
2 can.

3

4 That would be one of my comments.

5

6 I don't know that at this point can
7 this language be changed specifically.

8

9 MR. PAPPAS: That's what we're here to
10 ask, what changes you would like to see, as I
11 understand it.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

14

15 MR. PAPPAS: What I heard from you is
16 the concern about the biannual, so are you expressing
17 every four, six, eight, 10 years.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would prefer to
20 see a longer period, maybe every five years or some
21 calculation of how that will work with the Federal
22 Subsistence Board process, you know, maybe every four
23 years, make it an even number. You know, I do think
24 that things can happen, like Donlin Creek, could have a
25 huge mine with lots of people who are nonrural and this
26 Council may want to designate it as an area as
27 nonrural. But I think a biannual process could cause
28 lots of extra work for the Regional Councils if any
29 individual or organization can submit proposals, I
30 think there could be lots of proposals.

31

32 I would also like to know what
33 Southeast has met on this issue and basically their
34 line of thought. I'd like to know what other Councils
35 have done. So Robert's got -- they've already met,
36 they've already discussed this issue.

37

38 Robert.

39

40 MR. LARSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
41 name is Robert Larson, I work for the Forest Service
42 and live in Petersburg.

43

44 I have not finalized the Council's
45 letter yet to the Board regarding this subject but I --
46 and I do not know what the Kodiak/Aleutians said about
47 the nonrural so I can't speak to that, but I can speak
48 to what the Southeast Council said. And they had --
49 the letter will start nicely and say that we appreciate
50 the attention that the Board has put into this issue

1 because it's a fundamental part of who we are and the
2 whole process, but they did have two items that they
3 wished to have further discussions over and to
4 communicate their, to some degree, discomfort in.

5
6 The first was that they thought that
7 potential changes were good, however, the role of the
8 Regional Advisory Councils regarding deference, they
9 thought that the -- and I'll read what I've got here.
10 The Council feels strongly that the Federal Subsistence
11 Board should extend deference to Regional Advisory
12 Councils on issues related to nonrural and rural status
13 in the Federal Subsistence Management Program and is a
14 foundational element of the subsistence priority on
15 Federal lands, rural status is directly linked to the
16 take of fish and wildlife and, therefore, deference to
17 Councils should apply according to Sections .805(c).
18 We urge the Board to specify nonrural policy that
19 deference to the Councils be extended to matters
20 related to the rural or nonrural status of communities.

21
22 The other area which they were a little
23 uncomfortable with was in identifying the role of the
24 Regional Councils in providing information to the Board
25 for making these determinations.

26
27 The draft policy currently states the
28 Board will to the Regional Advisory Councils for
29 confirmation that any relevant information brought
30 forth during the nonrural determination process
31 accurately describes the unique characteristics of the
32 affected regions, however, deference to the Councils
33 does not apply.

34
35 So it is the opinion of the Council
36 that this language reduces the role of the Councils in
37 the nonrural determination process to simplify
38 verifying the accuracy of information provided in
39 proposals or analysis by -- what's unsaid is, by
40 others, such an approach greatly minimizes the
41 expertise of the Councils in identifying and defining
42 the unique characteristics of each region and a
43 subsistence way of life.

44
45 We urge the Board to amend the draft
46 nonrural policy to specify that this expert local
47 knowledge will play a clear role in the decisionmaking
48 process.

49
50 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And I fully agree
2 with the Southeast Regional Advisory Council on that.
3 That was my deference question and I feel that the
4 Council should have a more forward approach in the
5 determination process. I feel, like the Southeast has
6 done, that this Council should write a letter or
7 comments on this nonrural determination process.

8
9 And so I would like other Council
10 members to comment on this thing.

11
12 You have a comment there, Darrel, go
13 ahead.

14
15 MR. VENT: Yes. You know nondetermine
16 rural -- you know it could affect some rural areas but
17 just because, you know, maybe some boards are not all
18 with the subsistence I guess you'd call it, maybe
19 they're more -- not rural people, but they have
20 different areas where there's not a lot of rural there,
21 it's more representation from maybe nonrural, I'm not
22 sure, so you got to have a conflict of interest there.

23
24 Just a point from my side there.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Anybody else have
27 comments.

28
29 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ray.

32
33 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, I agree with what
34 you said that a letter should include that statement
35 too. And the other one that you made was that every
36 two years seems to be too frequently to bring these
37 things up, that there should be a longer time period
38 between considering proposals for changes.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh. I think that
41 a two year -- entering into this nonrural determination
42 process every two years will swamp the Regional
43 Councils, it'll swamp the Federal Subsistence Board
44 with additional work load.

45
46 MR. COLLINS: Uh-huh.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That really
49 communities don't change that rapidly within two years
50 to where they need to be -- that these issues need to

1 be addressed biannually. So I do feel that's -- what
2 does the Council feel about a more moderate timeframe
3 for the Federal Subsistence Board to review these
4 nonrural determinations, every four years, every six
5 years, it was a 10 year review process, which was
6 fairly long.

7

8 Did you have comments there, Robert.

9

10 MR. LARSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
11 was having a little ex parte communication with George
12 about the discussion at the Southeast Council regarding
13 thresholds for accepting proposals. And at that time
14 there was a discussion at that Council meeting and
15 there was some assurances made that the Subsistence
16 Board would not accept proposals of asperious nature,
17 they would accept proposals only that were backed up by
18 significant evidence that would result in, you know, a
19 need for a discussion regarding a change, but there has
20 to be evidence.

21

22 So the Southeast Council was satisfied
23 with that discussion regarding this need for
24 significant evidence that would necessitate an analysis
25 for a change.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Well, that
28 clarifies it a little better, makes it a little more
29 palatable to, you know, there has to be relatively
30 extreme documentation to initiate a proposal.

31

32 MR. COLLINS: If we get the change that
33 we would be shown deference in that because then we
34 could -- the Councils could determine the truth or not
35 of that information, too, before it goes forward. They
36 should have a bigger role, I think, in putting them
37 forward. Because you know the communities in your area
38 and you know what's changing out there and, therefore,
39 there should be some deference, I think give to the
40 Councils especially in the region affected.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's probably a
43 legal reason that, you know, the Councils have certain
44 statutory authorities under taking, et cetera, and it's
45 probably a Solicitor's opinion is why this deference
46 issue is not there. Because the Secretary of Interior
47 wanted deference to the Regional Councils, so it's
48 probably a legal reason, but we do want the document to
49 reflect the expertise, the word that the Southeast
50 Council used, in understanding the region's use of

1 subsistence within the region.

2

3

4 And so I feel that the role of the
5 Regional Advisory Council should be elevated to the
6 point where it's a deference, that the Federal
7 Subsistence Board looks closely at what the Regional
8 Council's comments are on any nonrural proposal. And
9 so I'd like to have that language included in our
10 letter and I do feel that we need a letter to be sent
11 on this issue, as the Southeast Council has done.

11

12

Any further comments.

13

14

(No comments)

15

16

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none -- oh,
17 George.

18

19

MR. PAPPAS: Just for clarification, I
20 may have misspoke earlier, yeah, this is the draft
21 nonrural policy discussion to develop this policy.
22 Definitely heard your comments, understand, Zach and I
23 will work towards getting a letter to the Board and
24 this will be decided upon.

25

26

The Board will decide whether or not to
27 adopt the nonrural policy at the January 2017 Board
28 meeting, so it's rapidly approaching.

29

30

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31

32

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we do need to
33 have -- yes, we do need a motion to adopt this letter
34 to include the language discussed regarding the
35 expertise of the Regional Councils and the need for a
36 biannual proposal for.....

37

38

MR. COLLINS: I so move.

39

40

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We got a motion.

41

42

MR. VENT: Second.

43

44

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Motion by Ray,
45 seconded by Darrel.

46

47

Further discussion on that letter that
48 needs to be transmitted to the Federal Subsistence
49 Board on the deliberation of the draft nonrural
50 determination policy.

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any further
4 discussion.

5

6

Darrel.

7

8

9 MR. VENT: Just one thing, we're here
10 in the Western Interior and we have a lot of rural
11 representation there, but you go like in the Eastern,
12 there's more representation from like the Fairbanks
13 area, so, you know, there's a difference between rural
14 and nonrural, so maybe something to note that, you
15 know, it's not all rural representation.

15

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, that is the
18 oddity of some of the Regional Advisory Councils that
19 they have fairly significant nonrural representation on
20 their Council. But each Council would deal with their
21 region independently, I feel.

21

22

Any further comment.

23

24

Zach.

25

26

27 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
28 Just for clarification, the motion would address, as I
29 understand it, two items to be reflected in a letter to
30 the Board, if I'm not mistaken.

30

31

32 One would be the deference to the
33 Councils for their expertise with regards to nonrural
34 determination.

34

35

36 Secondly, the need for a review
37 process, and I understand there was some concern about
38 perhaps lengthening that review, was that biannually,
39 or what is the timeframe the RAC is requesting.

39

40

Thank you.

41

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The discussion
44 revolved around the need to have a biannual proposal
45 for nonrural determination.

45

46

47 The deference is -- we're not
48 requesting deference because I do feel there's probably
49 a legal reason, what we're requesting is that the role
50 of the Regional Advisory Councils are elevated to the
51 Board process, to where they look heavily to the

1 expertise of the affected Regional Council regarding a
2 nonrural proposal. And you can review our transcript
3 on that, this is all transcribed.

4

5 MR. STEVENSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any further
8 comment.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 MR. VENT: Call for question.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called.
15 Those in favor of transmitting this letter on draft
16 nonrural determination policy to the Federal
17 Subsistence Board signify by saying aye.

18

19 IN UNISON: Aye.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed, same
22 sign.

23

24 (No opposing votes)

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Motion carries.

27

28 So we've covered that issue.

29

30 So we're going to move into fisheries
31 proposals. Scott, state your name for the record and
32 go right ahead.

33

34 MR. AYERS: Mr. Chair. Members of the
35 Council. My name is Scott Ayers and I'm a fisheries
36 biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management in
37 Anchorage.

38

39 We have five fisheries proposal
40 analysis to discuss today that will affect the Western
41 Interior region. I'll be presenting numbers 1, 2 and 5
42 and George will present 3 and 4. For you to kind of --
43 for some background, this is the first Council to hear
44 these presentations for the affected regions so we
45 don't have feedback yet on how the other Advisory
46 Councils have voted on these.

47

48 I'll now be presenting Fisheries
49 Proposal FP17-01, which you can find on Page 35 of your
50 books.

1 Proposal FP17-01 submitted by the
2 Eastern Interior Council requests a new regulation be
3 made for subdistrict 5D to allow harvest of chinook
4 salmon during Federally-recognized fisheries closures
5 once the mid-range of the Canadian interim management
6 escapement goal and the total allowable catch goal are
7 projected to be achieved in the Yukon River at the
8 Eagle sonar site.

9
10 If FP17-01 were adopted Federally-
11 qualified subsistence users would be allowed to harvest
12 salmon when the Federal in-season manager projects that
13 the mid-range of the Canadian interim management
14 escapement goal and the total allowable catch goal be
15 achieved.

16
17 The harvest in subdistrict 5D is
18 expected to be very low and will not substantially
19 impact the population of either chinook salmon or chum
20 salmon.

21
22 OSM's preliminary conclusion is to
23 support Proposal FP17-01 with modification to change
24 the wording in the proposed regulation from projected
25 to be achieved to achieved, and to specify that the
26 Federal in-season manager is the person to declare when
27 the IMEG and TAC are achieved.

28
29 Adoption of this proposal with
30 modification could result in additional harvest
31 opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users
32 in subdistrict 5D in times of chinook salmon
33 conservation. Estimates of in-season run strength
34 usually have a high degree of uncertainty so it would
35 be prudent to wait until the Eagle sonar counts achieve
36 the mid-range of the Canadian interim management
37 escapement goal and total allowable catch before
38 lifting the closure to Federally-qualified subsistence
39 users.

40
41 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any Council comments
44 on the proposal.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's on the
49 proposal.
50

1 MR. GERVAIS: I have a question.
2
3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.
4
5 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 Scott, what is the interim management escapement goal?
7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Fred.
9
10 MR. BUE: The interim management
11 escapement goal is set by the US/Canada Panel meeting,
12 annually it's reupdated and that's the agreement of
13 what is actual Canadian escapement into Canada. And so
14 this year or the last few years it's been 42,500 to
15 55,000 chinook salmon. On top of that they have a TAC,
16 total allowable catch, which is harvest share that
17 we've agreed to, both US and Canada at the panel
18 meeting, has agreed to this TAC level and that is
19 written into the Treaty, and so that's a percentage of
20 the total run.
21
22 MR. GERVAIS: The TAC is the US
23 harvest?
24
25 MR. BUE: Well, it's both. I mean 100
26 percent -- so it's divided, Canada gets whatever the
27 percentage is, it's around 26 percent and the US gets
28 the balance, 74 percent.
29
30 MR. GERVAIS: Does this proposal scare
31 you, Fred.
32
33 MR. BUE: I think, the proposal
34 projected, is not so bad. The recommendation to make a
35 firm proposal stating achieved is difficult for us
36 because we don't know the actual numbers like we just
37 talked about, the subsistence harvest, we don't know
38 what our harvest has already been in-season, so we're
39 not even going to know it until December, maybe, so how
40 can you base a regulation on something that we don't
41 have information for.
42
43 So that needs to be calculated and
44 that's worked out post-season and it's reviewed and we
45 try to modify it.
46
47 The other thing that also scares me, I
48 guess, if you're speaking of being scared or worried,
49 Mr. Chairman, is.....
50

1 MR. GERVAIS: Concerned.

2

3 MR. BUE: Concerned. Is that we're
4 putting into regulation a fixed number that relies on a
5 State assessment project and funding for that can come
6 and go and we have no idea how that works or how that
7 may change. The escapements are reevaluated or the
8 objectives are reassessed every year so it's difficult
9 for me to put something into a regulation that could be
10 changed by the State or some other group.

11

12 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those are very
15 important issues. And so I would have concern that the
16 State would pull funding for a very expensive sonar
17 project and put the -- and especially the in-season
18 manager completely into the dark by regulation. So I'
19 not sure that -- you basically have discretionary
20 authority to do this right now with the tools you have
21 right now and this regulation is to have it
22 specifically stated would put more restraints on the
23 in-season manager, and so I would have concerns about
24 this proposal because of the economic uncertainty of
25 the State of Alaska right now.

26

27 Personally I see where Eastern's coming
28 from but they're making a proposal without the
29 forethought of the funding for that Eagle, you know,
30 they might want to go to video wheel or some other
31 method that's cheaper to try and get escapement
32 projection into Canada would be a completely different
33 management tool system that the in-season manager might
34 not have as much confidence in. I don't -- I think
35 that the in-season manager can actually accommodate
36 what this proposal is wanting with the tools that he
37 has already.

38

39 I have kind of a bad feeling about
40 putting this into regulation, especially for the very
41 important stocks that the lower river would have been
42 protecting to assure that those Canadian goals are met.

43

44 But I'm kind of getting out of sequence
45 here, as Zach's giving me my -- so we're in
46 deliberation and I don't want to go there yet.

47

48 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair.

49

50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead, Tim, a

1 question on the proposal.

2

3 MR. GERVAIS: Fred, has it been a
4 situation where this IMEG and TAC have been met and you
5 have declined to allow them to harvest on the closure.

6

7 MR. BUE: Mr. Chair. Yes, in hindsight
8 and that's the uncertainty of management, is the
9 uncertainty in our assessment. I think our mandate is
10 to allow harvest if we think we have some available and
11 so we try to allow as much as we think we can. We're
12 not trying to put extra fish on to the spawning
13 grounds. The reason we do that is because we're not
14 confident in our numbers and we're not sure what -- we
15 don't want to fail is more important than getting a few
16 extra fish across the border and that's been our fear
17 and that's what's been driving our conservation
18 management the last few years, it's not that we just
19 want to put extra fish up there. We want people to
20 harvest and we're mandated to provide harvest
21 opportunity if there is a surplus available.

22

23 So that's why I speak to projection.
24 Our management is based on projection. We don't know
25 what's going to be there until it crosses the border
26 and that's too late for the fishermen.

27

28 5D, it takes approximately 10 days to
29 get from the lower 5D Stevens Village up to the border.
30 The middle 50 percent of the run is 10 days long. And
31 so that main segment of the run is already through by
32 the time we would know what the mid-point of the run is
33 at the border so it is too late for many of the
34 fishermen in 5D. I can see coming out of the Yukon
35 Flats, some of those people feel like they've missed
36 opportunities that they wish they would have had and I
37 appreciate that and I do feel bad, we want to give them
38 more opportunity and so we are working on other things,
39 like letting them fish on the tricklers and stuff and
40 as we gain confidence in our run returning, we're
41 trying to provide more opportunity.

42

43 I think that's, for the most part, we
44 are trying to harvest what we can and feel comfortable
45 based on our projections.

46

47 Mr. Chair.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Robert.

50

1 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2

3 I read this in -- I really -- I don't
4 have any issues with this, in fact, I even have -- I
5 would support this here without, say support this with
6 restrictions that our Federal biologists take a look at
7 this and if it's going to work, if it's not going to
8 work I -- I would like to go ahead and say, yeah, we --
9 just go ahead and pass this and we'll use it with
10 biologists restrictions. I mean it's not going to hurt
11 anything, it's going to be up to the biologists if they
12 want to open it or close it but it's going to be in
13 place as a tool for these people, instead of waiting
14 for next year to do another proposal, the year after do
15 another proposal. I mean these people spend a lot of
16 time, they already got money tied up into this.

17

18 That's my point of view.

19

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Robert.

23

24 So we're on the introduction of the
25 proposal. They want the Council basically to
26 understand the proposal. Then we have to go through
27 report -- there's tribal consultation and so the OSM
28 contacted tribes and did we get any comments on this
29 proposal from tribes.

30

31 Zach.

32

33 MR. STEVENSON: I can find out for you,
34 Mr. Chair, get you that information, I don't have it in
35 front of me at the moment.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: For every proposal
38 we have to have a report, there was a -- supposedly
39 there was a teleconference with OSM, with various
40 tribes on each one of these proposals, so the tribal
41 liaison, which is Orville Lind, should be on the call
42 for these proposals, so we want to get him on the
43 phone. He's not in the office right now, it is 4:30
44 but we want him here for tomorrow, at least, because we
45 need to know what the tribal consultations actually
46 said.

47

48 Go ahead, Robert.

49

50 MR. WALKER: I mean, you know, I forgot

1 to mention here, too, when you look at the comments
2 there is written public comment, there's none, so I
3 mean nobody's opposing it. There is no written
4 opposing or supporting it so it's something we should
5 take a look at.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Page 36, and so
8 we'll get to that under Section 5 of our review. So
9 there's -- Page 36, I don't see any comments. So
10 anyways -- that's written public comments, there's a
11 tribal consultation process and so the tribes, each
12 tribe along the Yukon River was supposed to be called
13 and they're supposed to be informed of these proposals
14 and then they're supposed to be a period of time where
15 they actually are on a teleconference and I would like
16 to know what those tribes said. And so that's what the
17 tribal consultation process is about. So we do need to
18 have -- Orville Lind would be in charge of that so he
19 needs to be on the phone at some point.

20

21 George.

22

23 MR. PAPPAS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.
24 I was just informed online that the tribal consultation
25 has not taken place on these proposals yet. This is an
26 opportunity for representation of tribal organizations
27 to provide input on these proposals at the RAC meeting
28 to assist you in the process, but at this time tribal
29 consultation has not occurred.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Robert.

32

33 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
34 know we have TCC delegation here also, maybe they would
35 like to speak on this, you know, give them a chance,
36 Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, we're coming to
39 them right now. And so we're -- that's under agency
40 comments, we do have Native and tribal organizations
41 behind the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and
42 Federal agencies. So since the tribes have not been
43 consulted, for some reason, since the RACs are meeting,
44 they should have been consulted before this Regional
45 Council meeting had occurred, and so that's -- you
46 know, there was -- in the Council comments, Robert was
47 talking about this tribal consultation problem, so
48 we're identifying more and more of an issue with tribal
49 consultation on proposals.

50

1 I think -- I've stated on the record
2 before, it's too big a job for one Native liaison to
3 cover. I feel that each agency has subsistence
4 coordinators, he has to work with the subsistence
5 coordinators for Koyukuk/Nowitna, YK-Delta and various
6 to get the word out, and each one of those coordinators
7 should be going over these proposals with the
8 respective villages, whether they're BLM, Park Service,
9 Fish and Wildlife. This is the way this tribal
10 consultation has to work, because, look, it's not
11 working right now. It's too big a job for one guy.
12 You can't have 228 communities stuck in one guy's
13 office. He can't consult with that many people. So we
14 need to change this tribal consul.....

15
16 MR. WALKER: Also, Jack, we don't even
17 have an anthropologist here do we.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: They're on the
20 phone. So they're on the phone.

21
22 MR. WALKER: Oh, okay.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So anyway we'll make
25 note that this tribal consultation did not occur for
26 these proposals so I'm a little concerned about that,
27 whether the ANCSA Corporations were -- Doyon would be
28 the primary for our region, whether they were
29 consulted. We do have TCC here and I'm going to ask
30 them here in a second.

31
32 You got a comment there, Tim.

33
34 MR. GERVAIS: Well, if we don't have
35 the tribal consultation doesn't it invalidate us taking
36 action.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, no, no we are
39 just highlighting the issue of tribal consultation is
40 being -- has been ineffective. And we're under a
41 Secretary of Interior mandate for tribal consultation,
42 and so we need to address this issue. And so this ball
43 has been being dropped in different -- for wildlife
44 proposals, fishery proposals, we need to have this --
45 OSM needs to address this issue, look to our minutes,
46 we've developed a protocol for the Native liaison to
47 work with the subsistence coordinators to work with the
48 tribes to get the information back. We have a
49 subsistence coordinator right there, we got one right
50 there, we got subsistence coordinators and every

1 agency, every conservation unit has a subsistence
2 coordinator, they need to be used because we're not
3 getting the information flow like -- and that's -- I
4 want to see that information. I think the tribes want
5 to see that information. And we need to have this
6 dialogue.

7

8 You have a comment on the phone there.

9

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did somebody have a
14 comment on the phone.

15

16 REPORTER: The moment was passed.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The moment was
19 passed, okay.

20

21 MS. PELKOLA: Mr. Chair.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, Jenny.

24

25 MS. PELKOLA: Yeah, I agree with you
26 Jack, that there needs to be consultation of the --
27 with the tribe because if they call the tribal
28 administrator, that person may not know how to reply
29 but if we had plenty of time to -- it was brought to us
30 we could talk about it our meetings, you know, because
31 we have a meeting -- all the tribes have a meeting once
32 a month and anybody is welcome and that would be -- you
33 know, it would be helpful to us and we'd be able to act
34 on it.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Jenny, I
37 appreciate that.

38

39 So we have the proposal, now I want to
40 know do we have any Alaska Department of Fish and Game
41 Staff still on the phone.

42

43 MS. WESSEL: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is
44 Maria Wessel. I'm the Federal subsistence liaison for
45 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, go ahead.

48

49 MS. WESSEL: Thank you. We have the
50 following comments regarding this proposal.

1 Fishery Proposal FP17-01 submitted by
2 the Eastern Interior RAC would allow the harvest of
3 salmon in subdistrict 5D once the mid-range of the
4 Canadian interim management escapement goal and the
5 total allowable catch goal for chinook salmon are
6 projected to be achieved in the Yukon River at the
7 Eagle sonar site.

8
9 The State understands that people in
10 Y5D can have a difficult time harvesting salmon due to
11 the braided nature of the river and high water events.
12 Also being the last district on the river with mostly
13 Canadian origin chinook salmon has led to closures in
14 this region in the past. The State has been
15 endeavoring to provide additional opportunity for Y5D
16 the past couple of years such as fishing on the early
17 fish to try to get chinook salmon into the community
18 ahead of the first pulse closure.

19
20 We would like to work with people in
21 the region but have concerns that formalizing this in
22 regulation could decrease flexibility in management.
23 Additionally, the modified language suggested by the
24 OSM, which would replace the words, are projected to be
25 achieved with the words are achieved, creates two
26 different scenarios. To be achieved would be a post-
27 season estimate and would not work for in-season
28 management. For example, in 2015 under this proposal
29 more harvest could have been supported with a post-
30 season estimate of the achieved TAC but in-season the
31 projection was lower and management was restricted with
32 almost no directed chinook subsistence opportunity, as
33 a result of the projections of Y1 through 5.

34
35 Should this proposal be adopted the
36 area manager suggested the following substitute
37 language: In subdistrict 5D salmon may be taken for
38 subsistence use once the mid-point of the interim
39 management escapement goal and the Canadian harvest
40 share are projected to be achieved, which seems to be
41 the original intent of the proposed language.

42
43 We do have area Staff listening in who
44 should be able to answer specific questions the Council
45 may have about the State's comments and management of
46 salmon.

47
48 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Any

1 comments on the State's position.

2

3 Darrel.

4

5 MR. VENT: Just something that we're
6 kind of overlooking, you know, the survival of these
7 salmon here, we're trying to work with the salmon just
8 like, you know, that Jack was talking about caribou
9 where, you know, you're already trying to put something
10 place when we're not sure if everything is going to
11 work yet so, you know, I'm just putting that out there.
12 Because we don't know the survival rate of the salmon
13 that's coming after going up there and, you know,
14 laying the eggs, we're not sure of anything yet.

15

16 So that's my point of what I'm looking
17 at there.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Darrel.

20

21 Any other comments on the State's
22 position.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Federal agency
27 position. US Fish and Wildlife has stated their
28 position -- OS -- go ahead, Scott.

29

30 MR. AYERS: It's been stated, sir.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So then we're
33 down to Native tribal, has TCC discussed these
34 proposals. Nicole, do you want to come to the mic.

35

36 MS. FARNHAM: TCC, I think, would agree
37 with this proposal -- oh, Nicole Farnham with the
38 Tanana Chiefs.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Has TCC formally
41 discussed these proposals with Orville Huntington, the
42 director.

43

44 MS. FARNHAM: Not to my knowledge, we
45 have not seen these until about a week ago.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So I would
48 suggest that you give Orville a call this evening and
49 just kind of feel him out, what TCC's position would be
50 on these proposals, I would like to have a more defined

1 answer from TCC if you could.

2

3 MS. FARNHAM: Yes. Would you like me
4 to have him call in tomorrow if I can get a hold of
5 him.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If he would like to
8 call in or convey his position as Director of Wildlife
9 and Parks, his position on the various proposals, if
10 he's reviewed them, if you could.

11

12 MS. FARNHAM: Yes.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If you could.

15

16 MS. FARNHAM: Yep.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'd appreciate that,
19 thank you.

20

21 And the InterAgency Staff Committee
22 comments. Was there an InterAgency Staff Committee on
23 these proposals.

24

25 Glenn.

26

27 MR. CHEN: We have no comments.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No comments from the
30 InterAgency Staff Committee.

31

32 Advisory Committee's, there's no other
33 Regional Council that's met on this proposal yet.

34

35 The Fish and Game Advisory Committees,
36 is Ken Chase still on the line or any other Advisory
37 Committees, have they met on these proposals.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Hearing none. Of
42 course the Subsistence Resource Commissions have not
43 met on this.

44

45 MR. COLLINS: No.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There is no -- on
48 Item 5, summary of written public comments. There are
49 no public comments, written, on this proposal.

50

1 And I don't see anybody here that would
2 like to make public testimony, we're in McGrath on the
3 Kuskokwim River.

4
5 Regional Advisory Council
6 recommendations. We need a motion to adopt the
7 proposal for discussion.

8
9

10 (No comments)

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do I have a motion
13 to adopt.

14

15 MR. STEVENSON: 17-02 correct.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The first.....

18

19 MR. WALKER: I'll move, Jack.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:FP17-01.

22

23 MS. PELKOLA: Second.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Motion Robert,
26 second by Jenny. And so is there a conservation
27 concern, will the recommendation address the concern.
28 Well, there is a conservation concern for sure on the
29 chinook salmon.

30

31 And so is there language that would
32 make you feel more comfortable, Fred, the State was
33 throwing out some language but I couldn't hear exactly
34 what she was saying that would make it, if in
35 regulation, would it be more flexible as amended
36 language.

37

38 MR. BUE: To tell you the truth I
39 haven't worked through the language specifically, but,
40 again, my -- what my sense or what I -- the way we
41 manage is based on projections and so rather than the
42 firm word of achieved specified, projection would be
43 better. My thought is that, you know, if you wait
44 until you achieve something then it's after the fact
45 and you've lost that opportunity so, in fact, they may
46 actually be losing an opportunity whereas if we think
47 we're going to make the goal, we're on track, then we
48 can allow some harvest.

49

50 Also another element is that I wasn't

1 certain if they were recommending to not harvest below
2 the mid-point, and the way you read it, I think they're
3 saying they want to make sure they harvest when they're
4 at the mid-point or above, but currently based on the
5 projection and based on our management, we are allowed
6 to have some harvest down to the low end of the
7 escapement goal, depending on the situation. And so
8 this would -- could potentially even make it more
9 strict management -- or managing towards the higher
10 end. And the reason that comes to mind is that the --
11 in Canada, their salmon subcommittee, their management
12 plan the last two years, well, actually this year for
13 sure, I can't remember exactly last year, but their
14 management plan said that they were not going to
15 harvest below the mid-point of their escapement goal
16 and that was written into their management plan. And
17 so that's where I'm thinking this way, typically we
18 manage so you can harvest anywhere in that escapement
19 goal, they're managing as a conservation measure to
20 manage so that they don't go below the mid-point in the
21 goal.

22

23 Mr. Chairman.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you feel if the
26 regulation passed, even when projected to be achieved
27 as the proposal is stated, that you would be compelled
28 to harvest above the mid-point, you would be straight-
29 jacketed into harvesting after the mid-point is
30 achieved -- projected to be achieved.

31

32 MR. BUE: I don't think so. I think
33 the projected takes into account how much confidence we
34 have in our assessment.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

37

38 MR. BUE: From -- even before any fish
39 come into the river we're projecting and we're
40 projecting all the way along the river, we're updating
41 our projections everyday, you know, from May 25th or
42 something all the way through until mid-July and so
43 that projection is changing. And I think what they're
44 -- we want to use the best scientific information we
45 have in the run and that's based on our projection and
46 confidence that we have.

47

48 So depending on the situation, if we
49 have high water and we have some reason to think that
50 the assessment is operating up as good as it has in

1 other years or we have questions about the assessment,
2 it may give us a number but we have some maybe
3 disqualifiers or something, in the back of our mind we
4 hedge things based on feedback we get from fishermen,
5 from the weather, a lot of things, and so it is kind of
6 a grey area.

7

8 Mr. Chairman.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Fred.
11 That makes a lot of difference in my deliberation.

12

13 Go ahead, Tim.

14

15 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair. Due to the
16 complex or ambiguous nature of how these triggers are
17 going to be achieved, can we ask Fred to explain how
18 this -- if this proposal was in place during this
19 season, how it would have changed his management
20 openings.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

23

24 Can you review that scenario.

25

26 MR. BUE: Well, there's -- I guess I'm
27 not certain which scenario we're talking about, the OSM
28 recommendation or the proposal recommendation.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right now the
31 proposal, as written, is on the table. We have not
32 actually adopted the amended language into the motion.
33 So right now we're actually deliberating the proposal
34 as the proponents have stated.

35

36 Go ahead.

37

38 MR. BUE: Okay. So with the way we put
39 it into practice is that, yeah, we watch the fish come
40 into the river and it takes a good three weeks for them
41 to get up into the Yukon Flats. In that timeframe we
42 have genetic information that's coming through and it's
43 characterizing the strength of the pulses and so we
44 kind of have an idea which pulse is going to which
45 portion of the river and so we have a feeling of when
46 we should expect the Canadian run at the border to
47 start ramping up. So when we start getting those fish
48 at the border, did they arrive there on time as we
49 expected, is there a big push of fish, are they ramping
50 up like we would expect and so that can be well before

1 the mid-point in the run that we're judging, the lower
2 river assessment, is that making sense with what we're
3 seeing at the border. We also have to take into
4 account how much harvest we've had in between that area
5 and so in the back of our minds we're figuring this out
6 and it's not a clear-cut thing. But we are basing our
7 confidence in management, we allow some harvest and as
8 we become more confident, we either cut back or
9 liberalize based on what we're seeing crossing the
10 border.

11
12 So we start out with a plan and we keep
13 on modifying it as we get confirmation at the border,
14 how the run is coming through and then we see what's at
15 the border, but we also have an idea, is there another
16 pulse or two that we're expecting at the border and so
17 we're projecting all along.

18
19 MR. GERVAIS: Right. But it seems to
20 me like the intent of the proposal that the Eastern
21 Interior feels there's foregone harvest getting across
22 the border, and my question is if this proposal was in
23 place for a scenario that occurred exactly this year,
24 would that have -- if we had a TransBoundary escapement
25 of over 70,000 would this proposal have allowed the
26 Yukon Flats, or 5Delta -- I'm sorry, what district is
27 it.

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: 5D.

30
31 MR. GERVAIS: 5Delta, yeah. Would they
32 have gotten an extra 15 or 20,000 kings out of this.

33
34 MR. BUE: Mr. Chairman, no, I don't
35 think so. I think we allow them to harvest as much as
36 we think we have surplus for. As we go we become more
37 confident. But picking it apart is mostly a post-
38 season thing. It's down to those very precise numbers
39 and so, yeah, if it's -- it's how much risk are you
40 willing to take is the balance. So we haven't -- our
41 assessment is not perfect, even Eagle sonar is not
42 perfect, we still wait -- you know, there is still some
43 assessment that we see where the fish get to the fish
44 ladder and to the other sonar projects in Canada is
45 when we actually figure out the actual escapement, does
46 that make sense with Eagle, as a second thought, and
47 then also what their aboriginal or subsistence harvest
48 is in Canada feeds into their total allowable catch,
49 what was harvested there and same with our Alaska
50 subsistence harvest.

1 Like I say, people on the Yukon -- on
2 the Alaska side think their harvest was better, but we
3 don't know, was it 5,000 more than last year or 20,000
4 more than last year. It's still really difficult to
5 tell that proportionment and so as much as we would
6 like precision, we don't have as much precision as I
7 think this proposal seeks.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Darrel's got a
10 question.

11

12 MR. VENT: The thing I'm kind of
13 looking at is kind of vague on is that, you know,
14 you're talking about pulses, we're trying to protect
15 certain pulses in order for the fish to make it up
16 there. And where is this fish coming out of, is it on
17 the first, second or third pulse or do we have any kind
18 of definition of what's going on with this, subsistence
19 use.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Fred.

22

23 MR. BUE: Well, subsistence uses
24 dependent on management, the pulse is dependent on how
25 the fish come back. Generally we figure the earliest
26 fish are going the farthest up river and so generally
27 the earlier fish are bound for Canada and then the
28 later fish are bound for other places with the Tanana
29 probably the last -- you know, comes in a little bit
30 later along with the lower Yukon. But they're not
31 completely one pulse goes to one place and one goes to
32 another, it's mixtures and so it tends to be -- the
33 larger proportion of Canadian fish come early in the
34 front half of the run and then the other half of the
35 run, there's fewer Canadian fish.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So if harvest was to
38 occur on the second pulse you'd be harvesting in the
39 optimum for that 5D portion because you wouldn't be
40 harvesting in the tail end of the run where you got a
41 high percentage of females, you'd have more higher male
42 ratios, so it'd be actually beneficial to harvest at
43 the mid-point in the second pulse.

44

45 MR. BUE: I think so. I think just
46 generally we think of spreading the harvest out across
47 the whole run because nothing is perfect. We do think
48 that more males tend to run earlier, but there are
49 definitely males towards the later part of the run and
50 females are -- a few of them are in the front but

1 generally spreading the harvest out as much as can is
2 probably -- is the best we could do.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So as the proposal
5 is written you would have the ability to harvest in the
6 first pulse, tail of the first pulse.

7

8 My concern is that you're going to be
9 straight-jacketed and not being able to spread your
10 harvest out.

11

12 MR. BUE: Mr. Chairman. I guess
13 there's one other element, yes, we would have -- I
14 think based on projection we do have some flexibility
15 there because we're actively assessing the run.

16

17 The other element is not all of 5D is
18 just waters adjacent to Federal management units,
19 there's State of Alaska concerns and so Circle and
20 Eagle are fishing in State waters and so some of this
21 -- it's going to be differential on who gets to fish
22 when and such because if we're differing from the State
23 then we would have to take a special action, which may
24 disqualify some people from fishing, participating and
25 , you know, it could be -- could be a little bit tough
26 to sort out, I think.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So any other --
29 we're deliberating the proposal.

30

31 The questions on this sheet here, is
32 there a conservation concern. Yes, we do have
33 conservation concerns for the chinook.

34

35 Is the recommendation supported by
36 substantial evidence, such as biological and
37 traditional, ecological knowledge. Yes, there's
38 considerable ecological knowledge, traditional
39 knowledge incorporated into this proposal about run
40 timing in 5D.

41

42 Will the recommendation be beneficial
43 or detrimental to subsistence needs and users. It'll
44 be beneficial to some subsistence users because of the
45 State and Federal waters. It will be -- whether it'll
46 be beneficial biological to the fish, that's a
47 different question. But as written, I feel that as
48 written it gives the manager more leeway.

49

50 Will the recommendation unnecessarily

1 restrict other uses and it could, if there was
2 liberalization of the Federal waters there may need to
3 be restrictions for the State waters for Circle and
4 Eagle. And so I don't know that Eastern Interior
5 calculated that one. So that might restrict Circle and
6 Eagle to a higher degree than other users associated
7 with Federal waters.

8

9 But I would hope that the Federal in-
10 season manager would also consider those other
11 communities as rural residents and their harvest
12 accommodations so that's -- so you would be able to
13 calculate in time or gear types accommodating other
14 users, rural users on State waters.

15

16 That's kind of a tough one.

17

18 Fred.

19

20 MR. BUE: It would be difficult
21 separating them out. I think it's easier to think
22 about them all as one group and that's what we normally
23 do. Myself works with the State managers throughout
24 the season and our -- that's what we try to do,
25 coordinate, because it's not just here, it's the entire
26 drainage and so it's really important if we think of
27 everybody as one user group. They all have a C&T for
28 these fish, you know, if you're in Circle or Eagle, but
29 you'd have to go to the Federal management unit, move
30 your location of harvest to those places.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the most likely
33 scenario you would have a concurrent opening with State
34 and Federal, so that gives me more confidence also.

35

36 Any further discussion on the proposal.

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: At this point I'm in
41 favor of the proposal as written as projected to be
42 achieved.

43

44 And so further discussion.

45

46 Tim.

47

48 MR. GERVAIS: I will back it so long as
49 it doesn't limit the Federal manager from allowing
50 harvest when it's below the mid-range and the way I

1 read it, it doesn't, but I'm just asking around, if
2 somebody feels that it sets a -- that the mid-range has
3 to be achieved.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: As Fred stated the
6 projected to be achieved gives him the confi -- all the
7 managers the confidence to have an opening, even to
8 start with, and so I think that the proposal as written
9 gives the manager more flexibility.

10

11 Is that my correct interpretation,
12 Fred.

13

14 MR. BUE: Again, I'm not a lawyer and I
15 assume the Federal Subsistence Board will -- I'm the
16 manager carrying out the wishes of the Federal
17 Subsistence Board and so this whole process would go
18 through an evolution, continues, and then they would
19 give me direction on how to interpret the language here
20 and so I think as it is, my intent would allow some
21 harvest as we go along and be sure that we allow some
22 harvest once we're confident in the mid-point.

23

24 But I don't know where we'll end up
25 after we talk to all the RACs.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If the proposal is
28 adopted by the Western Interior Regional Advisory
29 Council, I would like our justification to reflect that
30 our intention is for the Federal in-season manager to
31 be able to harvest throughout the run, and especially
32 after the mid-point of the run, as the proposal states.

33

34 So we want to be clear on the record,
35 and that justification is looked at, whoever represents
36 the Council, that justification to the Federal
37 Subsistence Board is looked at very closely by the
38 Federal Subsistence Board during the meeting.

39

40 So I want that to be clear on the
41 record, that we do not want to constrain the in-season
42 manager, to have some harvest before the mid-point, but
43 we want to also endorse the proposal to harvest
44 especially after the mid-point is projected to be
45 achieved.

46

47 Robert.

48

49 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
50 know I really believe that this would be something

1 beneficial for the people, and also the in-season
2 managers could use the windows for this too, you know,
3 like whatever they set they're going to have to follow
4 and I really believe this is a procedure to use, the
5 windows, because you can't fight the windows, because
6 that's why -- that's one of the things I never wanted
7 to get rid of was the windows for our fisheries because
8 it's there, set in stone, and it is a really working
9 tool for the biologists and area managers or the people
10 who run the fisheries, for the State and the Federal
11 so, yeah, and I'm going to call the question, too,
12 also, Mr. Chair.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Question's called on
15 the proposal as written with the language projected to
16 be achieved, those in favor of Proposal FP17.....

17

18 MR. WALKER: Mr. Chair. When I made
19 the motion, did I say that it would be at the
20 discretion of the in-season management.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, you made a
23 motion to adopt Proposal FP17-01 and that would be --
24 and that motion would be as -- because you did not
25 amend the language.....

26

27 MR. WALKER: No, no, I didn't want to.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Then it's as
30 written. So that's -- to change the language we would
31 have had to amend the motion but that would have been
32 during the discussion process, and so we're just
33 strictly dealing with the proposal as written by the
34 Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council.

35

36 So that's clear to the Council.

37

38 (Councils nods affirmatively)

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those in favor of
41 the proposal as written signify by saying aye.

42

43 IN UNISON: Aye.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed, same
46 sign.

47

48 (No opposing votes)

49

50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And we're at 5:00

1 o'clock, which we're right on time to recess for the
2 day and so we're going to start promptly at 9:00
3 o'clock in the morning and we got to finish these
4 proposals and a whole bunch of other business. So I
5 appreciate the Council being here -- you got a final
6 comment, Zach, for the day.

7

8 MR. STEVENSON: Just a quick
9 housekeeping item. For RAC members, I have your per
10 diem checks, if you could see me before dinner I'll get
11 those to each of you.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're recessing
16 for today, until 9:00 a.m., tomorrow morning.

17

18 Oh, dinner at Ray's at 6:00 o'clock.
19 Dinner at Ray Collins place is at 6:00 o'clock.

20

21 (Off record)

22

23 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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 2 through 152 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I taken electronically on the 11th day of October 2016 at McGrath, 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 18th day of November 2016.

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