

0111

1 YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE  
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

3  
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5  
6 VOLUME II

7  
8  
9 Gordon Watson Conference Room  
10 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
11 Anchorage, Alaska  
12 October 11, 2023  
13 9:07 a.m.  
14  
15  
16

17 MEMBERS PRESENT:

18  
19 Raymond Oney, Chairman  
20 Wassilly Alexie  
21 John Andrew  
22 Jacqueline Cleveland  
23 Norma Evan  
24 Robert Hoffman  
25 James Landlord  
26 Walter Morgan  
27 Henry Parks  
28 Phillip Peter  
29 Alissa Nadine Rogers  
30 Richard Slats  
31  
32  
33

34 Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid  
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41 Recorded and transcribed by:

42  
43 Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC  
44 329 F Street, Suite 222  
45 Anchorage, AK 99501  
46 907-227-5312/sahile@gci.net  
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 10/11/2023)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for coming to our second day of our YKRAC meeting. I'll go ahead and call the meeting back to order. The time now is 9:07 a.m. Before we get started I'd like to have our Secretary do a roll call. And then if there's any housekeeping items that need to be announced we'll go ahead and do that and do a recap of what we did yesterday. Brooke will do that. So at this time I'll go ahead and ask our Secretary to do a roll call to see who all's present.

Thank you.

MR. SLATS: Roll call for day of the Regional Advisory Council. Those present say aye.

Henry Parks.

MR. PARKS: Aye.

MR. SLATS: Norma T. Evan.

MS. EVAN: Aye.

MR. SLATS: John W. Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Here.

MR. SLATS: Walter A. Morgan, Sr.

MR. MORGAN: Here.

MR. SLATS: Jacqueline K. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Here.

MR. SLATS: James C. Landlord.

MR. LANDLORD: Here.

MR. SLATS: Alissa Nadine Rogers.

(No comments)

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1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa will be joining  
2 us shortly and we can let the record know.....

3  
4 MR. SLATS: Oh, okay.

5  
6 MS. McDAVID: .....when she arrives.

7  
8 MR. SLATS: Okay.

9  
10 MS. McDAVID: Thanks.

11  
12 MR. SLATS: Thank you. Philip K.

13 Peter, Sr.

14  
15 MR. PETER: Here.

16  
17 MR. SLATS: Wassilly B. Alexie.

18  
19 MR. ALEXIE: Here.

20  
21 MR. SLATS: Raymond J. Oney.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Here.

24  
25 MR. SLATS: Myron P. Naneng, Sr.

26  
27 (No comments)

28  
29 MR. SLATS: Myron P. Naneng, Sr.

30  
31 (No comments)

32  
33 MR. SLATS: Robert J. Hoffman.

34  
35 (No comments)

36  
37 MR. SLATS: Robert J. Hoffman.

38  
39 (No comments)

40  
41 MR. SLATS: And Richard B. Slats is  
42 here. Robert, are you online?

43  
44 (No comments)

45  
46 MR. SLATS: Robert Hoffman, are you  
47 online.

48  
49 (No comments)

50

0114

1 MR. SLATS: Okay. Mr. Chairman, we  
2 have 10 present, three absent, one on the way. That  
3 makes sense, Alissa's on the line.

4  
5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay.

6  
7 MR. SLATS: Ten are present so we have  
8 quorum, over half.

9  
10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you,  
11 Richard. Next on the agenda if we could maybe do.....

12  
13 MR. SLATS: Mic, your mic.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: .....could do  
16 housekeeping, what we did yesterday.

17  
18 Brooke.

19  
20 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
21 And good morning, everyone. Welcome to day two of the  
22 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta RAC meeting. I don't have any  
23 particular housekeeping announcements, but I can  
24 quickly recap where we left off yesterday or what we  
25 went through and where we left off yesterday. So we  
26 started out the meeting with all the standard items  
27 that we always do at every RAC meeting. We went over  
28 the agenda and adopted it, we reviewed the meeting  
29 minutes from the previous meeting, we heard reports  
30 from all our council members and our Chair. We  
31 recognized four Council members for their service on  
32 the Council and we received a couple of public comments  
33 on non-agenda items.

34  
35 As a reminder we'll have another  
36 opportunity for public comments on non-agenda items  
37 shortly here this morning. So if you would like to  
38 sign up for a public comment here in the room, there's  
39 some blue cards on the back table there, you could fill  
40 one out and pass one of those to me and I'll make sure  
41 the Chair knows you'd like to comment. If you're  
42 online the Chair will announce when it's time for  
43 online comments for non-agenda items and you can just  
44 speak up by saying Mr. Chair and he'll recognize you.

45  
46 If you would like to submit written  
47 comments you can pass those to me or you can email them  
48 to subsistence@FWS.gov.

49  
50

0115

1                   After non-agenda item comments  
2 yesterday we moved into old business and we went over  
3 the .805(c) report cover letter, the Council received  
4 an update on Federal Subsistence Board's summer work  
5 session and the Board's replies to the Council's annual  
6 report from FY22. The Council also received a summary  
7 about the correspondence that had been sent and  
8 received since the past meeting and heard several  
9 special -- fishery special action updates from our  
10 Fisheries team. The Council reconfirmed their  
11 representatives for the Kuskokwim River Salmon  
12 Management Working group and that was the end of the  
13 old business items.

14  
15                   We moved into new business and began  
16 some wildlife reports. At the end of the day we heard  
17 from Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and we also  
18 had a report from the Bureau of Land Management about  
19 the D1 land withdrawals. And I believe where we will  
20 be picking up today is with -- back in wildlife reports  
21 once we wrap up the public comments on non-agenda items  
22 this morning, and that will be Togiak National Wildlife  
23 Refuge up first.

24  
25                   Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26  
27                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Thank you,  
28 Brooke. Maybe for the record maybe we could reach out  
29 to see who might be with online this morning.

30  
31                   (No comments)

32  
33                   MS. McDAVID: As a reminder folks  
34 online, your line has been muted to start out so you'll  
35 need to press star, six to unmute.

36  
37                   Thank you.

38  
39                   (No comments)

40  
41                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Can anyone online hear  
42 us this morning?

43  
44                   (No comments)

45  
46                   MS. McDAVID: Good morning to folks  
47 online, I hope you can hear us now. Our apologies, it  
48 looks like our phone line here in the room was muted.  
49 Could someone online confirm that you can hear us now?

50

0116

1 Thank you.

2

3 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, ma'am, can you hear  
4 me?

5

6 MS. McDAVID: Yes, good morning,  
7 Robert. Thank you for confirming your attendance and  
8 that you can hear us.

9

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Thank you, I can hear you  
11 loud and clear.

12

13 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Great. And just a  
14 quick recap for folks online. We just went through  
15 here in the room where we wrapped up yesterday and that  
16 was -- we had started new business and heard one  
17 wildlife report from Yukon Delta National Wildlife  
18 Refuge. The Chair has just asked if folks online could  
19 maybe identify themselves so we know who's joining us  
20 today. And then we'll move into public comments on  
21 non-agenda items.

22

23 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chair, for the record  
24 we have 11 present, one absent -- two absent, one on  
25 the way.

26

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you.

28

29 MR. SLATS: Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Once again  
32 reaching out to the people online. If you could call  
33 in and let us know who's with us this morning, identify  
34 yourself.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 MR. SVOBODA: My name's Nate, I'm  
39 online. I'm the Fisheries Biologist at Yukon Delta  
40 National Wildlife Refuge.

41

42 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you.

43

44 MR. RUNFOLA: Dave Runfola, Alaska  
45 Department of Fish and Game calling in from Fairbanks.

46

47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Morning, Dave. Anyone  
48 else.

49

50

0117

1 (No comments)

2

3

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, hopefully they'll be able to tune in when we reach the reports that are -- that are online. As Brooke mentioned we could go ahead and start off this morning with public and tribal comment on non-agenda items.

8

9 Do we have anyone here or online that  
10 wants to provide comments on non-agenda items at this  
11 time.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, we could  
16 go ahead and move on with the agenda. I believe next  
17 item we have on the agenda is Togiak National Wildlife  
18 Refuge update with Andy Aderman.

19

20 Andy, if you're with us you have the  
21 floor.

22

23 MR. ADERMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Can  
24 you hear me?

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I can hear you.

27

28 MR. ADERMAN: Okay. Great. Thanks.  
29 My name is Andy Aderman, I'm a wildlife Biologist with  
30 the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. I have a report  
31 in your meeting materials. It's volume II, the Page  
32 number is 352, 3-5-2. I'm just going to talk a little  
33 bit about Mulchatna Caribou and moose on the Togiak  
34 Refuge.

35

36 So starting near the bottom of Page 352  
37 with Mulchatna Caribou. The Togiak Refuge is a  
38 cooperator with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
39 Fish and Game has the lead on Mulchatna Caribou and we  
40 try to assist them with a number of items, telemetry  
41 flights, law enforcement flights. We also help with  
42 capture and collaring and this past March we helped  
43 catch 14 adult cows in the area north of Goodnews Bay.  
44 Those caribou, all of them looked in very good  
45 condition and they looked very healthy.

46

47 We attempted a population count in  
48 early July, we came up with a minimum of 639 caribou.  
49 One of the things that is different from other parts of  
50

0118

1 the Mulchatna Herd is the caribou don't group up very  
2 nicely or they're in small groups, but the biggest  
3 group we saw was maybe 130 caribou, but lots of just  
4 small groups, single digits to, you know, 20, maybe 30.  
5 And so they're just spread over the landscape and it's  
6 really hard to get a good estimate on how many there  
7 are.

8

9 And then here recently we conducted a  
10 sex and age composition survey, that was -- that was  
11 actually done this last Saturday. I don't have the  
12 results of that yet, but I think they'll be pretty good  
13 numbers of bulls and calves per hundred cows. Well, we  
14 know that the hunting season's been closed for a couple  
15 -- last couple years.

16

17 Yeah. That's all I have on Mulchatna  
18 Caribou. The other thing that I mentioned is moose and  
19 that's on the next Page 353. Our collared moose  
20 continue to be very productive, most of them having  
21 twins. And this is across the Refuge which the eastern  
22 half is in 17, the western half is in Unit 18. Hunters  
23 did not as well this last -- this -- the previous  
24 season, not the one here in 2023, but I think it was  
25 just poor travel conditions in the winter hunt that  
26 people weren't able to get where they wanted to in many  
27 instances.

28

29 We did a survey in 2022 that included  
30 17A, I won't bother you with that, but it also included  
31 the Goodnews hunt area. And what we found was an  
32 estimate of 464 moose in that area. And that's pretty  
33 close to what we saw back in 2020, 450 moose.

34

35 So with that I will -- I will stop and  
36 ask for any questions.

37

38 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Andy. Do we  
39 have any questions or comments for Andy at this time  
40 from any of the Council members.

41

42 MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman, I got a  
43 question.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Mr. Peter, go ahead.

46

47 MR. PETER: About the Mulchatna  
48 Caribou. In Togiak Refuge those herds in 2023, this  
49 year, Mulchatna Caribou Herd and five or seven,  
50



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1 slightly up 12,000. That's the estimate in 2022. And  
2 objective is 30 to 80,000. And I got question, those  
3 Mulchatna Caribou up in (in Native), Unit 18, they  
4 usually go down to Three Step Mountain this time of day  
5 or and I'd like to know about the -- how many are  
6 caribous crossing from 17C to 18 -- Unit 18?

7

8 That's my question.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 MR. ADERMAN: Through the Chair, member  
13 Peters. That I don't know for sure. I think the  
14 Alaska Department of Fish and Game might be able to  
15 answer that question if John Landsiedel's online  
16 possibly or Patrick Jones might -- might have some  
17 information on that.

18

19 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Phillip.

20

21 MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman, the Nushagak  
22 Peninsula Caribou, they're -- I want to note the  
23 population estimates like 511 plus or minus eight. And  
24 caribou at the 95 percent interval. Could you explain  
25 to me about the figures, how you get the figures on the  
26 estimate?

27

28 MR. RINALDI: Good morning this is Todd  
29 Rinaldi.....

30

31 MR. ADERMAN: Through the Chair.

32

33 MR. RINALDI: .....with the State of  
34 Alaska. There's a number of callers that are unable to  
35 call in this morning, including Refuge Manager Kenton  
36 Moos and Bristol Bay Area Biologist John Landsiedel.  
37 So just as a heads up there's people that are having  
38 trouble connecting.

39

40 I understand there was a question that  
41 was directed towards the State possibly, but I can't  
42 hear much of the conversation that's happening in the  
43 room.

44

45 MR. ADERMAN: Yeah, Todd, can you hear  
46 me?

47

48 MR. RINALDI: Yes, Andy's coming in  
49 loud and clear.

50

0120

1 MR. ADERMAN: Okay. Member Peter had a  
2 question first about the number of caribou moving out  
3 of Unit 17 into Unit 18. And I told him I didn't have  
4 a very good feel for that and said that possibly John  
5 or Patrick Jones might -- might be able to address  
6 that.

7  
8 MR. RINALDI: Yeah, right now -- thank  
9 you, Andy. Through the Chair. Right now I have John  
10 Landsiedel patched through my phone to another phone,  
11 but I don't think.....

12  
13 John, do you want to say something and  
14 see if people can hear you.

15  
16 MR. LANDSIEDEL: Yeah, (indiscernible -  
17 distortion).....

18  
19 MR. RINALDI: Well, I can take a stab  
20 at the question. I think the -- my understanding is  
21 caribou movements from Unit 18 into 17 and vice versa.  
22 As you know, there's the bulk of the population right  
23 now and -- and I guess I should take a step back. I  
24 have a presentation that's going to talk about all this  
25 information and I think we're next on the agenda. Do  
26 you want me to just go into this presentation or  
27 address this question specifically?

28  
29 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Todd. Member  
30 Cleveland just translated for member Peter and he said  
31 it's okay to wait. I would ask if we could take a five  
32 minute recess so that I can send out an alternative  
33 phone number and the Teams meeting link so folks can  
34 start passing that around that are having trouble  
35 calling in to the meeting today. We're sorry about  
36 that, we've never experienced the toll free number not  
37 working before so look for an email from me in a few  
38 moments and hopefully that'll give folks online a  
39 chance to join us.

40  
41 Thank you.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: So we'll go ahead and  
44 take a five minute break.

45  
46 MR. RINALDI: Okay. Thank you. I'll  
47 stand by.

48  
49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: We'll go ahead and take  
50

0121

1 a five minute break and come back at 9:35.

2

3 (Off record)

4

5 (On record)

6

7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I believe we still have  
8 Andy online. I didn't know if you were done with your  
9 presentation, if not do we -- is there any Council  
10 members still have questions for -- questions or  
11 comments for Andy at this time.

12

13 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

16

17 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
18 Andy, if you can hear me this is a question on caribou.  
19 So one of my friends I work or one of my colleagues  
20 from Iliamna Lake had mentioned that their herd of  
21 caribou is not really part of the Mulchatna Herd, but  
22 is identified as Mulchatna. So even though it's  
23 another herd and their herd is doing better according  
24 to them, just felt like they shouldn't be included in  
25 the restrictions because it's another species and I was  
26 wondering if you had anything that you know about that?

27

28 Thanks.

29

30 MR. ADERMAN: Yes, can you hear me?

31

32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, we can hear you.

33

34 MR. ADERMAN: Okay. Yeah, I'm not real  
35 familiar with that, that herd. I believe it's closer  
36 to Kanektok and it's my understanding there's about 300  
37 to 400 caribou in that herd and they seem like they're  
38 a resident herd, that they kind of stay put within the  
39 certain area there as opposed to a migratory herd that,  
40 you know, would move to different areas depending on  
41 the seasons. Like caribou now are probably going to be  
42 looking to go where they're planning to winter.  
43 There's some radio collars that were deployed in that  
44 herd, but I'd let Fish and Game talk more to that.  
45 It's a little bit similar maybe to the caribou that are  
46 just south of Quinhagak. Those caribou seem to stay in  
47 there throughout the year. Some of them move over to  
48 the east, north of Goodnews Lake, but the majority of  
49 them stay kind of along the coast there. And we have a  
50

0122

1 number of radio collars out in that herd just to see  
2 are they resident, like a separate herd, or are they  
3 mixing in with the -- with the greater Mulchatna Herd.  
4 And I think that's yet to be determined, but we're  
5 looking at it, we being Fish and Game and the Refuge  
6 and support from BLM.

7

8 But that's about all I can tell you on  
9 it, member Cleveland.

10

11 MS. CLEVELAND: Through the Chair.  
12 Thanks, Andy. That makes sense.

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Any other  
15 Council members that have questions or comments for  
16 Andy at this time.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, do you  
21 still have more to report, Andy.

22

23 MR. ADERMAN: No, Mr. Chairman. Thank  
24 you.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Oh, thank you again.  
27 Thank you for your report, appreciate it.

28

29 We'll go ahead and move on to our next  
30 agenda item. The next agenda item we have is Unit 18  
31 muskox presentation.

32

33 Patrick Jones, with ADF&G.

34

35 MR. JONES: For the record I'm Patrick  
36 Jones, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, I'm the Area  
37 Biologist located in Bethel.

38

39 So I'd like to talk to you about muskox  
40 in Unit 18 and more specifically the population we're  
41 calling the mainland population. So on your agenda at  
42 this meeting there are two proposals for muskox. We  
43 have WP24-22 and WP24-23. And the presentation's  
44 actually on the wall behind you so you guys might want  
45 to turn around so you can see what's going on here.  
46 But -- on the screen behind you.

47

48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: It's on here too.

49

50

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1 MR. JONES: Yeah, there'll be  
2 animation. So.....

3  
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay.

5  
6 MR. JONES: .....anyway -- so on these  
7 two proposals I'll just start out -- I'll cut to the  
8 chase. Fish and Game's going to be opposed to both of  
9 them. But I'll give you a little history on how we got  
10 to where we are today and what I hopefully see for us  
11 in the future.

12  
13 So one of the proposals is to find a  
14 C&T, a customary and traditional finding for muskox for  
15 mainland 18. And this is the third time a proposal  
16 about C&T for muskox in 18's come up in front of the  
17 Council and the Board. In '88 the Board found a  
18 negative finding for muskox and then in 2014, more  
19 recently it came up for muskox on Nunivak and Nelson  
20 Island. But before it was voted upon the proponent of  
21 the proposal asked to have it withdrawn. And that was  
22 a resident of Mekoryuk. So today they still have a  
23 negative C&T finding for all of Unit 18.

24  
25 And just so everybody is aware there  
26 are two similar proposals on the State side working  
27 their way through the Board of Game process this winter  
28 for our January meeting.

29  
30 So we put this map together and it  
31 should have an asterisk next to it. So all the red  
32 dots you see are locations that we could find in  
33 literature and books about where muskox were before  
34 they were extirpated from the State. So just a quick  
35 recap that muskox were in Alaska traditionally and then  
36 in the late 1800s they seemed to disappear from the  
37 landscape. And they were mostly on the North Slope  
38 north of the Brooks Range. So the hash marks around  
39 these things is because we know muskox move around a  
40 lot which is one of the things I'll show you later on  
41 in this presentation. So we went ahead and created a  
42 150 kilometer buffer around all the -- all the dots  
43 just to give extra credit for where they might be. And  
44 then we dropped the hash marks down there on the  
45 Baldwin Peninsula by Kotzebue because in the -- in 1826  
46 an individual found a full muskox skeleton on the beach  
47 there. And it seems unclear in the literature whether  
48 that was a recently dead muskox or if that was a fossil  
49 that had just eroded from the -- from beach action. So  
50

0124

1 we went ahead and included it. So when I'm talking  
2 about recent history on this map I'm talking about the  
3 last thousand years or so.

4  
5 So as you can see there's just no  
6 historic record for muskox being anywhere near Unit 18  
7 or western Alaska. There is no record of them being  
8 used for a subsistence species in Unit 18. Even if we  
9 go back to Lent's book which is one of the books that  
10 has a lot of information on muskox, they get help for  
11 where they've been found. Nome is the furthest south  
12 along the western coast where we found fossils for  
13 muskox, but even those were dated 10s of thousands of  
14 years old, predating humans and most likely from when  
15 they crossed over the land bridge during the  
16 Pleistocene.

17  
18 So you'll be asked later in this  
19 meeting when you're looking at these proposals to  
20 evaluate the C&T based on eight criteria. And our  
21 population of muskox down in Unit 18 are not going to  
22 fit the eight criteria.

23  
24 On this map this is -- so I've got Nome  
25 there with an arrow pointing to it just to orient  
26 everybody to where we're at. So we have muskox in  
27 numerous places in Alaska that we've reintroduced, but  
28 in Nome we have GPS collars on them the last -- a  
29 little over a year now. And so what we're seeing here  
30 on the animation is in the upper left-hand corner you  
31 can see the month flip by to orientate you to where the  
32 dots are. So this animation is showing all the GPS  
33 collared animal movements from November of 2021 through  
34 September of 2023. Then in November of '22 we added an  
35 additional 12 collars so about halfway through the  
36 little cycle you see all the dots double.

37  
38 But this just gives you a rough idea on  
39 how -- how these animals move and how much they move.  
40 So for total distance traveled, the 10 muskox that were  
41 on the air for a full year, using their average  
42 distance for a year, the average muskox moved 299  
43 miles. Most sedentary of the muskox that we had  
44 collars on moved 194 miles, that's about half mile a  
45 day and the most adventurous muskox traveled 408 miles.  
46 So these guys are moving around a lot more that we  
47 traditionally gave them credit for. They are not loyal  
48 to their group so they switch groups, groups switch  
49 locations. What is becoming obvious is there are  
50

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1 certain features on the landscape that muskox like. So  
2 one group will like a mountain, it'll move off and then  
3 another group will move in and occupy that same  
4 mountain. So it will seem like there's always muskox  
5 there, but in reality they're always different animals.  
6 So 22 of the muskox that have been on the air for the  
7 last 11 months, so he used their data just to boost our  
8 sample site a little bit. Still the average distance  
9 traveled is 241 miles, the shortest distance traveled  
10 155 miles and our long distance champ is 200 or 413  
11 miles. So some of these guys are moving around a lot.

12

13 We see some -- we've been seeing some  
14 really impressive movement as we move into this fall  
15 which is when they're really moving around. So it'll  
16 be interesting to see a year from now how consistent  
17 these guys are. So we look more in depth at movements  
18 and what they're doing. It's pretty clear in the  
19 summer season these guys are crossing creeks a lot,  
20 shallow lakes and they're crossing shallow rivers that  
21 they can wade across, but when they bump up against  
22 rivers that are deeper, that require swimming, they  
23 seem to ricochet off of those and bounce back into the  
24 mainland.

25

26 So Nome, they have a lot of rivers, but  
27 they're not anything compared to our rivers. A lot of  
28 their rivers can be walked across in knee boots towards  
29 the headwaters and that's kind of what we're seeing the  
30 muskox do. Over by White Mountain they have a -- the  
31 Fish River which is a little bit bigger river, we're  
32 seeing muskox kind of ricochet off that one, not cross  
33 it and so get kind of bounced back to the mainland.  
34 And that's a pretty small river compared to anything we  
35 got down in our region.

36

37 On this map I've got the home range of  
38 five individual muskox. So we took a whole year, every  
39 location we had and we basically built a bubble around  
40 everywhere that muskox had been in a year. The pink is  
41 the largest home range that we've detected so far and  
42 the light blue which is in the bottom corner of the  
43 pink is the smallest home range we've detected. Just  
44 to throw some numbers at you the average home range  
45 thus far is 372 miles. So that's this average. The  
46 minimum home range is in the light blue is only 33  
47 square miles and the largest home range in the pink is  
48 867 square miles. So the range seems to vary quite a  
49 bit based on individuals.

50

0126

1                   And the reason I guess I'm showing all  
2 this and hitting it home is just to illustrate that  
3 these animals move around a lot. These GPS collars  
4 have only been deployed in the Nome area for a few  
5 years, we're trying to get research and finally do it  
6 down in our area, we haven't secured it yet, but we  
7 have a -- we have a grand pending at the moment. So  
8 fingers crossed that we're able to do something similar  
9 down in our area because I anticipate our muskox are no  
10 different.

11  
12                   So this is a map of Unit 18 I'm sure  
13 all of us are familiar with. And this is kind of why I  
14 keep on hammering at the movement patterns. Unit 18's  
15 a big area, but we're also heavily density of humans.  
16 We have the highest -- for a rural area we have a high  
17 density of people. We have 38 year round villages, we  
18 have just a little under 25,000 people that live on the  
19 YKDelta. And then for muskox for management purposes  
20 we talk about three populations. I got Nunivak Island  
21 off on the -- off out there with Mekoryuk being the  
22 only village. And that's the first place we introduced  
23 muskox. And then we have Nelson Island with Toksook  
24 and Nightmute and Tununak that are highlighted. It's  
25 hard to see that it's an island on this map, but it is  
26 and that's the second place we introduced muskox in the  
27 area. And in the mainland for the purpose of this  
28 presentation is everything else in Unit 18, everything  
29 that's not those two islands.

30  
31                   So for the mainland how we got to --  
32 got there is we introduced muskox just -- I'll just  
33 back up and do the history of muskox in Alaska. So  
34 they got extirpated in the late 1800s, then in 1930 the  
35 U.S. Congress approved funds to acquire a herd from  
36 eastern Greenland. After a long journey those animals  
37 ended up in Fairbanks and after six years in Fairbanks  
38 we moved all those animals -- in 1935 and 1936 we moved  
39 all those animals out to Nunivak Island. And then  
40 later on in 1967 and '68 we took animals from Nunivak  
41 Island and we introduced 23 of them to Nelson Island.  
42 In 1974 residents of Schwanik (ph) reported seeing a  
43 muskox on the hill near the community and that's our  
44 first -- that's our first reporting of a muskox on the  
45 mainland. And what's happening is Nelson Island during  
46 the winter when everything freezes is functionally not  
47 an island, it becomes part of the mainland for the  
48 winter season. And during the winter season animals do  
49 occasionally wander off and wander back on.

50



1                   So on this map the light color is State  
2 managed lands and the yellow is BLM and the dark brown  
3 is Federal Wildlife Refuge. And we started in the '70s  
4 after that first reporting of a muskox in the mainland,  
5 we started keeping a sightings log in the Bethel  
6 office, every time we saw a muskox or somebody reported  
7 seeing a muskox on the mainland we went ahead and put  
8 it in the logbook. And those are the pink dots. So in  
9 the '70s we have a few locations, one out there on the  
10 coast and then a couple over there by the Johnson River  
11 and the tundra villages. And as time goes on we get  
12 into the '80s and we start getting more and more  
13 sighting blogs and the animals are moving inland,  
14 they're moving to the north, we even had a few animals  
15 cross the Yukon. And we have one animal up there by  
16 Kalskag. So in '81, the other thing that happened in  
17 '81 as we started our first hunt in Nelson Island  
18 because the Nelson Island Herd was doing so well. We  
19 go into the '90s, again these are cumulative dots, but  
20 you can see there's dots -- their pattern's starting to  
21 form of where these animals are routinely seen. They  
22 like the Ekanong (ph) Mountains, they like Kulsivak  
23 Mountain, they like the mud volcanos and they like that  
24 area a little southeast of Baird Inlet and the Johnson  
25 River and tundra. In most of those -- most of those  
26 places you can see the dots accumulating are on -- are  
27 going to be on State managed lands and a few of them  
28 are going to be on the Federal Wildlife Refuge. So we  
29 get into the 2000, you can see their range is expanding  
30 even more, now they're into Unit 19 and 21. They're up  
31 there by Aniak and Kalskag, there's some by Holy Cross,  
32 there's some down there by Eek and Quinhagak.

33  
34                   We get into the 2010s, a little more  
35 recent history, we're getting more animals, we're  
36 seeing more movements, we're getting more locations,  
37 but a pattern of where we see them is starting to  
38 really become clear. They like certain features, they  
39 like the higher tundra, they like the drier tundra and  
40 they're starting to really like the -- that area up  
41 there on the border of 21E and Unit 19. We have  
42 animals all the way up to McGrath, we have animals on  
43 the Holitna and it's not on this map, but they're  
44 moving south down to Goodnews, Platinum, Manokotak.  
45 And so they're -- we're starting to see these animals  
46 move around a lot. Normally the first animal we see in  
47 a new location is a bull, the bulls have -- seem to  
48 have a little more wanderlust than the cows and they  
49 take off, occupy an area for a few years then five to  
50

0128

1 10 years later we start seeing cows show up where those  
2 bulls were.

3

4

5 So the Department would like to -- at  
6 this point I should say we did a survey and we found  
7 174 animals in Unit 18 in 2019, that's our most recent  
8 survey. And so the Department would like to delay  
9 opening a hunt for this population until we see a  
10 minimum of 300 animals. That's our -- that's been our  
11 goal for all the other muskox populations in the State.  
12 One of our concerns is that of the 174 animals they're  
13 really spread out, we have an extremely low density of  
14 animals, Unit 18's a big area. So we can -- there's  
15 oftentimes 30 and 50 miles between active groups. And  
16 so right -- and right now the Department is actively  
17 seeking funding to research these animals better and we  
18 want to put GPS collars on them so we can track their  
19 movements, further identify what areas are important to  
20 them and they're -- where they're traveling to. And  
21 even if this one population, because right now it's  
22 unclear if the animals in Unit 18 are functionally one  
23 population and those ones up there in 19 and 21E are  
24 functionally one population or if these are -- it's  
25 unclear if these are two populations on the mainland or  
26 if they're one.

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And so a little more insight. So we  
did collar a couple animals in the '80s with the more  
primitive style of collar, we had the VHS so you have  
to fly over, you have to get relatively close to detect  
it with an airplane. So in the '80s they collared some  
over there southeast of Baird Inlet and they found a  
cow with a collar. A year later and she was up there  
by Kalskag and then we lost her again and then a year  
later she was harvested legally by a hunter on Toksook  
Bay during the muskox hunt. So we know she went from  
Baird Inlet to Kalskag, back to Nelson Island in the  
course of at least three years. But that's our one and  
only data point for mainland muskox movements. So  
right now I'd really like more time to put collars on  
this and figure out -- figure this out better. We know  
animals leave and return to Nelson Island, but it seems  
at such a small rate it's -- it's hard to detect most  
years. We're talking about zero to six animals most  
years leave or return. The net difference from the  
island is pretty small. But it -- but it's not zero.

So I know we have members from Lower  
Kalskag so I'll throw in some Unit 19 and 21 stuff

0129

1 here. So in 2019 we did a survey of mainland muskox,  
2 we found 174. We found that just -- so 102 of those  
3 were on State land and 72 of those were on Refuge  
4 lands. I guess I got me one more slide. So the red  
5 lines here are track logs from all of our surveys. And  
6 really the take home message I want people to take home  
7 from this is when I survey Nunivak Island and Nelson  
8 Island the goal of the survey is to find every single  
9 animal, we're trying to do a direct census. It's one  
10 of the few populations that Managers actually attempt a  
11 direct census on these animals. Most every other  
12 population you see that we have estimates for them so  
13 muskox are kind of the exception. But the red lines  
14 should indicate that our search intensity is really  
15 high on those islands.

16

17 And then you look at the mainland and  
18 those transects get pretty wide. So we've done the  
19 mainland twice and both of those were more feasibility  
20 projects just to see how -- what the cost was or what  
21 time would be -- would it work. So that's why those  
22 transects lines are little wider. We went to areas  
23 that we knew we'd always seen muskox. We knew -- went  
24 to areas that we know they liked and then we tried to  
25 expand out from there. But Unit 18's a huge thing.  
26 Those lines for the mainland at Unit 18 took two Super  
27 Cubs three full days. We have six days of flying to do  
28 those lines. So it -- we did put some money and time  
29 into it both times we did it and we tried to get the  
30 areas we thought had the most muskox. Obviously we  
31 recognize there's muskox outside of those red lines,  
32 but we thought we captured the majority of the animals  
33 on the mainland.

34

35 So here's the two surveys of the  
36 mainland, we did it in 2017 and 2019. They were  
37 markedly similar. We found 175 animals in the 174  
38 animals introduced in Unit 18. But the other thing to  
39 take home when we're thinking about this is I count  
40 those by sex and age and if we look at age for muskox  
41 everything three and older we considered an adult,  
42 that's breeding age for a muskox. And if you look at  
43 it we got 29 adult bulls and 53 cows that are adults.  
44 That's not very many animals when we're talking about a  
45 hunt. Everything else is a -- is a juvenile or a calf.  
46 So it's a very small population, it's a very young  
47 population and there just aren't a lot of adults  
48 available for harvest.

49

50

0130

1                   So in 2017 we also went up and counted  
2 the muskox in 19A and 21E and there was an additional  
3 76 animals in -- up in Unit 19, 31 of those were  
4 adults. In 2019 Fish and Game repeated that and found  
5 -- again we found -- in May we found 71 muskox in 19A  
6 and 21E, but we went back in June and repeated that  
7 survey a second time just to see -- we're still trying  
8 to figure out when's the best time to count them on the  
9 mainland and our methods. So we went back in June to  
10 see if they would be pushed towards the ridge tops  
11 because of the heat they normally seek elevation, if  
12 that would be easier for us to count. And we could  
13 only find 34 which kind of illustrates a little bit too  
14 is they -- they're moving a lot seasonally and  
15 especially during the summer -- spring, summer and fall  
16 is when they're really bouncing around. They're pretty  
17 sedentary during the winter however.

18  
19                   I guess this my -- really my last slide  
20 and I just -- in conclusion the State has population  
21 concerns for these animals. We're talking about a 174  
22 animals, very few of those are actually true adults and  
23 available for harvest. We would like to see at least  
24 300 before we talk about a hunt. And we also --  
25 they're right in the middle of 38 communities and  
26 25,000 people so when we do have a hunt we got to  
27 really talk about how we're going to divvy out those  
28 permits because there's not going to be very many of  
29 them to start with. Generally when we talk about  
30 hunting muskox on mainland we talk about a harvest rate  
31 of 1 to 2 percent. So if we had 300 muskox that would  
32 be three to six permits.

33  
34                   So I know our -- the demand for hunting  
35 muskox is higher than the supply and it's going to be  
36 that way for a while. These animals just need more  
37 time to grow. And then -- and for the C&T we still  
38 haven't -- we haven't had a hunt for these animals yet,  
39 they don't have the customary and traditional history  
40 and harvest history and finding. Not yet anyway. And  
41 so that will come in -- come in time I'm sure, but in  
42 the meantime these animals need time -- the population  
43 to grow before we start having a hunt and developing  
44 that history.

45  
46                   And I'll -- I guess I'll leave it at  
47 that unless there's any questions.

48  
49                   MR. MORGAN: Mr. Chair, Walter Morgan.  
50

0131

1                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Walter.

2

3

4                   MR. MORGAN: I was wondering, you know,  
5 you're talking about Kalskag area and I see you count  
6 during the June month, you know. How come you guys  
7 don't do it when there's snow on the ground and you can  
8 probably get a better count because the summer months,  
9 you know, you can't see the tracks. And I do a lot of  
10 hunting outside of Kalskag, we go to Portage Mountain  
11 and I notice there's a little more muskox building up  
12 in the last few years. But, you know, my question is  
13 what -- why don't you do it when there's snow on the  
14 ground, you know, you can track them better.

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                  Thank you.

                  MR. JONES: Through the Chair. That's  
a good point. So we count them in June -- we've  
counted them every month of the year historically, we  
used to count them by snowmachines on Nunivak and  
Nelson Island in the '70s and the '80s. And then we  
used a helicopter in the winter and then we used an  
airplane in the winter. And then we started moving to  
the summer months out there and it made sense for us  
out there in the summer months because there's not a  
lot of brush for them to hide behind or in, they like  
to be out in the open with the wind on their face. But  
they also stand out really well on the islands because  
they're essentially black and everything else is green.  
So they just pop really nice, they actually pop better  
in the summer when you're flying from an airplane than  
they do in the winter against the snow background. But  
the islands I recognize are unique because they don't  
have brush and they're pretty open. And then we have  
really tight transects, we're trying to look at  
everything.

                  But if you look at mainland and what  
people do for muskox on mainland, both in Alaska and  
Canada and Greenland and everywhere these guys exist  
circumpolarly. A lot of places do count them in the  
winter. Nome and Kotzebue and Barrow, they prefer to  
count them in the winter and that's probably where if I  
was going to do a third survey for mainland muskox I  
would try and do it with snow on the ground just to see  
how it compares. There's just not a lot of animals so  
it's -- of all the surveys it's a pretty boring one  
because you might sit in that Cub for a couple hours  
before you see a muskox group. And then you'll see 30

0132

1 of them and then you'll sit there for an hour before  
2 you see the next group of five. They're so spread out,  
3 but it would help to see tracks, that would help narrow  
4 us in and then the black on white would really help if  
5 we had really good, solid snow cover. When the snow  
6 cover's not 100 percent complete it actually makes it  
7 worse because all the brown shows up in there and  
8 becomes mottled and it's actually harder to see  
9 animals. So we need just extremely good snow  
10 conditions. But yeah, the next plan -- the next survey  
11 we're planning on doing will have snow on the ground  
12 just to compare it. So that's where it's going I  
13 guess.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Does that answer your  
16 question, Walter.

17  
18 MR. MORGAN: Yeah. And I had another one, Mr.  
19 Chair. I see the last count was in 2019, you know,  
20 that's quite a while back. Why do you wait so long to  
21 do a count, because of money or, you know, that's my  
22 question. I think, you know, you ought to look into  
23 that a lot better and get a better head count because I  
24 start seeing muskox, we had one come up to the lake.  
25 Three times I seen four of them right in the Kalskag  
26 area and they -- they're pretty shy, they come out for  
27 a little while and they go back in the woods; you know,  
28 they don't show themselves. So, you know, that's why I  
29 said, you know, winter hunt -- wintertime you can get a  
30 better count.

31  
32 Thank you.

33  
34 MR. JONES: Through the Chair. Yeah.  
35 So up in your country you definitely have trees that  
36 they can hide in. I was up there in July when it was  
37 really hot and most of them were on the ridge tops  
38 trying to escape the heat, but there's obviously some  
39 down in the bottom sitting in the -- in the shallow  
40 water trying to escape the heat. They -- and that's  
41 obviously some in the forest trying to be in the shade,  
42 trying to escape the heat. So they -- these guys  
43 really don't tolerate heat well, they start trying to  
44 cool off whenever it gets hot. But I agree we're going  
45 to try and count them in winter the next time to see if  
46 that changes much.

47  
48 But the other thing, the why the space  
49 between there is their growth rate, their population  
50

0133

1 growth rate is really low. They can only -- the don't  
2 twin like moose do, they only have one calf. And these  
3 guys live a lot longer than moose and caribou. You  
4 know, an old moose or caribou is eight, nine years old,  
5 an old muskox is 18, 20 years old. They got a  
6 different life history. We've had several cows make it  
7 to 18. They have some in captivity in their mid 20s.  
8 So they just live longer, they'll have a calf or two,  
9 it'll take a year off, we'll have another calf. So  
10 they're just -- the growth rate is really slow on these  
11 guys and with such a small population there's no way  
12 for it to jump up really fast. So counting it every  
13 three to five years is kind of what we're doing now  
14 just to monitor it until it gets closer to that 300  
15 mark and then when we get closer to having a hunt I --  
16 we'll start monitoring it a lot closer. But it's just  
17 mathematically impossible for that thing to grow fast  
18 enough to need to count it every year at the moment.

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do you have any more  
21 questions or comments for Patrick at this time.

22

23 Jackie, go ahead.

24

25 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
26 I had a few questions so I was trying to prioritize.  
27 In the beginning you were a little fast when you talked  
28 about the eight criteria and I was wondering what those  
29 were maybe summarized and the C&T for Mekoryuk, why are  
30 they withdrawn?

31

32 MR. JONES: Thank you, Chair and member  
33 Cleveland. When you guys get the proposal you'll go  
34 through that eight criteria in -- in detail. So I  
35 won't hit it -- hit with -- too hard with you right  
36 now.

37

38 Let's see, what was the second  
39 question.

40

41 MS. CLEVELAND: Through the Chair. Why  
42 Mekoryuk withdrew from the C&T process.

43

44 MR. JONES: So Mekoryuk -- so Nunivak  
45 Island that's so Mekoryuk -- is where Mekoryuk's at.  
46 So they've had muskox the longest, they've been hunting  
47 muskox the longest. 1974 I believe was the first hunt.  
48 And Mekoryuk is also pretty special too because even  
49 before muskox they had big game guides out there pre  
50

0134

1 '72, pre the Marine Mammal Act, they had guides out  
2 there taking clients out for walrus and things. So  
3 they had a local economy based on guiding and bringing  
4 people in for money. And then in '72 of course marine  
5 mammals got shut down to everybody but Alaska Natives  
6 and that ended that industry. But in '75 or '74 when  
7 we started muskox hunting those same people that were  
8 walrus guides switched over to be muskox guides.

9  
10 So they've had a really long history  
11 and economy of guiding out there. And when this  
12 proposal last came up the muskox population on Nunivak  
13 was low and the number of permits given out was low  
14 compared to historical averages. I think on an average  
15 year we give around I believe 45 cow permits and 45  
16 bull permits. The bull permits are allocated to the  
17 draw hunt and then the cow permits have always been  
18 allocated to -- we give them out -- we give five out in  
19 Bethel and they give the rest out in Mekoryuk so  
20 they're mostly -- they're mostly going to Mekoryuk  
21 residents and if not Mekoryuk residents at least  
22 residents of the YKDelta. But it's also a small  
23 community, I'd say 180, 200 people and about 40 to 50  
24 hunters is basically what they had. So we're meeting  
25 their desires on normal years, but on low years we got  
26 down to where we only had five permits to give out in  
27 Mekoryuk and that wasn't -- that wasn't enough and they  
28 were looking for ways to get more harvest. And one of  
29 the ways was they were thinking about tapping into the  
30 bull -- taking bull permits instead of cow permits.  
31 And so one of the ways they were trying to get to there  
32 was with the C&T and a positive finding, but ultimately  
33 they decided to withdraw because they weren't sure how  
34 it was all going to break down, how many were going to  
35 be allocated for C&T purposes and how that was going to  
36 affect their guide industry going forward and they  
37 didn't want to risk their guide industry.

38  
39 So we came -- so they went through that  
40 proposal on the C&T I believe on the State and the  
41 Federal side and then we came to another agreement on  
42 the State side that when we're -- have less than 10 cow  
43 permits available we will -- but we have bull permits  
44 available, we'll allocate the bull permits to the local  
45 people. So we came up with another solution I guess  
46 the is -- is the long and short answer. I don't know  
47 if that helps.

48  
49 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you.  
50



0135

1                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do you have any more  
2 questions or comments for Andy.

3  
4                   Chris, you had a comment. Chris Tulik.

5  
6                   MR. TULIK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
7 My name is Christopher Tulik. I'm looking at the draft  
8 analysis on Page 155 of the packet. It says the oxen's  
9 have migrated out from Nelson Island and Nunivak Island  
10 over the past 20 years. I would like to say that based  
11 on my local knowledge and observation that it is not  
12 true in -- that Nunivak herds have migrated to the  
13 mainland. It's impossible for this animals to swim  
14 over 20 miles of the strait. Because Etolin Strait is  
15 treacherous especially during the winter. I've known  
16 -- because I know that area down there. During the  
17 winter it may freeze over, but the ice is always  
18 cracking up and jamming and piling up. There is no way  
19 for these animals to swim that distance. And if they  
20 do walk out into the ice, I mean, they have no chance  
21 of surviving in that strait. So it is not true that  
22 the herds from Nunivak have migrated out to the  
23 mainland, that's not true. I have not seen any one  
24 animal out there, out there in the strait, Etolin  
25 Strait. These animals can swim, but they don't swim as  
26 good as moose do.

27  
28                   The other thing here is that it says  
29 over the past 20 years, that's not -- I mean, these  
30 oxen have been migrating out from Nelson Island well  
31 over 50 years. We -- because I've seen them. I'm  
32 speaking from my own knowledge and observation. And I  
33 -- we know that the mainland hurt or disbursed and  
34 their growth rate on the mainland is pretty slow. But  
35 over the past 50 years since they were introduced on  
36 the island in '68 or around there, '69, you know, we --  
37 we saw the animal or the population growing from there.  
38 And then -- and they've been migrating out of Nelson  
39 Island. So I will say that the analysis here is --  
40 where it says Nunivak Island first over the past 20  
41 years is not true.

42  
43                   Guyana.

44  
45                   Thank you.

46  
47                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Chris. Any  
48 more comments or questions for Patrick at this time  
49 regarding the Unit 18 muskox.

50

0136

1                   Wassilly, when Andy sits down you could  
2 ask your question or comment.

3

4                   Thank you.

5

6                   Andy, we have Wassilly Alexie. Go  
7 ahead.

8

9                   MR. ALEXIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
10 I just wanted to ask, you know, we have all this data  
11 collected from moose, muskox and caribou. Is there any  
12 data collected from the wood bison?

13

14                   MR. JONES: Yes, I'm not sure I'm the  
15 right person to hand -- to answer all the wood bison  
16 questions because I don't do those surveys, but yeah,  
17 they -- those are monitored very closely. They have  
18 some collared animals and they fly the surveys and they  
19 do the count for bulls, cows and calves every year.  
20 And they've been tracking the -- the birth rate of the  
21 new calves and then the mortality. So this last winter  
22 they had a pretty big mortality event so that herd's  
23 down to I believe 74 or 70 animals. So it's -- they  
24 took a really big hit this last winter.

25

26                   MR. ALEXIE: All right. Thank you.

27

28                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

29

30                   MS. CLEVELAND: Through the Chair. I  
31 guess my other question was I guess how much more time  
32 do you -- would we need of data and if the numbers --  
33 you know, like if -- at the rate it's going now with  
34 the increase or I guess how much more time if you were  
35 to guess at least three I would take it because you do  
36 your surveys every three years so maybe four years  
37 would be the soonest next available mainland hunt? If  
38 that makes sense.

39

40                   Thanks.

41

42                   MR. JONES: That's tough. One of the  
43 problems, one of the reasons it's taken so long to get  
44 to a 174,000 animals, I mean, we started in the '70s,  
45 right, and it -- and we've had groups on the mainland  
46 for 50 years now and everywhere else we've introduced  
47 them they've done well, in that time they've grown to a  
48 hutable population in that time frame, but they  
49 haven't here. And it would appear that they haven't

50

0137

1 got there yet in our country because of illegal  
2 harvest. There are numerous cases where people -- in  
3 our unit I think the most egregious wildlife crimes are  
4 on muskox. We got local people killing those things  
5 and leaving them and not taking meat. They're the most  
6 wasted animal we have. Then the mud volcanoes, they  
7 killed I think 20ish muskox and they didn't salvage the  
8 meat from any of them. And that's happened numerous  
9 times in the history on the Delta. Our illegal harvest  
10 and poaching problem is a big one. Every time they  
11 grow they get knocked back down. So I -- the  
12 harvestable surplus we have is taken by illegal harvest  
13 most years and it's taken a long time to get to where  
14 we are today, I think we're finally getting to the  
15 point where they might be over the hump, they might be  
16 growing despite of the illegal harvest now, but it's  
17 really slowing things down. Last year I saw where  
18 people killed five cows and I think if -- we can't  
19 afford to lose any cows. If we want to have calves,  
20 especially of these cows that live 18 and 20 years and  
21 they produce calves most of their life. So I -- I  
22 don't know, if people would leave them alone they would  
23 probably grow at about 10 percent a year, but people  
24 aren't leaving them alone. So.....

25

26 MS. CLEVELAND: Through the Chair.  
27 Follow-up. You said the poaching and illegal hunts are  
28 done by locals, is that for sure?

29

30 MR. JONES: Yeah. So we don't catch  
31 all the people obviously, we find the aftermath and  
32 then we don't -- the troopers aren't able to make cases  
33 all the time though they have good suspects. So  
34 everybody we've caught has been local, everybody we  
35 suspect has been local. They're happening mostly  
36 during the winter season by snowmachiners near  
37 communities. And off -- everybody I remember is like  
38 seven, eight years ago, we had a big group of muskox  
39 walk into Bethel on Hanger Lake and then the next  
40 morning we went out there and there was a bunch of beer  
41 cans, about a thousand rounds of .22 ammunition on the  
42 ground and a dead muskox and several muskox walking  
43 around blind with their eyes popped out. I mean, it's  
44 just -- egregious things happen to these animals all  
45 the time.

46

47 They behave different than any other  
48 animal. When you stress them out they group together,  
49 they back up against buildings, they back up against

50

0138

1 trees, they don't run away. And that emboldens people  
2 sometimes to get closer and closer and to harass them.  
3 It's -- and it -- and the people that aren't used to  
4 muskox aren't used to their behavior, it's a weird  
5 behavior. You see it and it backs up to a bush instead  
6 of running away. And then so people get mad at them at  
7 berry patches and stuff and they're just a different  
8 critter, they don't respond to stress the same as  
9 anything else. They just stand their ground and the  
10 more you harass them, the more you stand your ground  
11 the more it escalates. So they're just one of those  
12 critters if they're -- if they're there you got to back  
13 off and give them space and they'll eventually wander  
14 off, but a lot of times they walk into communities and  
15 people don't know how to deal with them and then, you  
16 know, crowd control in a community is pretty hard so  
17 all the kids harassing them, all the people harassing  
18 them, they back up against a building and then -- and  
19 then somebody ends up having to shoot them just because  
20 they become a danger to people there. But it's just  
21 their behavior's different, people treat them  
22 different, it's just you have to get used to them it  
23 seems like and they're behaviors. And then you have to  
24 have value on them too. People that had muskox the  
25 longest truly value them for their meat, they have  
26 really good meat quality and then their quivet is  
27 really valued. People that are new to them seem to  
28 value them a lot less because they're on berry patches,  
29 they act weird, their -- they seem aggressive because  
30 they won't leave when you show up. They rub on stuff  
31 so they've been known to walk in to graveyards in  
32 communities that don't have fences and rub on --  
33 they're itchy, and they're rubbing on stuff and they  
34 knock over crosses and tombstones and people hate that  
35 understandably. So they get a bad rap and they just  
36 have all these things going against them I guess.

37

38 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Are there any  
39 more questions or comments for Andy at this time.

40

41 James, go ahead.

42

43 MR. LANDLORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
44 What do they eat?

45

46 MR. JONES: They're mostly eating  
47 sedges and grass. They'll browse on willows a little  
48 bit. And then -- and that -- in the winter that's what  
49 they're eating, mostly grasses and sedges which is kind  
50

0139

1 of like a grass. And then -- and then willows. And  
2 then in the summer they'll eat just about anything  
3 green. It's really common to see them on the edge of  
4 lakes and ponds eating the horsetails, the  
5 equisetaceae, snap grass some people call it. But that  
6 stuff's really high in protein and calcium and a bunch  
7 of other stuff. So they're -- for an animal that's  
8 terrible at swimming they're normally actually in our  
9 region associated in the summer with water because  
10 that's where the really good vegetation is.

11

12 MR. LANDLORD: It seems like they don't  
13 -- they don't seem very aggressive, huh?

14

15 MR. JONES: No, they -- they're not  
16 aggressive, they're not out -- not out to get you. I  
17 like them, I spend a lot of time around them. But when  
18 people haven't been around them they get thrown off  
19 because -- because if you walk up to a caribou or a  
20 moose it's probably going to leave, right, and then the  
21 muskox isn't. The muskox gets really stressed out,  
22 they tend to either back up to each other for safety or  
23 back up to a tree or a bush or a building. They --  
24 they overeat really easy, they only got one little  
25 sweat gland down in their back legs so they don't want  
26 to run hard for a long distance because then they get  
27 really hot then they have a hard time cooling down. So  
28 they -- if you let them they'll walk away slowly, but  
29 if they're in a situation where they feel like they  
30 have to run they're not going to, they're going to just  
31 stand there. They also really hate swimming. They can  
32 swim, they don't like to do it. And if they're under  
33 pressure from you they won't do it. That's one of the  
34 tactics we use when we're darting them, we ground dart  
35 them and I got from here to the wall to dart them, I'll  
36 walk over to them and they'll -- I'll walk them over to  
37 a creek or a lake and they'll stand there on the edge  
38 of the shore and they won't swim and they won't go away  
39 and one or two people can essentially trap a group and  
40 dart and collar them. So they're -- once you  
41 understand them they're very predictable, they're not  
42 very threatening once you understand them, but the  
43 first time you encounter them most people misinterpret  
44 their body language and behaviors as being aggressive.  
45 So I guess it's just how you look to them and how you  
46 can read their body language.

47

48 MR. LANDLORD: Yes, Chris said they  
49 tend to populate very slow?

50

0140

1 MR. JONES: They've done really well in  
2 areas -- you know, they did really good in Mekoryuk and  
3 Nelson Island, but we don't have any predators out  
4 there and all those communities out there are really  
5 good about letting them grow. And they did really good  
6 almost everywhere else we put them in Alaska. One of  
7 the North Slope places we put them they initially did  
8 really good and then essentially there's no more where  
9 we initially put them, but they -- some of them moved  
10 east into Canada and some of them moved west over  
11 towards Tulik Lake and everything. So they do really  
12 well and over in Canada, Canada, has, you know,  
13 Victoria Island has 100,000 of them, you know, they  
14 have a lot. And what they see has occupied a pretty  
15 big area for 20 or 30 years and they seem like they  
16 leave that area and just move over for 20 years. They  
17 seem to like to be in one spot for a while and then  
18 move to a different one when -- but they have a lot of  
19 muskox over there so they're kind of in a different  
20 situation too.

21  
22 MR. PETER: Mr. Chair, I've got.....

23  
24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Phillip.....

25  
26 MR. PETER: .....a few comments.....

27  
28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: .....Phillip, go ahead.

29  
30 MR. PETER: .....about the muskox. In  
31 Aggis when I went tundra behind the -- behind us for  
32 hare hunting and I spotted 15 miles northwest of and  
33 then I track them on the fresh -- the snow was really  
34 fresh. And then I see strange tracks with something  
35 was dragging on the snow. There were six, six muskox.  
36 I track them from there to Iliik (ph) and then I went  
37 up the hill where my uncle got the land down there,  
38 that lake on the top of it. I went and I saw six  
39 muskox in Aggis. And then after that in 2015 I went  
40 berrypick -- I usually go berrypicking Tuntutuliak  
41 below (in Native). I go up all the way to the hills --  
42 all the way to the hills at (in Native), you know, that  
43 place, they got big hills way up -- way up there. And  
44 then that I spotted four -- four muskox.

45  
46 And then in 19 -- and then 2020 I went  
47 up -- I went again to (in Native) and I spotted quite a  
48 few herds there. And I was really surprised that the  
49 first time I seen really close -- close by. I went  
50

0141

1 over walking, seen them really close. And I was  
2 wondering there's Nelson Island, it got different --  
3 it got diff -- it got those herds. And those herds  
4 when they -- the population grows up they separated,  
5 right, look to me. To me those herds were separated to  
6 (in Native). I -- but they're still -- I bet they're  
7 still there in (in Native).

8

9 And then I heard the -- my brother told  
10 me that they saw when they had -- when they traveled  
11 for a spring bear -- looking for bear holes. And he  
12 told me that they saw tracks going toward Kalskag, a  
13 few herds, you know, few herds. And I was really  
14 surprised, maybe they divide it up to me.

15

16 And then in 2021 in summer fishing was  
17 open for subsistence in 2021. I got fish camp three  
18 miles -- three miles about Akiachak and from my fish  
19 camp I traveled to -- three miles and there's a sandbar  
20 for like drifting I see strange tracks, strange one.  
21 So I asked my brother-in-law -- my brother, let's go  
22 check those strange tracks on the beach. My brother-  
23 in-law is from Mekoryuk and he recognize them right  
24 away, these are muskox tracks, but I don't know how  
25 many on the sandbar. And then when the moose hunting  
26 was open they -- he saw one in -- one muskox, we call  
27 it the (in Native) right above (in Native) he saw one  
28 caribou on the beach, right below Kalskag. Right below  
29 Kalskag, yeah.

30

31 That's my comment.

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Thank you  
36 for your report, Patrick, appreciate it. We'll go  
37 ahead and take a 10 minute break and then we could do  
38 the Arctic lamprey after that.

39

40 Thank you, Pat, for your part. I'll  
41 ask for a 10 minute break.

42

43 (Off record)

44

45 (On record)

46

47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: .....get started as  
48 soon as we get all our Council members seated. Okay.  
49 We can go ahead and get started. Our next item on the  
50

0142

1 agenda is Arctic lamprey presentation by Carol --  
2 Caroline Brown and Sam Decker.

3

4

5 At this time before we get started I'd  
6 like to recognize Alissa for the record being with us  
7 at our meeting. Thank you for being here.

7

8

9 Go ahead, Caroline, you got the floor.

9

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MS. BROWN: Thank you, Chair and RAC members. My name is Caroline Brown. I am the Statewide Research Director for the Subsistence Division at Fish and Game and I am located in Fairbanks. I'm pretty happy to be here in person to give this presentation, I'm actually down in Anchorage for a different meeting, but this -- this worked out well. And I really appreciate your flexibility in being able to let me give this presentation this morning.

So I already introduced myself, but the other person who helped put this presentation together for you is Sam Decker. She is a Fisheries Biologist for the Division of Commercial Fisheries and she is also in Fairbanks, works primarily on the Yukon River. And she's also I believe on the phone and so if there are questions about the biology I'm probably going to punt to her.

But this talk is going to explore some of the details of lamprey life history, monitoring efforts and harvest and also the experimental commercial fishery that you guys have expressed some concern about on the Yukon River. Lamprey also run in the Kuskokwim, but I don't personally know of any direct research on them there. There's very little in general reported in the scientific literature about the ecology or harvest and use of Arctic lamprey in Alaska and much of what I'm going to talk about today especially in the first half of this presentation comes from a traditional knowledge research study that I did in the mid 2000s in the -- what the GASH area, Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross. So even though there's not a lot of scientific literature about lamprey there is as you all probably know a rich body of local knowledge about certain aspects of lamprey or eels as they're usually referred to locally. And many of these observations can yield some important insights for the continued biological study of fish life



0143

1 history. They also offer some important insights and  
2 considerations for management.

3

4

5 So as I mentioned before this study or  
6 a lot of what I'm going to talk about came from  
7 research that I did working with elders and fishers of  
8 lamprey in the GASH area. And there's the GASH area on  
9 a map. And so historically most of the -- most of the  
10 knowledge we have is was held by indigenous fishers and  
11 on -- along the lamprey bearing rivers and passed down  
12 through generations to other people who also relied on  
13 the resource. And in this particular area some of the  
14 earliest documented research comes from Lieutenant  
15 Zagaskin who's a Russian merchant explorer who traveled  
16 through the area in about the 1800s. He put a lot of  
17 effort into documenting what we would now call  
18 ethnographic information about subsistence and other  
19 things, about traditional practices of all kinds  
20 including lamprey fishing.

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21 In the mid 2000s in response to  
22 declining runs in the Pacific Northwest the Pacific  
23 Lamprey Conservation Initiative helped draw focus to  
24 lamprey as a collaboration between Native American  
25 tribes, government agencies and non-governmental  
26 organizations. It also provides a platform for  
27 research and sharing knowledge.

29 In Alaska Pacific lamprey are present  
30 across the Gulf of Alaska or I'm sorry, the Gulf of  
31 Alaska coast and Arctic lamprey which are the red. So  
32 Pacific lamprey are in that blue circle and the red  
33 circle is Arctic lamprey. They're present in the  
34 Bering coast including the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers,  
35 Bristol Bay and Norton Sound. Their ranges overlap in  
36 the Cook Inlet area and both species are present in the  
37 Susitna River drainage.

39 So local fishers in this area in the  
40 Yukon report encountering lamprey from coast -- from  
41 the coast tributary such as the Innoko, the Koyukuk and  
42 the Tanana River in Lake Minchumina and into Canada.  
43 According to fishers in the GASH area lamprey run thick  
44 in most years up the Yukon to about Fox Point above  
45 Anvik where Shageluk fishermen set up eel camps on the  
46 Yukon in November. While a few lamprey reportedly have  
47 been caught in fish wheels further upstream around  
48 Tanana. Respondents told us that the run likely thins  
49 out and disburse such that focused lamprey fishing is

0144

1 really no longer efficient or doable. According to  
2 Mucklingberg, a biologist, the Arctic lamprey build is  
3 circular red with their mouths in gravelly substrates,  
4 but I'm not aware of the extent any resource that  
5 documents major spawning area for Arctic lamprey in the  
6 Yukon drainage.

7

8 Juveniles burrow in muddy areas as  
9 attested by local residents who observe them emerging  
10 from the mud along the Yukon River usually at the  
11 mouths of sloughs and tributaries. These areas which  
12 are often the site of fish camps have attracted  
13 children over the generations. At camp between shores  
14 the kids like to rake them out of the mud and collect  
15 them in old coffee cans.

16

17 Generally speaking lamprey migrate up  
18 the Yukon River from the Bering Sea around mid to late  
19 October through early December. Most biologists  
20 recognize one migration of lamprey up the Yukon. Local  
21 residents have observed at least two and in some cases  
22 three separate migrations or probably runs are like  
23 pulses of the same migration. The first run usually  
24 arrives around Thanksgiving in the GASH area and  
25 consists of smaller lamprey while the second run  
26 arrives shortly thereafter and consists of much larger  
27 fish. A small group of fishermen in that area also  
28 recognized another run earlier than the Thanksgiving  
29 one, usually in early November, but this run is not  
30 usually fished any longer because the changing climate  
31 patterns don't always allow for safe freeze up in the  
32 Yukon that early.

33

34 Another observed characteristics of  
35 these migrations is how concentrated and also how  
36 inconsistent they can be year to year. The run can  
37 last anywhere from 15 minutes to several days or longer  
38 and fishermen have to watch very carefully to risk or  
39 risk losing them completely -- missing them completely.  
40 Today fishermen rely on communication by telephone or  
41 CB radio between villages to know when lamprey are  
42 passing at any given point and calculate their arrivals  
43 based on an average mile per hour. They travel about  
44 12 to 15 miles per hour a day. Historically elders  
45 were recalled two methods by which they could estimate  
46 lamprey arrival, the emission of blue light and  
47 weather. And Anthropologist Cornelius Osgood  
48 documented this observation in the '30s, 1930s that  
49 lamprey emitted a kind of light as they swim. And the  
50

0145

1 quote on the screen there notes the same observation.  
2 At that time in November there's usually minimal to no  
3 snow cover on the river, on the frozen river, and  
4 certain vantage points or particular locations you can  
5 see a long way downriver and fishers would observe a  
6 light blue or flashing blue light that signalled the  
7 arrival of lamprey. The arriving pulse of lamprey also  
8 brought a spell of warmer weather and along with it a  
9 bit of wet snow or rain according to some elders. The  
10 weather was said to change again once the lamprey  
11 passed. It's also possible that weather observations  
12 may -- may be how lamprey -- lamprey may choose to move  
13 in response to certain weather changes. So that's  
14 another aspect of things that people used to understand  
15 movement.

16  
17 Unlike other fish harvest the harvest  
18 of lamprey is generally a large group activity likely  
19 because of the concentrated nature of the run. Though  
20 the run is concentrated it is highly variable and so  
21 fishermen must be very patient to observe and not to  
22 miss them. Usually fishermen begin to watch for  
23 lamprey by talking to other communities further  
24 downriver or by camping out by prepared holes and  
25 watching for the fish as they pass underneath or what  
26 was referred to as eel TV when I was there. Fishermen  
27 have -- usually have to prepare and cut their holes  
28 well ahead of time, nowadays with chainsaws and ice  
29 shovels because to do so during the migration would  
30 likely drive the fish away. There -- the -- these  
31 holes are usually cut parallel to the bank so that  
32 fishers can dip against the current. And sometimes  
33 these camps can be quite a distance from the village.  
34 Grayling holes were usually about eight to 12 miles  
35 downriver from the village, Shageluk fishermen travel  
36 over a frozen tributary about 70 river miles or 35 to  
37 40 overland miles from the Innoko to the Yukon.  
38 Mountain Village has a good spot about six miles  
39 downriver for example. Fishers look for areas near the  
40 edge of the river where there's a steep slope.  
41 According to local folks the water runs more swiftly in  
42 these areas which is a necessary element of productive  
43 lamprey fishing spot. They look for glare ice which is  
44 an indicator of swift running water under the ice and  
45 place where lamprey tend to swim in clumps. Also where  
46 the water moves more slowly thicker ice forms, that's  
47 more work to cut through the ice.

48  
49 Once the lamprey hit fishers dip the fish out of  
50

0146

1 the water or through the holes as you can see there in  
2 those pictures with a dipnet or eel rakes. Eel rakes  
3 or sticks are usually curved spruce poles about six  
4 feet long resembling hockey sticks either with or  
5 without nails sticking out at regular intervals. The L  
6 shaped curve of the stick comes from selecting a small  
7 spruce tree that grows out of a cut bank and grows  
8 upward creating a natural L shape. When eel sticks --  
9 when eel rakes or sticks are used the holes are cut  
10 perpendicular to the bank so that the fisher can swipe  
11 through the water against the current. Takes a lot of  
12 strength to do this for those of you who have tried and  
13 it's usually a two person job, one person dipping and  
14 the other person dumping the net. If the run is strong  
15 fishers can get 25 to 30 fish per dip. And as you can  
16 see there they're tossed onto the ice to freeze.

17  
18                   Lamprey remain an important seasonal  
19 subsistence resource for a lot of fishermen in the  
20 area, they arrive after salmon runs and just after  
21 freeze up. They're extremely high in oil and can be  
22 preserved -- only preserved for long periods of time  
23 through smoking and jarring. Frozen eels will last  
24 about a month for folks in Grayling before going  
25 rancid. Residents don't generally clean lamprey  
26 stomachs before processing. Lamprey are cartilage fish  
27 so there's no bone removal. Historically -- well, they  
28 use all parts except for the heads above the gill pores  
29 and the tail. Historically women would prepare a large  
30 feast of lamprey shortly after the harvest by pounding  
31 them in a special pestle made of alder that would  
32 render out the oil. Cooked lamprey would then be  
33 dipped in this oil and eaten in a community feast in  
34 the (in Native). Their high oil content also makes  
35 them a valuable dog food in the winter. And primarily  
36 they're just used for people and dog food, however  
37 historically they had many other uses. Their oil was  
38 used to keep skin boots conditioned, tanned skins were  
39 also used to make rain slickers similar to gut parkas  
40 found on the coast and the skins were made into  
41 decorative or utilitarian bags to hold clothes or other  
42 belongings and dried food in caches. And some of these  
43 bags are actually still on display in major east coast  
44 museums.

45  
46                   One of the most interesting aspects of  
47 the beliefs that have evolved around lamprey fishing  
48 especially in the GASH area is the idea that lamprey  
49 are highly sentient or knowing fish that sets them  
50

1 apart from other fish species. It's not to say that  
2 local people don't recognize an interactive  
3 relationship between themselves and other fish species,  
4 only that lamprey are particularly sensitive. This  
5 sensitivity shapes their continuing relationship with  
6 lamprey specifically in terms of harvest practices. So  
7 fishers in Grayling often refer to lamprey as smart or  
8 superstitious and they're aware of the actions of  
9 fishermen and they act accordingly. As a result  
10 fishers in the area were careful to observe long term  
11 practices that would not offend or scare the lamprey  
12 away. For example the two most often cited beliefs and  
13 practices were the prohibition of women on the ice  
14 during the harvest and being on the ice to harvest  
15 within one year of losing someone in your family.  
16 During the November that I traveled out to the area to  
17 do some of this research I actually took a male  
18 colleague with me because I could not be on the ice.  
19 So all those pictures were taken by him.

20

21                   Sparked by interest from a processor  
22 and fishers in 2003 Fish and Game issued a  
23 Commissioner's permit for an experimental Arctic  
24 lamprey commercial fishery. The mission statement of  
25 the Department of Fish and Game is to protect, maintain  
26 and improve fish, game and plant resources of the State  
27 and to manage their use and development of the best  
28 interest of the economy and the well-being of the State  
29 consistent with sustained yield principles. In order  
30 to offer a commercial fishery there must be some  
31 scientific confidence that there are enough fish to  
32 allow some for harvest and there must be a  
33 buyer/processor and interested fishers. Our knowledge  
34 of the historical subsistence harvest and the capacity  
35 of the lamprey run to return year after year despite  
36 the harvest pressure from the subsistence fishery gave  
37 the Department confidence that a small scale fishery  
38 could be successful. The goal is to manage for a very  
39 conservative harvest, 10 percent of the total run or  
40 not exceeding that, that would conserve the fish  
41 population and provide some economic benefits to the  
42 people in the region.

43

44                   The experimental fishery's also a  
45 platform for collecting and processing samples which  
46 would allow the Department to learn more about the  
47 biology, ecology and run dynamics of Arctic lamprey.  
48 The permits have allowed a range of combined total  
49 harvest from 5,000 to 44,000 pounds of Arctic lamprey.

50

0148

1 The 44,000 pound harvest cap was based on historical  
2 subsistence harvest information of run duration and  
3 catch rates of lamprey in the lower Yukon area. The  
4 experimental commercial fishery provides a platform for  
5 data collection, but also depends on knowing enough  
6 about abundance to continue providing that opportunity.  
7 There are few monitoring efforts that help with this,  
8 the lamprey test fishery, commercial fish tickets and  
9 harvest monitoring through household surveys and the  
10 post-season salmon survey and that latter is for  
11 subsistence. I'll talk about each of these and what  
12 they tell us about lamprey biology and use over the  
13 next few slides.

14  
15 As noted the commercial fishery allows  
16 for a small economic input for the participating  
17 locations such as Grayling which is where one of the  
18 locations is. The number of fishers range from zero to  
19 38 over the time period that it's been offered with an  
20 average of about 12 fishers although there are five  
21 years where there were no fishers and you can see those  
22 years where there are dashes instead of numbers in the  
23 number of fishermen column which is over there on the  
24 left. The total harvest on average is about 11,000  
25 pounds or about 49,000 fish with an average weight of  
26 about .26 pounds per fish. The approximate economic  
27 input on average about 19,000 for the total harvest,  
28 approximately 1,500 per fisher though some years the  
29 commercial fishers earned only about 200 while in -- on  
30 -- in other years fishermen earned an average of about  
31 2,000 to 8,000. Because the run is so variable it's a  
32 risky test to invest in and many fishers do it  
33 opportunistically while they're doing their subsistence  
34 fishing.

35  
36 As noted earlier the experimental  
37 commercial fishery also provides some economic benefit,  
38 but it also results in samples that provide  
39 opportunities for research to help us learn more about  
40 these amazing fish. The samples that we take from the  
41 commercial harvest and test fishery include length,  
42 weight and sex which provides some basic biological  
43 stock information. Partnering with UAF graduate  
44 students on this data collection has also provided  
45 information about fecundity, gonad weight, liver weight  
46 and reproductive status. Age information is an  
47 important component of creating spawner recruit models  
48 for understanding abundance and sibling relationships,  
49 but the unique life history of lamprey makes it hard to  
50

0149

1 get this information. Age information can be collected  
2 from scales, vertebrae and bone -- and otolith, none of  
3 which the lamprey have. Lamprey from other locations  
4 have a statolith in place of an otolith or an ear bone,  
5 but the Alaskan waters have a low pH which prevents the  
6 fish from forming them. The current hope is that the  
7 lamprey islands will provide a reliable source of age  
8 information.

9

10                   The two boxes there on the slide  
11 compare some biological metrics in 2022 between the  
12 lower river test fishery near the mouth of the Yukon  
13 and the Grayling fishery further upriver. If you  
14 compare length, total weight and liver weight you'll  
15 see some significant differences. Locals remarked that  
16 the fish at the lower Yukon test fishery looked like  
17 good, healthy fish, average size while up at Grayling  
18 folks reported that lamprey looked pretty small. And  
19 this is in 2022. Could this be a difference between  
20 the first and the second pulses or do these differences  
21 reflect changes in body condition that occur through  
22 the migration. So those are the kind of questions that  
23 biologists are trying to understand, to piece together  
24 more of that history or more of that ecology.

25

26                   Lamprey harvest data has also been  
27 collected on an annual basis through the Post-Season  
28 Salmon Survey Program conducted in person and through  
29 lamprey harvest survey conducted by postcard. I know  
30 these are really tiny numbers on this slide, but the  
31 information I think is -- that is most useful for you  
32 to see here are the trends. If we consider harvest  
33 levels as partially a result of abundance levels, how  
34 many fish there are swimming in the river, we can see  
35 several low and high periods which may further validate  
36 that inconsistency that local fishers observe. And so  
37 if you look at the overall annual and 10 year averages  
38 which I think I've bolded there at the bottom, we see  
39 harvest of about eight to 9,000 fish annually. So  
40 there's a whole lot of research going on as well.

41

42                   The Department has funded several  
43 research projects partnered with YRDFA to create the  
44 lamprey test fishery program and that experimental  
45 fishery is part of that. In this way the experimental  
46 fishery also contributes to the body of knowledge about  
47 fish species. So I already mentioned -- I already  
48 mentioned that 2002/2003 traditional ecological  
49 knowledge study that I conducted, but since then a  
50

0150

1 variety of projects by Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife  
2 Service and NOAA have encountered Arctic lamprey and as  
3 I mentioned before with some work with individuals at  
4 UAF and support with funding through the Pacific  
5 Lamprey Conservation Initiative we have some additional  
6 accumulated knowledge.

7

8                   In 2004 Fish and Game attempted sonar  
9 monitoring of the lamprey run at Grayling. That year  
10 lamprey traveled nose to tail in a concentrated group  
11 for about eight hours. Sonar is very expensive and  
12 several logistical challenges remain to calibrate sonar  
13 for lamprey including ice conditions because safety  
14 matters, site assessment, knowing what the bottom looks  
15 like, evaluating high density runs 2004 which when we  
16 did this was assessed as a fairly mediocre run compared  
17 to or based on what fishermen's -- fishermen's  
18 perceptions of the run based on their experience with  
19 previous runs. And whether or not the sonar is  
20 providing a true picture of the total run. Recall that  
21 we learned from local knowledge that lamprey may also  
22 run on the other side of the river so we're not really  
23 sure we need to know what proportion of the run was  
24 typical for one side or the other to calibrate what  
25 we're seeing in that one spot.

26

27                   From 2016 to 2019 the Department tagged  
28 9,000 lamprey for a mark recapture study to estimate  
29 the size of the population, but only 17 tags were  
30 recovered. The ratio of 9,000 tags to 17 recovered  
31 tags is so low that the study was unreliable. So maybe  
32 we didn't look in the right locations for lamprey  
33 recaptures or maybe the tags were shed by the fish, but  
34 the suspicion of unreliability led to some follow-up  
35 studies with the graduate students from UAF. So they  
36 conducted a study in 2018 to 2022 looking into tag  
37 retention which showed that lamprey heal well and are  
38 unencumbered by tags meaning that they swim well and  
39 they live out their full natural lives after tagging.  
40 This is promising because it shows that lamprey can be  
41 tagged successfully, but combined with a large scale  
42 tagging study indicates that there's still a lot to  
43 learn about how many lamprey run up the Yukon and where  
44 and when they spawn.

45

46                   In spring of 2023, just this year, four  
47 tags were placed under two feet of ice on the Tanana  
48 River, not I believe in lamprey, but just placed under  
49 the ice to see if the radio tags could be heard by  
50



0151

1 radio receivers on towers and airplanes. And it was  
2 very successful suggesting that telemetry may be a  
3 possible or a beneficial way to monitor lamprey  
4 movement through the drainage. And that's a technique  
5 that we use for other fish as well.

6  
7 So to sum up traditional knowledge  
8 which is developed over time through observing and  
9 harvesting these fish for subsistence really provides  
10 our baseline of information about customary and  
11 traditional uses, but also about the ecology of these  
12 fish including run timing and juvenile habitats, but we  
13 still have a long way to go including general relative  
14 abundance, spawning areas, swimming behavior and  
15 location are all examples of information that could and  
16 should be further developed to understand a better  
17 picture of lamprey life history and abundance  
18 assessments which are all necessary for sustainable  
19 management.

20  
21 And I leave you with this lovely  
22 picture of a -- of the mouths of Arctic lamprey versus  
23 Pacific lamprey. And I'd be happy to take any  
24 questions.

25  
26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you for your  
27 report, Caroline. Do we have any question or comments  
28 for Caroline at this time regarding lamprey yields.

29  
30 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

33  
34 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
35 Through the Chair. Thank you so much for your  
36 presentation. This is exciting news. I know we've  
37 been trying to get some type of information in regards  
38 to lamprey eels because they -- people have been coming  
39 to us and asking us about the lamprey eels and why the  
40 population is declining and why studies haven't been  
41 done yet before the commercial fishery opened. So I'm  
42 glad we actually got something finally in our books.

43  
44 I do have a couple questions. The  
45 first question is was there a study in regards to using  
46 saws versus -- what are they called, chainsaw, sorry,  
47 using chainsaw versus cutting holes in the river  
48 because I know that our past couple -- couple past  
49 Council members that are from that area had really big  
50

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1 concerns about using chainsaws and having the oil deter  
2 the lamprey from being caught in that specific one  
3 versus one that was chopped up via ice pick. Was there  
4 anything in regards to that as well?

5

6 MS. BROWN: Through the Chair. Not  
7 that the Department has done. I have heard that as  
8 well although it's a little bit harder for me to have  
9 some of that information because I'm not on the ice  
10 with fishers. But I have heard the same concerns when  
11 I interviewed fishers back in the communities and I've  
12 talked to people since then about that, and I think it  
13 -- my understanding of that is, you know, that that  
14 kind of varies place to place and fisher to fisher even  
15 about their concerns with that. And it might even have  
16 things to do with ice thickness at a particular time  
17 period or a particular place. But no, the Department  
18 has not conducted any -- any research having to do with  
19 the method of cutting the holes.

20

21 MS. ROGERS: Follow-up, Mr. Chair.

22

23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Alissa.

24

25 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. A follow-up  
26 question also. I was looking at what you had for  
27 subsistence lamprey harvest and your lamprey harvest  
28 estimate from the commercial fishery. I realize that  
29 there is significant highs and significant lows in both  
30 and when you add them together and then you get a full  
31 harvest estimate. Have you, the Department, noticed  
32 any type of -- well, I guess the question would be  
33 production -- production activity of the lamprey. Do  
34 we have enough information to know how long a lamprey  
35 will be alive, how successful are their production  
36 rates and like how many years -- like you have king  
37 salmon would be nine to 12 years and then you have  
38 chums which is like two to three years, lamprey in that  
39 to see the population fluctuation? What I'm concerned  
40 is like during the years of low production population  
41 we shouldn't be having openers.

42

43 MS. BROWN: Through the Chair. Those  
44 are really excellent questions. I'm going to take a  
45 stab at it and then I'm going to hopefully invite Sam  
46 Decker on the phone to add any more biological context  
47 if she has it. I think -- I think one of the -- one of  
48 the issues that is important to kind of think about in  
49 the beginning here is that when that experimental  
50

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1 fishery went in in 2003 I think it was there was a lot  
2 of debate about it for that particular reason, right.  
3 Really the only thing we knew about Arctic lamprey was  
4 what -- was what people -- what the fishers themselves  
5 knew. And but that's also one of the purposes of that  
6 Commissioner's permit, it's a special type of permit  
7 that's a low level fishery to try to collect data.  
8 There is -- I don't -- I'm not aware of significant  
9 biological research on lamprey prior to that. So all  
10 the samp -- a lot of the samples we've -- or a lot of  
11 the biological information we have we have because of  
12 that low level commercial fishery. There have also  
13 been attempts to increase that fishery and I don't  
14 believe it's happened because of the experimental  
15 nature of it. And not -- and the need to have more  
16 information than we do in order to expand it.

17  
18 So in terms of like being able to say  
19 predicting like what is a low or a high year, because  
20 we don't have any monitoring of the lamprey coming into  
21 the river we don't really have any that I'm aware of  
22 and maybe Sam will correct me, not aware of any -- any  
23 ideas of what's coming to know if it's -- if it's a  
24 high or a low year. I think in general it limits  
25 itself, right, if you've got a 15 minute run that's  
26 going to be hard to hit. If you've got an eight day  
27 run that's a little bit easier to harvest on. And  
28 those are probably fairly -- abundance probably goes  
29 with those. So a longer run is going to be a higher  
30 abundance year, a 15 minute run's going to be super  
31 low. And, you know, just looking at the commercial  
32 data or the subsistence harvest data that we get from  
33 the post-season salmon survey or from the postcards, we  
34 did -- you do see those highs and lows and it probably  
35 has a lot to do with, you know, how many fish are  
36 actually there to fish.

37  
38 There's another dataset, but it's very  
39 limited which is the household surveys that we did and  
40 I did not show you those data because we only have a  
41 few years of it when we worked in individual villages  
42 and those harvest estimates tend to be higher than we  
43 get from the post-season salmon survey because it's  
44 focused in a different way than the post-season salmon  
45 survey which is really about collecting salmon data.  
46 But the post-season salmon survey is also great because  
47 it really gives us an idea on an annual basis of the  
48 harvest of other fish too, so it's really valuable for  
49 those reasons as well.  
50

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1                   So that's -- I'm going to stop there  
2 before I do anything else. But I'm going to invite Sam  
3 if she knows anything about lamprey lifecycles or some  
4 of the spawning behavior that you talked about.

5

6                   MS. DECKER: Thank you, Caroline. Can  
7 you hear me?

8

9                   MS. BROWN: Kind of.

10

11                   MS. DECKER: Okay. I'll try to speak  
12 up. This is Sam Decker, I'm in the Fairbanks office of  
13 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. And thank you  
14 to Caroline for doing this presentation. I know it's  
15 so difficult to do things, you know, through Teams and  
16 over the phone. So I was really, really glad that  
17 Caroline could be there to do that presentation in  
18 person. And thank you, everybody, for, you know,  
19 allowing us to do it on Caroline's schedule so that you  
20 could have the benefit of having an in person  
21 presentation.

22

23                   So hi, Alissa. We've met before down  
24 in Bethel, I'm glad to hear from you. And these are --  
25 these are sort of really interesting questions that we  
26 are trying to answer about lamprey is these questions  
27 about productivity and their life history. They're a  
28 super.....

29

30                   MS. McDAVID: Sam, we're going to need  
31 to stop you for a second. Sorry.

32

33                   MS. DECKER: Oh, that's okay.

34

35                   MS. McDAVID: Oh, okay. Try again.

36

37                   MS. DECKER: Okay. Can everybody hear  
38 me better now?

39

40                   MS. McDAVID: Yes, you're clear now.  
41 So whatever you're doing is working okay.

42

43                   MS. DECKER: Great. Well, I just  
44 wanted to thank Alissa for her questions because these  
45 are exactly the same questions that we have about  
46 lamprey. Their life history is really, really  
47 difficult. You get asked about all of this kind of --  
48 a number of things that we measure about fish, you  
49 know, we get a lot of information from scales, from  
50

0155

1 otoliths, from vertebrae and lamprey don't have any of  
2 those especially our Alaskan lamprey. So we -- we're  
3 partnering with different agencies and trying to find  
4 out what biological part of the lamprey would be  
5 effective at telling us more about their life history.  
6 And right now the eye lens is something that's being  
7 tested in Pacific lamprey because they -- in the lower  
8 48 Pacific lamprey have both the eye lens and the  
9 (indiscernible - distortion) and they're able to look  
10 at eye lens and judge how closely the age of the fish  
11 that's returning from both of those parts of the fish.  
12 If that proves successful then that will give  
13 information about our Arctic lamprey (indiscernible -  
14 distortion) and only have the eye lens. They go  
15 through this -- so our Arctic lamprey live in very  
16 similar habitat to salmon and then -- and they -- they  
17 -- you know, when they're -- when they hatch out of  
18 their reds they go downriver and they metamorphose into  
19 these ammocoete and the ammocoete are the juvenile  
20 stage that live in the mud. That can be for years they  
21 can live in those -- in those living sections before  
22 they head out to sea probably within (indiscernible -  
23 distortion) either.

24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

26

27 MS. ROGERS: Sam, it's Alissa, you're  
28 cracking up and it's hard -- kind of hard to hear. You  
29 were giving -- the part that I lost you at was the age  
30 between adulthood to or sorry, the rearing to adulthood  
31 when they spawn. I think -- I think that's what you  
32 said, I couldn't clearly hear -- hear you very clear?

33

34 MS. DECKER: Okay. So.....

35

36 MS. McDAVID: And, Sam, sorry before  
37 you start. If you could turn off your video and -- we  
38 actually can't see you here in the room so that might  
39 help too with bandwidth or something with the audio.

40

41 Thank you.

42

43 MS. DECKER: Sure. Alissa, if you'll  
44 give me your -- if you'll -- if you'll give me your  
45 email address I can also email you this information.  
46 Let me see if I have you here in my contacts. I know I  
47 can get ahold of Brooke so I can also email this  
48 information to Brooke. Can everybody hear me better  
49 now, am I coming through a little more clearly?  
50

0156

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, we can.

2

3 MS. DECKER: Okay. So basically the --  
4 they have a -- lamprey have a very flexible life  
5 history. The amount of time that they spend as an  
6 ammocoete in the mud.....

7

8 MS. ROGERS: I'm -- I'm good. Mr.  
9 Chair.

10

11 MS. DECKER: I hear -- I hear talking  
12 in the background. (Indiscernible - distortion).....

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, Sam, you're  
15 breaking up again. You get good for one minute and  
16 then get bad for another minute. You're breaking off  
17 and on.

18

19 Go ahead, Alissa.

20

21 MS. DECKER: How about -- how about

22

23 this.  
24 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
25 Through the Chair. Sam, can you.....

26

27 MS. DECKER: If people will.....

28

29 MS. ROGERS: .....would -- would it be  
30 just okay that you can send me that information, I can  
31 just share it within the group. It's.....

32

33 MS. DECKER: Yeah.

34

35 MS. ROGERS: .....really hard to hear  
36 in translation, trying to come through. So if it's  
37 okay with you, Mr. Chair, we can go ahead and move on  
38 and she can just email the information.

39

40 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, thank you. I  
41 think you could go ahead and email the information to  
42 Brooke.

43

44 Is there any other questions or  
45 comments for Caroline at this time regarding lamprey  
46 eels.

47

48 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

49

50 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, go ahead.

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MR. LANDLORD: I always wondered --  
thank you, Mr. Chair, wondered where they spawn, do  
they spawn all the way up the river?

MS. BROWN: Through the Chair. As far  
as we know they spawn into Canada. So and one of the  
main reasons we know that is not just because every now  
and then a fisherman might get say for example a  
lamprey in a fish wheel or upper -- upper river, in the  
upper river area, but also because they come out of the  
mud in the -- in the earlier parts of the year or the  
spring and summer when they're emerging from the mud  
after the -- the juveniles, after -- you know, after  
they've been spawned. And so they -- they come out in  
-- they come out then in the mud. And I mentioned that  
elders used to tell me stories about collecting them in  
old coffee cans at fish camp. And I myself saw that  
once in a -- my family and I just did a canoe trip in  
the -- it was in one of the rivers around in the Yukon  
Flats area and upper river Yukon area. And my kids  
actually found them coming out of the -- of the mud  
there too. And so that was pretty far upriver. And I  
think the only reason I could have even recognized what  
they were because they were like worms with gill holes,  
was with having done this research. So it took me a  
minute, but I was like oh, look, that's juvenile  
lamprey.

So yeah. So they -- I think they spawn  
all the way up into Canada, but we know that again from  
people's observations of them in those -- in those  
habitats.

MR. LANDLORD: I'd ask if there was a  
difference between lower Yukon test fishery and  
Grayling test fishery, these are all Yukon lam -- 423  
female, male 409, in Grayling 381 and 332. What -- why  
did they -- why they shrink?

MS. BROWN: That's a great -- through  
the Chair. That's a great question. And one of the  
reasons I -- Sam included this information for you guys  
is because what was happening or the samples that we  
were getting from the lower Yukon test fishery versus  
what we were seeing further upriver in Grayling showed  
these differences. And not just differences in length,  
but also in liver weight and, you know, overall weight  
of the fish and length as well. And so that -- it's  
just we -- we can't always answer a question from one

0158

1 piece of data, but that raised questions like what --  
2 for example, I believe the lower test fishery data did  
3 not have -- I wasn't sure about the time, the dates of  
4 that -- of that data collection, whether or not that --  
5 the dates are associated with that, but it raised  
6 questions about are these different -- you know, as we  
7 talked about before fishermen told us that in the -- in  
8 the lamprey run there might be up to three pulses say  
9 of lamprey, like there can be different pulses of say  
10 king salmon that come in. The same is likely true for  
11 lamprey because people in Grayling and -- and further  
12 downriver recognized or had observed different sort of  
13 pulses or parts of the run, different concentrations of  
14 fish. And in different locations like on one side of  
15 the river versus the other side of the river.

16

17 And so one question this raises for us  
18 is whether or not these are different -- the lower test  
19 fishery was taking samples from one pulse whereas the  
20 Grayling fishery was taking -- was taking samples from  
21 a different pulse. And that -- and so you see the  
22 difference between pulses in the -- in the size of fish  
23 and length of fish. It could also be related to other  
24 things like what lamprey go through when they're  
25 migrating, how their bodies change.

26

27 So those are answers we don't know, but  
28 in doing -- in collecting this information we're trying  
29 to piece together these different -- different kinds of  
30 information that we get about lamprey in different  
31 places so that we can piece together more of that life  
32 history and understand more about lamprey in general.

33

34 Does that help?

35

36 MR. LANDLORD: Yes.

37

38 MS. DECKER: This is Sam Decker. Can  
39 people hear me?

40

41 MS. McDAVID: Sam, we can hear you.  
42 There is an echo. If you're still on Teams on the  
43 computer too maybe make sure to mute your mic on your  
44 computer, but we can hear you much better.

45

46 MS. DECKER: Okay. I'm trying again.

47

48 MS. McDAVID: There you go, that's.....

49

50



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1 MS. DECKER: I've got all of the other  
2 mics turned off.

3  
4 MS. McDAVID: .....that sounds great.

5  
6 MS. DECKER: Okay. I just wanted to  
7 thank Caroline, I think you're doing a great job of  
8 answering these questions. If anybody has anything  
9 else specific I don't -- I don't think we need to  
10 backtrack unless people have specific questions that I  
11 can answer.

12  
13 Thank you for your patience with all  
14 the technology.

15  
16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, James.

17  
18 MR. LANDLORD: Yeah. Okay. On  
19 human/lamprey relationship, they said they got  
20 feelings. Even in -- even in Mountain Village where  
21 there was an elder, people used to, you know, dip their  
22 nets. And there's one elder when he saw -- even if  
23 they left him on top of the ice he kept telling the  
24 young guys that were dipping you can't leave them  
25 behind, you've got to take them home. If you keep  
26 leaving them behind they're going to disappear when --  
27 when they fish. And they did disappear, they never  
28 came back to that area even in front of Mountain  
29 Village for a long time. I said we were thinking that  
30 they were migrating on the south side, but they never  
31 came back on the north side where -- where the guys  
32 left their fish and didn't take them home. So that  
33 make me think when the elders say, you know, you got to  
34 take them home, you got to -- you can't leave them  
35 there. Even with pikes they -- they will -- the same  
36 thing. You can't leave them on the ice, on top of the  
37 ice, on the beach or whatever, they'll disappear and  
38 maybe they'll go to another route.

39  
40 And I think Stanislaus Sheppard know  
41 that too because one of the elders kept telling them  
42 you can't leave them behind, you can't leave them  
43 behind, but they didn't listen and we never had eels  
44 for a long -- for a long time on the north side.

45  
46 Thanks.

47  
48 MS. BROWN: Through the Chair. I think  
49 that's a really important observation. And one thing  
50

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1 that I would stress based on my experience doing some  
2 of this research on traditional knowledge is that it  
3 may or may not be true for the entire lower Yukon, but  
4 I know that in the GASH area the sensitivity of those  
5 fish and their -- how those fish relate to humans is  
6 really important to them and it's a really important  
7 thing to respect when thinking also about research. So  
8 in making sure that, you know, we know about those  
9 local concerns and those local knowledge about lamprey.  
10 You know, just like for example when I went out there  
11 women aren't allowed on the ice so I did not go on the  
12 ice. And so but it's not necessarily a fish that --  
13 because of their beliefs about the fish and the fish's  
14 sensitivity, it's something we need -- as researchers  
15 need to be aware of and need to be -- need to -- need  
16 to work with to do that research.

17

18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, go ahead.

19

20 MR. LANDLORD: Yes, last -- last year  
21 they finally came back and -- after a long time and we  
22 were very glad because they came back. We were able to  
23 -- able to dip even from people from St. Mary's and  
24 Peters Point came down and a lot -- a lot of guys were  
25 dipping with Willow Mountain all the way up, maybe  
26 above 40mile. So I think -- anyway they got  
27 really.....

28

29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

30

31 MS. BROWN: So just one last thing. I  
32 know that there are lots of questions about the life  
33 history and the biology of lamprey. We are trying to  
34 learn as much as we can as quickly as we can, but I  
35 just wanted to ask Brooke if she could give you guys  
36 Sam Decker's contact information and my contact  
37 information for any further questions. Sam's always a  
38 great person to contact or reach out to if you have  
39 questions especially on the Yukon. And if she doesn't  
40 know the answer she'll find it. So if -- you know, I  
41 would encourage all of you guys to reach out with any  
42 additional questions you have and if you have any  
43 questions about harvest and use and subsistence and  
44 traditional knowledge I'd be happy to share any of  
45 that.

46

47 Thanks.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. I

50

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1 believe we have Stanislaus Sheppard that want to  
2 comment. I'll give you two minutes.

3

4

5 MR. SHEPPARD: Mr. Chair, members of  
6 the Board. My name is Stanislaus Sheppard, born and  
7 raised in Mountain Village. Speaking on my behalf, and  
8 not representing no -- any organization. Because I  
9 participated this last fall on the lamprey eels and I  
10 have some knowledge, I don't have a diploma or  
11 certificate to prove that my knowledge is to believe,  
12 it's what the elders pass down to me. And I try my  
13 best to follow. Back home our tradition as we all know  
14 is going down. They're switching more to the western  
15 world. In all the game and fish we gather there's a  
16 special way we do it, taught by our elders. If we  
17 don't do it right we'll lose them.

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Now you brought up two points that were  
right. A person that has loss in the family can't go  
down and harvest. And a woman that's (in Native).....

MS. BROWN: Childbearing years.

MR. SHEPPARD: .....baby.

MS. BROWN: Yeah.

MR. SHEPPARD: Child -- yeah. They  
can't go down. They'll -- they'll -- they'll sense  
that and go. So it was -- it's been trying years. I  
have this cousin up in St. Mary's, his grandkids were  
born the year we never -- we quit getting eels. Last  
year they turned six and seven. They brought them in  
the house, they were scared of those eels. So it's  
been six, seven years, maybe a cycle. We don't know.  
But before we lost that run all I know elders tell me  
we get them three, four days at the most in Mountain  
Village, dipping.

And before we lose them (in Native)  
that run, it -- it takes Mountain Village to Pilot  
Station two days. If we get them in Mountain Village  
whether it be in the evening or afternoon, two days  
it'll get to Pilot Station. After -- after two days  
when they get from Mountain Village it takes five days  
to get to Marshall. So before that year, that fall  
before (in Native), before they lost and I've never  
seen this before, we get them in Mountain Village,  
people think this point, they start coming down, they

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1 start checking the beats, second day they get them in  
2 -- they get them in Pilot Station. And then by the  
3 fifth day they get them in Marshall. We were still  
4 getting them in Mountain Village. So that was a really  
5 huge run. Elders tell me something's going to happen  
6 to these eels, this is not normal. Sure enough every  
7 year we check, no eels, no eels. I monitor the ice on  
8 the water, ice on the beach. I just told her a picture  
9 of how it is when the eels are in (in Native).  
10 Sometimes the water comes up, the weather warms up and  
11 it drifts the ice out, we can't go out there unless we  
12 pull our boat down and go get.

13

14 So that's -- I hope that, Sam, if you  
15 hear me and you have that information.....

16

17 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

18

19 MR. SHEPPARD: .....now.

20

21 MS. BROWN: Yep.

22

23 MR. SHEPPARD: And right now if you and  
24 Sam could prepare to think about keeping an eye on  
25 Mountain Village towards the end of this month,  
26 October.....

27

28 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

29

30 MR. SHEPPARD: .....is when we start  
31 paying attention to when they start coming up the  
32 Yukon. When we know that YRDFA has those studies and I  
33 seen these pictures up there, they may be catching  
34 like, if I may say, Chairman, he mentioned to me he had  
35 taste of eels last week. That's way too early for  
36 us.....

37

38 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

39

40 MR. SHEPPARD: .....but maybe from the  
41 test fishery. So toward the end of this month, too  
42 next month, it depends. And our eels were very  
43 small.....

44

45 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

46

47 MR. SHEPPARD: .....last fall.

48

49 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

50

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1 MR. SHEPPARD: They were small and  
2 really bright silver. It might have been the last run,  
3 it might be the second run. For sure it wasn't the  
4 first run. The first ones were little bigger size,  
5 little bit slimmer and mixed with the big kind of red  
6 ones. The second run is little bit bigger, silver,  
7 bright silver. And then mixed with the big -- not as  
8 red as the first ones, okay. And my -- my uncle, we  
9 all know Nick Andrews, Sr., right.....

10

11 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

12

13 MR. SHEPPARD: .....an elder. He said  
14 him and his buddy Al Notertuk (ph) before he passed  
15 away sometime 15, 20 years ago maybe, we all know when  
16 we travel on the Yukon River they're streams, trib --  
17 not tributaries, streams that we could take for  
18 shortcut, all right. From Pilot Station to Marshall  
19 there's this one slough we take for shortcut to  
20 Marshall, Olive Slough. He said one -- one winter they  
21 run in -- they went to that river and they seen open  
22 water, nothing but boiling eels in there, lamprey. So  
23 -- so they -- that tells me that they don't all go  
24 upriver.....

25

26 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

27

28 MR. SHEPPARD: .....to spawn.

29

30 MS. BROWN: But they have spawning all  
31 over.

32

33 MR. SHEPPARD: Uh-huh. And I  
34 participated maybe one or two times when YR DFA was  
35 trying to get purchase of lamprey -- eels in Mountain  
36 Village. We had to go through Juneau commercial  
37 fishery to purchase freshwater permit. Okay.

38

39 Okay. Yeah. So thank you very much  
40 for allowing me to speak, Mr. Chair. Quyana.

41

42 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you.  
43 Appreciate it. Brooke, go ahead.

44

45 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
46 Thank you, Caroline and Sam for your presentations.  
47 Sam did send me her contact information and so I'll  
48 email it to you Council members who use email. If you  
49 have any more questions you can reach out to Sam via  
50

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1 phone or email. And for those of you that don't use  
2 email if you want to get in touch with Sam just let me  
3 know and I'll give you her phone number.

4

5 And I also wanted to remind Council  
6 members that next year will be a time when you get to  
7 develop priority information needs as part of the  
8 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. And if you  
9 think that more research needs to be done about lamprey  
10 eels then you could include that as a priority  
11 information need and folks like Sam and Caroline and  
12 researchers at UAF could submit research proposals.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Caroline, I  
17 appreciate your report.

18

19 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman.

20

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: We have a couple more  
22 Councils members. Go ahead, John.

23

24 MR. ANDREW: Yeah, Guyana. Thank you  
25 very much. Caroline I've got a urgent question. Where  
26 do I get those big eel dipnets?

27

28 MS. BROWN: Where?

29

30 MR. ANDREW: You can bring me a couple  
31 of them so I can experiment if I go home. So....

32

33 (Laughter)

34

35 MR. ANDREW: Yeah, we caught eels on  
36 the Kuskokwim too. We usually know because some of our  
37 young men always go checking for certain time like in  
38 -- sometime in October, they have -- their bellies are  
39 full of eels. Again in -- towards the latter part of  
40 the month or right before Thanksgiving and sometime in  
41 December too.

42

43 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

44

45 MR. ANDREW: But hardly nobody harvests  
46 them, but last year a few guys were dipping for them  
47 with small -- real small smelt dipnets, they were  
48 catching. And across from our village and we heard  
49 some guys were catch -- one of the Napoka boys were  
50

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1 catching up at bridge of Tuluksak. And that's 30  
2 something miles upriver from where we are. So you can  
3 help us by getting -- getting us some good size  
4 dipnets, we'll be happy.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 Quyana.

9

10 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

13

14 MS. ROGERS: Quyana. I have one more  
15 questions. Are you planning on doing this same study  
16 in the Kuskokwim area?

17

18 MS. BROWN: Through the Chair. I think  
19 Brooke just mentioned about your priority information  
20 needs and if you ask for it probably somebody will try  
21 to meet that need.

22

23 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
24 Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I don't see any other  
27 hands or -- go ahead, James.

28

29 MR. LANDLORD: Just one small note.  
30 When the eels are coming if there's ice in front of  
31 Mount -- in our village and it's just ice and when eels  
32 are coming in the water usually come up just a small,  
33 but you can see the difference when just plain ice.  
34 But when they come in the water goes over the ice and  
35 there's puddles some water out on the ice. So that's  
36 one of the signs too that the young guys know that  
37 there's eels in the river.

38

39 MS. BROWN: Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I think I don't see any  
42 more hands up. Thank you, Caroline, appreciate your  
43 report. I look forward to updates on -- or any reports  
44 that you may have in the future. Appreciate what  
45 you've given to us.

46

47 Thank you. Yeah, I think it's that  
48 time where we could go to lunch. Let's go ahead and  
49 take a lunch break and come back in at 1:30. Break for  
50

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1 lunch.

2

3 (Off record)

4

5 (On record)

6

7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, good afternoon,  
8 everybody. We're about to get started here if you can  
9 seat yourself. Okay. I'll go ahead and call the  
10 meeting back to order. The time now is 1:38 p.m.  
11 We're going to be going right into the wildlife  
12 proposals and closure review. First on the list is the  
13 regional proposal and closure review WCR24-38, Unit 18  
14 Kuskokwim River hunt area closed to moose hunting  
15 except by residents of Tuntutuliak, Eek, Napakiak,  
16 Napaskiak, Kasigluk, Nunapitchuk, Atmautlauk,  
17 Oscarville, Bethel, Kwethluk, Akiachak, Akiak,  
18 Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag and Kalskag.

19

20 Tom Plank, OSM, you have the floor.

21

22 MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair.

23

24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: One moment. Brooke, go  
25 ahead.

26

27 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
28 Before we dive into going through the first proposal  
29 that you just mentioned, I did want to direct Council  
30 members to Page 64 of your meeting books. And it's  
31 actually also printed on the back of your name tag  
32 cards. But this is just a reminder about the steps  
33 that we go through for every proposal and closure  
34 review. So our Staff will introduce the analysis as  
35 the first step. If there's a proposal that you're not  
36 sure, you know, that you want to take up as a Council,  
37 we'll need to not get the full analysis and then you  
38 can get a little brief from Tom for some of those  
39 crossover proposals that happen later. But once we  
40 move into present -- presentation of the full analysis  
41 then we have to go through all of the steps listed  
42 here.

43

44 And members of the audience, there is a  
45 copy of the proposal procedure steps on the table over  
46 there and it just basically outlines the order in which  
47 we'll receive comments, agency comments, Advisory Group  
48 comments, public testimony and then moving into the  
49 Council recommendation and discussion before the final

50



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1 vote. So yep, those are the steps.

2

3 If there are members of the public that  
4 would like to comment on any of the proposals you can  
5 fill out a blue card and note down  
6 the proposal name. If you're online when we -- the  
7 Chair calls for public comments on each proposal you  
8 can comment at that time.

9

10 And one other thing, the -- Scott has a  
11 note about a change in the tribal consultation process.  
12 So I'll turn that over to Scott.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 MR. AYERS: Thank you. The Federal  
17 Subsistence Board.....

18

19 MR. BURCH: Mr. Chair, this is Mark  
20 Burch with the Department of Fish and Game. I have a  
21 question.

22

23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Fish and Game, go  
24 ahead.

25

26 MR. BURCH: Yes, for the record this is  
27 Mark Burch, the -- with the Department of Fish and  
28 Game. I haven't been there in the room so it's a  
29 little bit difficult for me to track exactly what's  
30 going on, but I believe there was a Department of Fish  
31 and Game report for the Mulchatna Intensive Management  
32 Program that was to be done before you got into  
33 proposals because it was going to affect I think most  
34 of your other motion as well as the proposals and the  
35 closure review. Is that correct or did I miss -- I'm  
36 just asking the question I guess.

37

38 MS. McDAVID: Good afternoon, Mark.  
39 This is Brooke, Council Coordinator. Chair Oney just  
40 informed me that we -- if it's possible because we  
41 don't have any caribou closure reviews for Unit 18 or  
42 Mulchatna Caribou proposals, if we might be able to  
43 have that presentation under agency reports just  
44 because we're moving a little behind schedule getting  
45 into the action items on the agenda.

46 Do -- would the Department be able to  
47 accommodate that update tomorrow?

48

49 Thank you.

50

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1 MR. BURCH: Well, I can't promise that.  
2 Through the Chair, if I may. I can't promise that.  
3 We've had people sitting around for well, a day and a  
4 half so far, waiting to give that presentation and I  
5 can't guarantee that they'll be available for another  
6 day and a half.

7  
8 And also there is a proposal that's  
9 affected. If not -- I agree there's no closure, but  
10 there is a proposal I believe that's affected.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. I'll leave it up  
13 to the Council at this time. What is your  
14 recommendation, I know we -- we're going to have the  
15 Mulchatna Caribou Intensive Management Update, but like  
16 Brooke said we are getting a little behind and if we  
17 can jump into the proposals I think that can -- we  
18 could move the -- this presentation report up to agency  
19 report.

20  
21 What is the wish of the Council at this  
22 time.

23  
24 MR. BURCH: Yeah. Mr. Chair, this is  
25 Mark again. As I said I don't know that we can have  
26 people available, but if we happen to have somebody  
27 around we'll give you a report.

28  
29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

30  
31 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
32 Through the Chair. We're going to go ahead and -- I  
33 recommend we go for the proposals at this time.

34  
35 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

36  
37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you,  
38 Alissa. That's what I was recommending because we're  
39 going a little bit -- a little late with -- because I  
40 feel that the proposals that we're going to be  
41 listening to is going to take up a little more time and  
42 we could always get back to the Mulchatna Caribou Herd  
43 Management update -- Intensive Management Update during  
44 the agency reports.

45  
46 That's my recommendation. Okay. Tom,  
47 we'll let you know when we're ready for you -- Mark.  
48 Yeah, I apologize for the change. Like I mentioned we  
49 -- the proposals that we have in front of us may take a  
50

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1 little longer than we think. So sorry for the change.

2

3 Thank you. Thank you, Mark.

4

5 Moving on we could go ahead and go  
6 right into regional proposals and closure reviews.

7

8 Tom, you have the floor.

9

10 MR. AYERS: Mr. Chair, this is Scott  
11 Ayers with the Fisheries Division at OSM. I just  
12 wanted to provide a really quick update related to  
13 consultations before we jumped into this. As Brooke  
14 noted we've made a slight adjustment. The Federal  
15 Subsistence Board is committed to providing Federally  
16 tribes and ANCSA corporations with opportunities to be  
17 meaningfully involved in the subsistence regulatory  
18 process. And to that end the Board plans to hold  
19 tribal and ANCSA consultations on regulatory proposals  
20 after the fall Council meeting cycle. Holding Council  
21 -- consultations after the Council meetings provides  
22 tribes the opportunity to participate in the meetings  
23 and hear presentations about the proposals. We hope  
24 that holding consultations later in the year will be  
25 less of a conflict with subsistence activities.  
26 Currently we've identified the weeks of November 13 and  
27 December 15 to schedule consultations. Additionally  
28 the Federal Subsistence Board will again host tribal  
29 and ANCSA consultations at the start of the wildlife  
30 regulatory meeting which is April 2nd through 5th of  
31 2024. The Board will also schedule consultations with  
32 tribal governments and ANCSA corporations on any  
33 subsistence issues or concerns throughout the year as  
34 requested.

35

36 If you'd like more information on  
37 scheduling a tribal or ANCSA corporation consultation  
38 please contact the Office of Subsistence Management  
39 tribal or Native Liaison, Orville Lind, at 907-786-  
40 3953.

41

42 So again it's adjustment to our process  
43 from where we have had consultations prior to the  
44 Council meetings in the past and we're moving them  
45 after the meetings at this point in time.

46

47 Thank you for the time.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Brooke, go ahead.

50

0170

1 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So  
2 just to follow-up on what Scott said, number 2 on the  
3 proposal steps you'll see is report on Federal  
4 Subsistence Board consultations. And so as we go  
5 through these proposals there haven't been any  
6 consultations so we'll be able to skip that during this  
7 meeting today.

8

9 There -- but we do encourage if there  
10 are any tribes online or tribal representatives in the  
11 room that would like to make tribal comments today  
12 during the meeting, there are -- there is still a space  
13 under agency comments for you to do that and we welcome  
14 you to comment. We also highly encourage everyone to  
15 participate in those tribal consultations that will  
16 happen in November and December.

17

18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you,  
21 Brooke. Tom, you have the floor.

22

23 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
24 members of the Council. And for the record my name's  
25 Tom Plank and I am a Wildlife Biologist in the Office  
26 of Subsistence Management and I'll be presenting a  
27 summary of the analysis for closure review WCR 24-38  
28 which begins on Page 66 of your meeting books.

29

30 Wildlife closure review 24-39 pertains  
31 to the closure to moose hunting in a portion of Unit 18  
32 except by residents of the 13 communities located  
33 within the hunt area plus Kalskag and Lower Kalskag.  
34 Unit 18 is depicted in Figure 1 on Page 70 and is  
35 referenced to as the Kuskokwim hunt area. This closure  
36 has been in place in some form since 1991 and at that  
37 time all Federal public lands within Unit 18 were  
38 closed to non-Federally-qualified users. Then in 2010  
39 the current boundaries of the lower Kuskokwim hunt area  
40 were established and the closure within the new hunt  
41 area was modified to allow moose harvest only by  
42 residents of the 15 communities that were found to be  
43 the most dependent on this resource, the 13 communities  
44 located within the hunt area plus Kalskag and Lower  
45 Kalskag.

46

47 In 2022 the Board adopted WP22-44 to  
48 extend the fall season in Zone 2 and establish a may be  
49 announced winter season with a modification was to

50

0171

1 clarify the regulatory language and delegate authority  
2 to the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager to  
3 announce a winter season via delegation of authority  
4 letter. In November, 2022 the Board approved WSA22-04  
5 to amend the delegation of authority to delegate the  
6 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager the  
7 additional authority to determine the number of permits  
8 to be issued and any needed permit conditions for the  
9 may be announced winter moose season.

10  
11 The moose population was small during  
12 the 1990s which led to a harvest moratorium beginning  
13 in 2004. The moratorium was effective in allowing the  
14 establishment of a harvestable population and it  
15 appears that the population along the Kuskokwim main  
16 stem and the tributaries continue to grow. Lack of  
17 snow cover in recent years precluded population surveys  
18 between 2015 and 2020. The survey completed in 2020  
19 showed an increase in the moose population in both  
20 zones which exceeded State population objective. Brow  
21 surveys indicate that population in Zone 1 is  
22 potentially reaching a point that will limit or stop  
23 growth and Zone 2 is about one-half of what it could  
24 be. Bull/cow ratios have been consistently above the  
25 minimum State management objective and until 2020 when  
26 it fell to 25 bulls per 100 cows. Calf/cow ratios also  
27 remain high which may indicate a growing population.

28  
29 Harvest has been allowed in the  
30 Kuskokwim hunt area since 2009 by State registration  
31 permit. Harvest has increased notably since then,  
32 doubling between 2014 and 2017. Since 2011 reported  
33 harvest has averaged 183 moose annually. Demand still  
34 outweighs moose availability and from 2009 to 2019 an  
35 average of approximately 1,450 hunters have obtained  
36 permits to harvest moose in the Kuskokwim hunt area  
37 each year, but only 10 percent of permit holders has  
38 successfully harvested a moose.

39  
40 OSM's preliminary conclusion is to  
41 recommend to maintain the closure of Unit 18 despite  
42 recent increases in population size and harvest quotas  
43 demand still far outweighs the number of moose  
44 available for harvest. Retaining the closure ensures  
45 that the 15 communities that have demonstrated the most  
46 dependence on this resource continue to have a  
47 subsistence priority on public -- Federal public lands.

48  
49 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the  
50

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1 Council. I'll be happy to field any questions.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Tom. Do we  
4 have any questions for Tom at this time.

5

6 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

9

10 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd  
11 make a motion to adopt.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Motion on the  
14 floor to adopt WCR.....

15

16 MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair.

17

18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Brooke.

19

20 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
21 And I'm sorry we don't have this on the back of your  
22 cards also. The motions for the closure reviews, the  
23 ones that say WCR are slightly different than for a  
24 proposal. It's -- if you would like to continue to  
25 support the closure the motion would be to retain the  
26 status quo or maintain the closure. So perhaps Ms.  
27 Rogers amend or restate her motion.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 MS. ROGERS: Motion to reinstate.....

32

33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, to maintain  
34 closure of Unit 18.

35

36 MS. ROGERS: Motion to -- thank you,  
37 Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. Thank you, Brooke, for  
38 the correction. I'm going to go ahead and correct my  
39 motion on the floor, motion to retain status quo.

40

41 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42

43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you,  
44 Alissa. Motion on the floor by Alissa to maintain  
45 closure of Unit 18. Do I hear a second.

46

47 MR. ANDREW: Second.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by John Andrew.

50

0173

1 MS. McDAVID: Oh, you didn't go through  
2 the steps.

3  
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay.

5  
6 MS. McDAVID: Sorry. Okay. Guys, I'm  
7 sorry, we -- we do have to go through the steps on the  
8 back of the card. So if we could get a withdrawal of  
9 the second for now and then we'll move into the agency  
10 comments.

11  
12 Thank you.

13  
14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, if John could  
15 withdraw his second then we could.....

16  
17 MS. McDAVID: Yeah.

18  
19 MR. ANDREW: I withdraw my motion.

20  
21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Let the record  
22 show that John Andrew withdraws his motion and we'll go  
23 through the process of agency reports and go through  
24 the process before we adopt it for discussion.

25  
26 MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair, would you like  
27 me to help keep us on track for the.....

28  
29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes. Yes.

30  
31 MS. McDAVID: Sure.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. I always  
34 get confused when it comes to motions. So I appreciate  
35 your help.

36  
37 Thank you.

38  
39 MS. McDAVID: No problem, guys. It  
40 caught me off guard a little bit too. So we'll get it  
41 after the first one, we'll get in a groove.

42  
43 Okay. So since there were no Board  
44 consultations we'll move into agency comments. Alaska  
45 Department of Fish and Game.

46  
47 MR. JONES: Through the Council, this  
48 is Patrick Jones, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
49 So the Alaska Department of Fish and Game we -- I guess  
50

0174

1 all of our recommendations today are preliminary and  
2 they may or may not change between now and when the  
3 Board meets. But as of today Alaska Department of Fish  
4 and Game supports rescinding the closure for moose  
5 hunting in the RM615 area in the Unit. We are now at  
6 15 years of hunting post-moratorium and the abundance  
7 of moose is at an all time high. The hunting season in  
8 Zone 2 is extremely liberal, it's September 1 through  
9 October 15th currently. And even though we have an  
10 extremely long and liberal season we're still not  
11 meeting the harvest objective. There's more animals to  
12 harvest. Some years that number is 10, some years that  
13 number is 25, but it's more moose.

14  
15 So in an attempt to harvest moose in  
16 Zone 2 in December and January of this -- of 2022 U.S.  
17 Fish and Wildlife had a winter season hunt for bulls,  
18 antlered bulls only. As he stated before -- I won't go  
19 over most of the history because that was accurate,  
20 there's still -- based on brow surveys there's still  
21 room for that population in Zone 2 and the mountains to  
22 grow so we don't want to harvest cows there yet, we  
23 want to keep it on bull harvest so we grow that  
24 population. And to do that -- the easiest way to do  
25 that is when the bulls have antlers and they're easy to  
26 identify. So they tried an early winter season last  
27 year and it wasn't very effective. Lots of people got  
28 the permits, I think they gave out all the permits they  
29 intended to, but they only had one successful reported  
30 moose. And most of the complaints were that it just  
31 wasn't good traveling, there wasn't enough snow and the  
32 ice was dangerous especially in the mountains where the  
33 rivers are open and the water's fast. But as it gets  
34 later into the winter those moose drop their antlers so  
35 by December 15th about half the bulls have lost their  
36 antlers. And it's not a big population of moose to  
37 start with, it's a little -- little -- somewhere  
38 between seven and 800 animals. So you start cutting  
39 half the -- you know, only 30, 40 percent of those are  
40 bulls and you cut that in half by late December there's  
41 just -- there's fewer and fewer animals to find and  
42 it's tough going.

43  
44 So Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
45 would like to rescind this closure, allow all Alaska  
46 residents to be in there. And then I think with all  
47 Alaska residents in there we would harvest those  
48 additional animals in the fall.

49  
50



0175

1                   As you can see in the other proposals  
2 in front of you today there's numerous other villages  
3 on the Kuskokwim River that would like to participate  
4 in this hunt, but currently can't because they're not  
5 Federally-qualified, you know, not to mention all the  
6 other Alaska residents that could do that. Right now  
7 we have -- it's really common conversation in the Fish  
8 and Game office in August and September we're giving  
9 out permits, people come in and they want to know if  
10 their kids can come back from Anchorage and go hunting  
11 with them or their brother can come out and go hunting  
12 with them and we have to tell them no, because if they  
13 live in Anchorage they're not Federally-qualified any  
14 more. So we have a lot of local people that want to  
15 come home and do traditional things with their family  
16 and they're not allowed to at the moment.

17

18                   And I guess I'll leave it at that  
19 unless there's any questions.

20

21                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any questions for  
22 Patrick at this time, ADF&G.

23

24                   MR. MORGAN: I've got a question, Mr.  
25 Chair.

26

27                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Walter, go ahead.

28

29                   MR. MORGAN: Okay. Is this for only  
30 bulls or cows too, it -- it don't say male or female?  
31 I'm kind of confused. And also we're in tier two, you  
32 know. I didn't get a ticket this year so I couldn't  
33 hunt with tier two. I -- I think it -- since they  
34 opened that tier two I've only hunt two times with it  
35 and other times I didn't get a permit. So, you know, I  
36 want to look at other opportunities to get a moose. I  
37 know I can get one in Unit 18 and, you know, below --  
38 on the Yukon side, but, you know, I -- I think there's  
39 enough cows out there now, you know, and there's not  
40 enough bulls. I think we target too many bulls in my  
41 opinion, you know. I think, you know, we ought to take  
42 a few cows out. I mean, I'm -- I'm not talking lots,  
43 I'm just saying, you know, a few -- a few cows would be  
44 exception.

45

46                   So thank you.

47

48                   MR. JONES: Through the Chair to member  
49 Morgan. So Kalskag and Lower Kalskag are part of the

50

0176

1 closure review for Unit 18, but the tier two hunt is  
2 not what we're talking about, we're talking about the  
3 moose hunt in Unit 18 in Zone 2. So that's the  
4 mountains on the -- on the south and east side of the  
5 Kuskokwim. So the upper Tuluksak, Kasigluk, Kisaralik  
6 and Eek River and Kwethluk River, that's what we're  
7 talking about. So the main stem river by Kalskag and  
8 that stuff from Whitefish Lake upriver is that tier two  
9 hunt area and that's -- that's different.

10

11 So this isn't -- this proposal isn't  
12 about bulls or cows, it's just about who can hunt moose  
13 in Unit 18 on Federal lands. And currently our  
14 management strategy for Zone 2 is for bulls because  
15 we're trying to grow that population, but this proposal  
16 has nothing to do with bulls or cows. When the  
17 population gets big enough we will talk an antlerless  
18 hunt or a cow hunt. On the State side we're going to  
19 be talking about it for Zone 1 on the main river where  
20 we have more moose, But that -- that's a separate issue  
21 from this proposal.

22

23 MR. MORGAN: Mr. Chair.

24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Walter, go ahead.

26

27 MR. MORGAN: Well, Lower Kalskag is --  
28 we have Unit 18, Unit 19 and 21. So a lot of times we  
29 get -- you know, we -- we don't -- I know on 21 we  
30 didn't -- we weren't able to hunt when they had a  
31 subsistence opportunity there. But, you know, the only  
32 time we got to hunt was, you know, towards the Yukon,  
33 Unit 18. We're tied in, if you go up to Whitefish Lake  
34 on the right side is Unit 18, on the left side is 19.  
35 You go to the lake and you go to -- over on the left is  
36 19 and on the right is 18. So we're all split up, you  
37 know, we -- it's pretty hard for us to hunt, you know,  
38 because we have three -- three different units and a  
39 lot of times we get, you know, we don't participate in  
40 the openings. So I just wanted you to get the idea of  
41 where we're at, you know.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more questions or  
46 comments for Pat at this time.

47

48 (No comments)

49

50

0177

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
2 you.

3  
4 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Next in the  
5 procedures is Federal agency comments.

6  
7 (No comments)

8  
9 MS. McDAVID: Any Federal agency  
10 comments on wildlife closure review 24-38?

11  
12 (No comments)

13  
14 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Hearing none, any  
15 tribal comments on WCR 24-38?

16  
17 (No comments)

18  
19 MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, any  
20 comments from other Regional Advisory Councils?

21  
22 (No comments)

23  
24 MS. McDAVID: Fish and Game Advisory  
25 Councils.

26  
27 (No comments)

28  
29 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Summary of written  
30 public comments?

31  
32 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. This is  
33 Tom Plank. There were no written comments for this  
34 one.

35  
36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you.

37  
38 MS. McDAVID: Okay. And now we'll open  
39 it up to public testimony if there's anyone in the room  
40 or online who'd like to comment on the closure review?

41  
42 (No comments)

43  
44 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Hearing none, Mr.  
45 Chair, I'll turn it back over to you and the Council  
46 for your motion.

47  
48 Thank you.

49  
50

0178

1                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Thank you,  
2 Brooke. Regional Council recommendation. I believe we  
3 did -- Alissa did a motion to adopt -- to maintain the  
4 closure of Unit 18.

5

6                   MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, I do have a  
7 question of how that motion is -- is there a reason why  
8 we have to say retain status quo, I mean, like I'm --  
9 motion to adopt so we can open this up for discussion.  
10 That's the reason why I wanted to open it up, but it  
11 wasn't to put a final say in our -- my mouth.

12

13                   MS. McDAVID: Okay. I guess I could  
14 see how that makes sense. I guess you would just --  
15 you could -- you would vote, you know, if you voted it  
16 down then you would be voting to rescind it. And if  
17 you're voting to support it you're voting to maintain  
18 it just for the record.

19

20                   MS. ROGERS: But don't we always make  
21 our motions in -- in the positive and then make our  
22 decisions in the end, right?

23

24                   MS. McDAVID: There's always been some  
25 confusion with these closure reviews every time they  
26 come up, but I'm not sure if yeah, Lt or leadership  
27 might have some words of wisdom for us.

28

29                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Scott.

30

31                   MR. AYERS: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Through  
32 the Chair, member Nadine Rogers. It's an excellent  
33 question and the closure reviews are kind of a slightly  
34 different beast than the normal proposals are. The  
35 proposal or any motion that you make has to be in the  
36 affirmative. With the regulatory proposals you make a  
37 motion in the affirmative as you always would and then  
38 the Council either votes in support of that or doesn't  
39 support that and then that's -- the motion fails,  
40 right. But with the closure reviews we don't have the  
41 same process in that we have effectively a couple of  
42 options. We have a maintain status quo or retain  
43 status quo which is the same thing, rescind, defer or  
44 modify. And the ability to modify these is almost non-  
45 existent. It's a very, very narrow scope to do so.  
46 But because there's a couple of different options there  
47 and because it doesn't just refer back to one if the  
48 motion fails then there has to be a motion for one of  
49 those specific items and then it has to have enough  
50

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1 support to actually pass. If it doesn't pass it goes  
2 back and another motion has to be made.

3

4 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

7

8 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
9 Through the Chair. So it would be one of those four  
10 options we'd make the motion to and then that would  
11 open us up for discussion and then we could make our  
12 final decision. But what's complicating is that it's  
13 setting up to -- for instance if I was going to say  
14 motion to rescind.....

15

16 MR. AYERS: Uh-huh.

17

18 MS. ROGERS: .....and then we can open  
19 it up for discussion. But since I'm already in the  
20 motion form to rescind this proposal and we took action  
21 on it and if it does not go the way it needs to go then  
22 are we just going to go through all four levels, motion  
23 to this, motion to that, motion until we come to  
24 something. But if we come to something then it -- it  
25 just doesn't make sense if we do that instead. Go  
26 ahead.

27

28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Scott.

31

32 MR. AYERS: Thank you again, member  
33 Rogers, Nadine Rogers.

34

35 MS. ROGERS: Right.

36

37 MR. AYERS: Pardon me. No, you're  
38 quite -- I think what you're looking at is kind of two  
39 different steps. You've made a motion to bring it to  
40 the floor for council discussion. And then you're  
41 looking following discussion to have a second motion  
42 specifically to what the Council's action would be, is  
43 that accurate?

44

45 MS. ROGERS: Yes.

46

47 MR. AYERS: And I think that that's  
48 perfectly reasonable. I think you can have a motion to  
49 bring this item to the floor for Council discussion,  
50

0180

1 have your discussion and then have a second motion  
2 specific to the Council's action on this closure.

3

4 MS. ROGERS: Exactly. That's what I  
5 was looking for.

6

7 MR. AYERS: Okay.

8

9 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Scott. I'm  
10 going to go ahead and remodify it to the original  
11 motion. Motion to adopt for discussion.

12

13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Alissa.  
16 Motion on the floor by Alissa Rogers to -- motion to  
17 adopt WCR24-38. Do I hear a second. Second.

18

19 James, do you second the motion.

20

21 MR. LANDLORD: And questions, I wanted  
22 to ask a question.

23

24 MS. ROGERS: We need a second.

25

26 MR. ANDREW: Second.

27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Second by John  
29 Andrew. Discussion.

30

31 Patrick.

32

33 MR. JONES: I think a map would help  
34 the discussion in this case. So in your book on Page  
35 110 there's a map of what we're talking about here.  
36 And in this the map pink land is the Federal land that  
37 we're talking about opening or keeping closed to non-  
38 qualified users.

39

40 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Can you say what page  
41 was that on.

42

43 MR. JONES: 110, 1-1-0.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you.

46

47 MR. AYERS: Pardon me, Mr. Chair. I  
48 just wanted to call point of order. If we're in  
49 Council deliberations the Council may call on someone

50

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1 to speak if they want to, but folks shouldn't just jump  
2 into the conversation while you all are in -- in your  
3 discussion and deliberation.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you. I'm  
6 just -- I think it would be.....

7

8 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, go ahead.

11

12 MR. LANDLORD: Your motion was what,  
13 Alissa, due to -- motion to discuss?

14

15 MS. ROGERS: Uh-huh. Just to open the  
16 floor for discussion and then we'll do another motion  
17 after we have discussion to decide what we're going to  
18 do.

19

20 MR. LANDLORD: I think a motion could  
21 be made to retain the closure. Right now it's closed,  
22 right?

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 MR. LANDLORD: Okay. The motion can be  
27 made -- the motion can be made to retain the closure  
28 and there'll be a second and it'll be a discussion and  
29 then we vote. Not a motion to discuss, I -- it can be  
30 done during the -- during the -- after the second. We  
31 didn't have to make a motion to discuss because it's  
32 already being discussed from steps one through six. I  
33 think those were discussion. So a motion can be made  
34 to retain the closure which is closed right now and  
35 except for the religious elements and I think that  
36 would be a proper way to open discussion after the  
37 second.

38

39 MS. ROGERS: To you, Mr. Chair.

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Go ahead, you  
42 have to guide me on this because I'm -- I do get  
43 confused when we get into motions because just seems  
44 like it be motion after motion and I kind of lose track  
45 of that. If you could clarify that for me, Alissa, I'd  
46 appreciate that.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50

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1 MS. ROGERS: Okay. So when you make  
2 the motion to adopt is in the positive of going in  
3 support of this -- of the proposal. And then if we  
4 don't want to support it then we would make a motion to  
5 go the route we want to go and then we vote on it.  
6 That's -- did you -- are you wanting to do it  
7 differently?

8  
9 MR. LANDLORD: No, you can vote -- if  
10 you want to -- if you're against this motion to the  
11 closure you can vote no during the vote. If you vote  
12 yes that means you support the closure, continue --  
13 retain the closure. And if you vote no that means  
14 you're against the motion. You don't have to make  
15 motion to you want to close it. You'll make your  
16 statement no when you vote no.

17  
18 MR. MORGAN: Mr. Chair, I've got a  
19 question.

20  
21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Walter, go ahead.

22  
23 MR. MORGAN: If we adopt this, you  
24 know, like they were saying if we have family from out  
25 of town that want to come, if we close it then they  
26 wouldn't have that opportunity to come and hunt, right,  
27 so, I mean, it's something to think about because we've  
28 got a lot of family that lives in Anchorage and other  
29 places that want to hunt, you know, and to support  
30 their family. And they're part of -- the reason they  
31 moved there is because they don't have jobs and we  
32 should consider them before we, you know, decide on  
33 this.

34  
35 Thank you.

36  
37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you.

38  
39 MS. ROGERS: Do you want me to pull my  
40 motion out then?

41  
42 MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair.

43  
44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Brooke, go ahead.

45  
46 MS. McDAVID: I.....

47  
48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay.

49  
50



0183

1 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I'll need  
4 guidance here.

5

6 MS. ROGERS: Jackie.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Oh, go ahead, Jackie.

9

10 MS. McDAVID: If you guys would like to  
11 move into the discussion on -- the motion in the  
12 affirmative would be to maintain the closure. And then  
13 you could discuss whether or not you want to maintain  
14 the closure, vote in support of maintaining it or vote  
15 no against it, but that would be my suggestion is --  
16 for that language.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

21

22 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay. Thank you, Mr.  
23 Chair. I make a motion to support this proposal, to  
24 maintain the closure.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do we need to withdraw  
27 Alissa's motion first.

28

29 MS. ROGERS: I need to rescind my  
30 motion.

31

32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, before we do I  
33 believe we do need to rescind Alissa's motion for the  
34 -- and seconded by John. We need to withdraw the  
35 motion.

36

37 MS. ROGERS: I withdraw.

38

39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: And -- and the second.

40

41 MR. ANDREW: I withdraw the motion.

42

43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you.  
44 Thank you. And the motion on the floor was by Jackie.  
45 Can you restate that again.

46

47 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
48 If I can say it all right. I make a motion to maintain  
49 the closure of the Kuskokwim hunt except for the

50

0184

1 villages mentioned on WCR24-33.

2

3

MS. ROGERS: Second.

4

5

MS. CLEVELAND: 38. Sorry.

6

7

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you,  
8 Jackie. The motion's been seconded by Alissa. Guide  
9 me. Guide me, do we need to go into discussion.

10

11

(Laughter)

12

13

MS. McDAVID: Yes. Now the Council  
14 should discuss whether or not you support and why you  
15 support maintaining the closure.

16

17

Thank you.

18

19

CHAIRMAN ONEY: So we are on discussion  
20 mode at this time. And like Scott mentioned, we can  
21 call any of the agencies to the floor if we need to,  
22 but we're at this point where the Council are at the  
23 discussion mode on this proposal.

24

25

MS. EVAN: Mr. Chair.

26

27

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Norma, go ahead.

28

29

MS. EVAN: I -- sorry, Mr. Chair. I  
30 support this because I live in Marshall. It takes a  
31 couple hours, maybe three hours by boat to go to the  
32 (in Native) River and it takes maybe 10 minutes by  
33 airplane to go there. And we do see a lot of out of  
34 State big game hunters and they always stop at our  
35 airport and fly directly from Marshall to here. And  
36 all day long there's airplanes even on the river they  
37 go back and forth. And I think you guys should keep  
38 your area the way it is. I don't know, but I support  
39 it.

40

41

Thank you.

42

43

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you,  
44 Norma.

45

46

MS. EVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

47

48

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more discussion  
49 from the Council.

50

0185

1 MR. ALEXIE: Mr. Chair, I got a  
2 question.

3  
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Wassilly, go ahead.

5  
6 MR. ALEXIE: If we do support this  
7 closure does that means once this pass like what Walter  
8 was mentioning, people -- our family members that live  
9 out there in Anchorage they're not allowed to go out  
10 and hunt out there, right?

11  
12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Brooke.

13  
14 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
15 Member Alexie, so the closure is currently in place and  
16 that is the case for the Federal hunt. It's only --  
17 this is applying only to Federal land. So your family  
18 from out of, you know, the rural areas could still  
19 participate in the hunts on State land.

20  
21 Thank you.

22  
23 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you.

24  
25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more discussion  
26 from the Council.

27  
28 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

29  
30 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

31  
32 MS. CLEVELAND: For me personally I  
33 guess I'm with Norma on this. I know it was mentioned  
34 this would be not so great for our families that live  
35 outside the area, but for me the sport hunters and  
36 competition to subsistence and all the other things  
37 that come with sport anything outweigh the other I just  
38 mentioned. And like Brooke said it's for Federal lands  
39 so we could still invite family to the State lands.  
40 And I guess let's keep the Federal lands more how it's  
41 supposed to be, subsistence has a first priority under  
42 ANILCA.

43  
44 Thanks.

45  
46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Any more  
47 discussion.

48  
49 MR. MORGAN: Mr. Chair.

50

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1                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Walter, go ahead.

2

3                   MR. MORGAN: Yeah, now I see it. So  
4 they can come out and hunt on State lands. We're only  
5 talking about the Federal lands in pink, right, with  
6 Unit 18?

7

8                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Correct.

9

10                  MR. MORGAN: So all right. Thanks.

11

12                  CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more discussion  
13 from the Council.

14

15                  MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

16

17                  CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

18

19                  MS. ROGERS: Can I call on Pat to ask  
20 him questions?

21

22                  CHAIRMAN ONEY: I believe we have that --  
23 we have that -- we do have it if you want to call  
24 someone, an agency that want to come up and discuss  
25 this we -- you can.

26

27                  MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
28 Through the Chair. I had a couple questions, Pat, on  
29 key points of this proposal. It's under my -- it's  
30 under -- my understanding A, if we rescind this closure  
31 we can open it up to a State cow hunt. Now if the cow  
32 hunt actually takes place the -- we can decide how  
33 those har -- those harvestable tickets are distributed  
34 between our villages and only to those villages,  
35 correct?

36

37                  CHAIRMAN ONEY: Pat.

38

39                  MR. JONES: Not under the State system.  
40 So the State system is just Alaska residents or non-  
41 residents. Right now this is Alaska residents only  
42 which means everybody in Alaska has the same  
43 privileges. We are talking about a cow hunt in the  
44 future for Zone 1 on this map. And that's a proposal  
45 that's going to go in front of the Alaska Board of Game  
46 this year. And it -- it's kind of a placeholder  
47 proposal, like we -- the idea of having a cow hunt is  
48 good, we're ready for -- on the main stem. How that  
49 hunt is going to -- what that hunt is going to look  
50

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1 like and how the permits are given out is yet to be  
2 decided. That's one of the proposals that's up for  
3 discussion this year. One of the ideas is a draw hunt  
4 so everybody would pay \$5 to put their name in the hat  
5 and then we just pull names out of the hat because when  
6 we start a cow hunt there's not going to be a lot of  
7 permits to start with, it'll probably just be 50 to a  
8 hundred permits because we don't -- we want to shoot  
9 some cows, but we don't want to shoot a lot to start  
10 with so we have to limit that harvest somehow and  
11 that's -- and that's one way we might do it. But like  
12 I said that's not set in stone, that's just a  
13 placeholder proposal and I guess I won't know if the  
14 cow hunt is going to be or how we give out the permits  
15 until the Board of Game votes in late January.

16

17 MS. ALISSA: Okay. Thank you. That  
18 clarifies. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Alissa. Any  
21 more discussion from the Council.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none -- where  
26 are we at now on -- on the.....

27

28 MS. McDAVID: Do you want to call for  
29 question?

30

31 MS. ROGERS: Question.

32

33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Question's been  
34 called. All of those in favor of.....

35

36 MS. McDAVID: Maintaining the closure.

37

38 CHAIRMAN ONEY: .....to maintain --  
39 maintain closure of Unit 18 except for the villages  
40 mentioned signify by saying aye.

41

42 IN UNISON: Aye.

43

44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Those opposed say nay.

45

46 (No opposing votes)

47

48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, motion  
49 carries. Thank you. Moving on. We'll go down to the  
50

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1 next proposal, WP24-21, Unit 18, Kwigillingok,  
2 Kongiganak, Quinhagak .804 restriction for moose.

3

4 Pippa Kenner, OSM, Anthropology.  
5 Pippa, you've got the floor.

6

7 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair and  
8 members of the Council. And to repeat my name is Pippa  
9 Kenner and I work for the Office of Subsistence  
10 Management in this region and for this Council. And  
11 I'm going to be presenting to you proposal WP24-21.  
12 This is a request to add the communities of Kongiganak,  
13 Kwigillingok, Quinhagak to the group of communities who  
14 are eligible to harvest moose in the Kuskokwim River  
15 drainage hunt area in Unit 18. So we're just going to  
16 call that the Kuskokwim hunt area, the Kuskokwim area,  
17 but we're talking about that Kuskokwim drainage in Unit  
18 18 that we were just talking about in the earlier  
19 closure review.

20

21 This proposal was submitted by this  
22 Council, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory  
23 Council. And the Council said that the Yukon -- said  
24 that the residents of Kwigillingok and Quinhagak hunt  
25 moose for subsistence and although these communities  
26 are located outside of the Kuskokwim hunt area  
27 residents of these communities travel to hunt moose on  
28 State managed lands within the boundaries of this hunt  
29 area, especially in years when it is more difficult to  
30 harvest a moose nearby their communities and therefore  
31 they should be able to hunt on Federal public lands as  
32 well.

33

34 So when this hunt area opened the Board  
35 adopted the recommendation of this Council and limited  
36 who could participate in that hunt. And the people of  
37 the communities that are eligible to hunt in the hunt  
38 area are listed on Page 89. And they are all the  
39 communities within the hunt area, the Kuskokwim  
40 drainage of Unit 18 and plus Lower and Upper Kalskag.  
41 So Kwigillingok and Quinhagak are the three communities  
42 closest to the hunt area who are not eligible to hunt  
43 in the hunt area. The communities that are eligible at  
44 this time are residents of Akiachak, Akiak, Atmautluak,  
45 Bethel, Eek, Kalskag, Kasigluk, Kwethluk, Lower  
46 Kalskag, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Nunapitchuk, Oscarville,  
47 Tuluksak and Tuntutuliak. So we're asking to add  
48 Kongiganak, Kwigillingok and Quinhagak to that list of  
49 communities who would be eligible to hunt in this area.

50

1

2

3

4                   And again I want to point out to you  
5 the map that's on Page 91. This is the area we're  
6 talking about. So the hunt area after the five year  
7 moratorium, the hunt area's been open to Federally-  
8 qualified users since about 2009 to that list of  
9 communities I just mentioned. Since that opening the  
10 area has been divided into two zones to allow better  
11 cooperation between the State and Federal management  
12 regimes. And so Zone 1 is considered more of State  
13 managed lands and tends to be managed by our State  
14 managers. And Zone 2 is more Federal public lands and  
15 is managed more by our Federal managers. But all the  
16 pink and yellow that you see are closed to non-  
17 Federally-qualified users. All the white area that you  
18 see is open to all State residents under State hunting  
19 regulations.

19

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                  So just to talk about the people who  
are involved in here, in this proposal, on Page 94 and  
95 there's a list of all the communities who are  
currently eligible and their total population is about  
12,500 people. And then if we added Kongiganak,  
Kwigillingok and Quinhagak that would add about 1,700  
people to those who are Federally-qualified. Now  
there's only a hunter or two in each of those  
households so we're not talking about 1,600 people, but  
I just wanted to again outline what we're talking about  
here. And so especially for Kwigillingok, but also to  
some degree to Quinhagak, there's not a lot of  
documentation specifically on people hunting moose in  
the area that we're talking about, but we do have some  
reports to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
through their harvest reporting system. In 1980 when  
there was documentation of hunting in Kwigillingok  
moose weren't even mentioned, there -- moose weren't  
even present at the time. But now in -- we have some  
statistics and one is on Page 97 that shows that in the  
last five years residents of Kongiganak have said they  
harvested 28 moose and Kwigillingok harvested 12 moose  
out of, you know, like 173 in Kongiganak permits that  
were -- were people who report -- reported hunting or  
returned a permit.

                  One of the problems with this data is  
that the general hunt area people report still through  
harvest ticket and the Alaska Department of Fish and  
Game hasn't -- it's not always been mandatory that

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1 people return those harvest tickets. And for other  
2 reasons we're going to assume that these are minimum  
3 estimates. But the point is that we now have  
4 documented evidence that people are hunting moose in  
5 this area and they do not have alternative populations  
6 of moose except for the moose in their area or they  
7 have to go all the way up to the lower Yukon. And so  
8 for that reason as far as the -- what we're going to be  
9 looking at to determine whether or not these  
10 communities should be eligible based on ANILCA is that  
11 whenever you're asked to decrease the pool of who is  
12 eligible to harvest in an area you do so based on three  
13 criteria. And these criteria are found in Section .804  
14 of ANILCA. One is you look at the customary and direct  
15 dependence upon the populations as a mainstay of  
16 livelihood, the second is local residency and the third  
17 is the availability of alternative resources to moose  
18 that people can use.

19

20 So what I'm going to do is talk to you  
21 why the OSM preliminary conclusion is to include these  
22 three communities in that hunt. So one that I just  
23 mentioned is we've been able to see there's a  
24 dependency on moose in these areas, they are very close  
25 to the hunt area. Let's see, Kwigillingok is about 14  
26 miles away from the hunt area, Kong is about five miles  
27 and Quinhagak is about 17 miles. So Kwigillingok can  
28 hunt at the mouth of the Kuskokwim River particularly  
29 up the Ishkowiik River which is State managed lands, but  
30 they can't go any further, everything else further east  
31 is Federal public lands that they're not allowed to  
32 hunt on at this time.

33

34 And the other thing, it was in this  
35 report that we wrote, it appears that each -- all three  
36 of these communities is equally situated with the  
37 communities that already are eligible to hunt in terms  
38 of alternative resources. They're all subsistence  
39 based economies, not a lot of jobs, not a lot of  
40 income, not a lot of grocery stores, they're all equal.

41

42

43 So just to remind you that if you  
44 support the proposal the residents of Kwigillingok,  
45 Kongiganak and Quinhagak will be eligible to hunt on  
46 Federal public lands in the hunt area -- in this  
47 Kuskokwim hunt area. And if you do not support the  
48 proposal they will continue to not be eligible to hunt  
49 in that area on Federal public lands.

50



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1                               And that's the end of my presentation.  
2 I am available to answer any questions and thank you  
3 very much.

4  
5                               CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Pippa.  
6 Do we have any questions or comments for Pippa at this  
7 time from the Council.

8  
9                               MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

10  
11                              CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

12  
13                              MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
14 Through the Chair. Do we have any biological reasons  
15 not to include them?

16  
17                              Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18  
19                              CHAIRMAN ONEY: Pippa, go ahead.

20  
21                              MS. KENNER: Through the Chair. Thank  
22 you. Great question, member Rogers. So adopting the  
23 proposal it would have no affect on subsistence users  
24 or the moose population, we're just saying who's  
25 eligible. If there were problems these concerns would  
26 be addressed through harvest limits and season length.  
27 So here we're simply choosing who's eligible, we're not  
28 setting harvest limits or seasons.

29  
30                              CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa.

31  
32                              MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

33  
34                              CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you. Any  
35 more discussion from the Council for Pippa, questions  
36 or comments.

37  
38                              (No comments)

39  
40                              CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, go ahead,  
41 Pippa.

42  
43                              MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
44 That's the end of the information that I have for you,  
45 but I'll stand by as you take testimony from others to  
46 answer any questions you might have.

47  
48                              CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you.  
49 Pippa, go ahead. I mean, sorry, Brooke.

50

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1 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
2 We'll move into agency comments. Alaska Department of  
3 Fish and Game.

4  
5 MS. COLEMAN: Hi, this is Jesse Coleman  
6 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the  
7 Subsistence Division. I just wanted to make a couple  
8 of points on our comments on this proposal. We're  
9 still finalizing our position so I'm not going to give  
10 that right here, but under State regulations there is a  
11 positive customary and traditional use finding for  
12 moose in all of Unit 18. And the amount necessary for  
13 subsistence there is 200 to 400 animals. So these  
14 communities are eligible subsistence users under State  
15 regulations currently.

16  
17 And if Patrick Jones is down there and  
18 wants to add anything I'll let him do that, but  
19 otherwise those -- that's all I really wanted to say  
20 about our comments.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Pat, you were going to  
23 comment.

24  
25 MR. JONES: This is Patrick Jones,  
26 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I really don't  
27 have any additional information on it, but I -- I guess  
28 I'll stand by if there's any more biological questions.  
29 Like Pippa said, it -- this isn't affecting the biology  
30 or the hunt, we're managing that with season dates and  
31 permits. So.....

32  
33 MS. McDAVID: Any comments from Federal  
34 agencies.

35  
36 (No comments)

37  
38 MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, tribal  
39 comments. I believe we have one.

40  
41 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair  
42 and everyone. So the Native Village of Quinhagak  
43 supports proposal WP24-21 which would add residents of  
44 Kwigillingok, Kongiganak and Quinhagak to the  
45 communities that are eligible to hunt moose in the  
46 Kuskokwim River drainage hunt area in Unit 18.  
47 Quinhagak agrees that those communities should be added  
48 because residents travel to hunt moose especially in  
49 years where it's becoming increasingly difficult to  
50

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1 harvest moose within their own community areas.

2

3 So that was the written comment from  
4 Native Village of Quinhagak.

5

6 MS. McDAVID: Go ahead, Pippa.

7

8 MS. KENNER: Through the Chair. This  
9 is Pippa Kenner with OSM reading the recommendation of  
10 the Orutsararmut Native Council in Bethel. ONC  
11 Subsistence Committee supports this proposal to allow  
12 more subsistence users the opportunity to harvest moose  
13 especially in Zone 2. This proposal will include the  
14 fall and winter hunt in the Federal management areas.  
15 This will allow more moose hunters in that area in  
16 order to achieve the moose harvest quota.

17

18 And again that was with ONC -- for ONC  
19 in Bethel.

20

21 MS. McDAVID: Any other tribal comments  
22 from folks online or in the room.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, other  
27 Regional Advisory Councils.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 MS. McDAVID: Fish and Game Advisory  
32 Committees.

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 MS. McDAVID: And then any other  
37 written public comments.

38

39 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
40 This is Pippa Kenner again with the Office of  
41 Subsistence Management. And I just checking and no,  
42 there are no written public comments that were  
43 submitted for this during the comment period.

44

45 Thank you.

46

47 MS. McDAVID: Would any members of the  
48 public like to comment today on this proposal online or  
49 in the room.

50

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1 (No comments)

2

3 MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, I'll turn  
4 it back to you, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Pippa,  
7 Brooke. We are on the Regional Council recommendation.

8

9 MS. ROGERS: Motion to support.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Motion on the floor by  
12 Alissa to -- motion to support WP24-21. Do I hear a  
13 second.

14

15 MR. ANDREW: Second.

16

17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by John.  
18 Discussion.

19

20 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa.

23

24 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
25 Through the Chair. Since there is no biological  
26 effects of including these communities and it's  
27 supported by the tribes of this area, I would like to  
28 see that we continue to support our tribes and our  
29 people and our Federal subsistence users allowing them  
30 to have more opportunity in Zone 2 and that's going to  
31 be a.....

32

33 (Teleconference disconnected)

34

35 MS. McDAVID: Sorry, Alissa. We got  
36 dropped. So hold that thought.

37

38 Thanks.

39

40 (Teleconference reconnected)

41

42 MS. McDAVID: To folks online, sorry,  
43 our call back dropped off. And now there's an echo.

44

45 So we're trying to figure that out.

46

47 (Teleconference reconnected)

48

49 MS. McDAVID: Okay. It's -- sorry

50

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1 about that, folks. Technical difficulties. Thanks for  
2 your patience. I believe we left off with a comment  
3 from member Nadine Rogers.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Alissa.

8

9 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 Sorry, folks, online. I didn't mean to get you guys  
11 cutoff because I just talk too much. All right. I'll  
12 go ahead and restate what I was saying.

13

14 Since there are no biological effects  
15 to adding fellow subsistence users in Zone 1 and Zone 2  
16 I would like to support broadening our hunting lands to  
17 those who have customary and traditional uses in our  
18 lands.

19

20 And, Mr. Chair, I would also like to  
21 involve Kipnuk as well into the villages. They're not  
22 listed so it -- we're hoping to get Kipnuk also added  
23 to the list, Mr. Chair, as a modification.

24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Alissa. The  
26 motion, it's been first and seconded and we're in  
27 discussion mode and the discussion is to include Kipnuk  
28 also in this proposal. Any more discussion on WP24-21.

29

30 MS. McDAVID: I believe we need a  
31 motion to amend and then a second for that amendment  
32 and then you could discuss the amendment.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay.

37

38 MS. ROGERS: Okay. Motion to amend to  
39 include Kipnuk. I said that.

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: John Andrew, go ahead.

42

43 MR. ANDREW: Second.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Motion is to  
46 amend WP24-21 to include Kipnuk and seconded by John  
47 Andrew and we are in discussion.

48

49 James, go ahead.

50

0196

1 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair. I was just  
2 wondering where Kipnuk's located, I don't know where it  
3 is?

4  
5 MS. CLEVELAND: May I?

6  
7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

8  
9 MS. CLEVELAND: So it's next to  
10 Kwigillingok, but I forgot if it's like north, south,  
11 do you remember exactly where it's at or.....

12  
13 And there's a map over here. Oh, it's  
14 more west.

15  
16 MR. PARKS: It's on east side of  
17 Chefornak.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Pippa, you had or  
20 comment or question?

21  
22 MS. KENNER: No, I -- I just wanted to  
23 follow.....

24  
25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Did you get your  
26 answer.

27  
28 MR. LANDLORD: Yes, I said -- they told  
29 me where it's located. It's southwest of Kong and they  
30 go a long ways to go moose hunting. So I think that's  
31 justification for my reason if I wrote yes is support  
32 Kipnuk to be included in the WP24-21.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes. Any more  
35 discussion to include Kipnuk in WP21 -- 24-21.

36  
37 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

40  
41 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
42 I was going to call on one of the RITs who is based in  
43 Kipnuk. Is he? Oh, sorry, my mistake. I wanted to  
44 ask if he knew what they thought. But it's not, that's  
45 not, that's Kwig?

46  
47 MS. ROGERS: Kong.

48  
49 MS. CLEVELAND: Oh. (In Native).  
50

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1 Sorry, never mind.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. As you were.

4

5 (Laughter)

6

7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Any more  
8 discussion on -- to include Kipnuk in WP24-21.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 MR. ANDREW: Question on the

13 motion.....

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. There's question

16 on.....

17

18 MR. ANDREW: .....the amendment.

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: There's a question on  
21 the amendment. All those in favor of including Kipnuk  
22 in 24-21 signify by saying aye.

23

24 IN UNISON: Aye.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Those opposed say nay.

27

28 (No opposing votes)

29

30 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, motion  
31 carries. Thank you.

32

33 MR. ANDREW: You got the main motion

34 now.

35

36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. We're back to

37 the main motion

38

39 MS. ROGERS: Questions.

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Question's been  
42 called on the main motion. All those in favor of WP-21  
43 with amendment signify by saying aye.

44

45 IN UNISON: Aye.

46

47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Opposed say nay.

48

49 (No opposing votes)

50

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1                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, motion  
2 carries. Thank you. Okay. Moving on, we are down to  
3 WP24-20, Unit 18, modify moose harvest limit and expand  
4 delegated authority for winter season.

5  
6                   Tom Plank, OSM, Wildlife. Tom, you  
7 have the floor.

8  
9                   MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
10 members of the Council. And again for the record my  
11 name's Tom Plank and I'm a Wildlife Biologist in the  
12 Office of Subsistence Management. And I will be  
13 presenting a summary of the analysis for wildlife  
14 proposal WP24-20 which starts on Page 104 in your  
15 books.

16  
17                   Proposal WP24-20 is submitted by the  
18 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and requests  
19 modifying the harvest limit, permit requirements and  
20 delegation of authority letter for moose in the  
21 Kuskokwim River area hunt area of Unit 18 during the  
22 winter may be announced Federal subsistence hunting  
23 season. The modification to the delegation of  
24 authority letter includes delegating authority to the  
25 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager to  
26 announce sex and antler restrictions, determine the  
27 permit allocation system and set any needed permit  
28 conditions.

29  
30                   The proponent is asking for the ability  
31 to set the number of permits and permit conditions to  
32 encourage timely reporting. The proponent also  
33 requests flexibility in using either a first come,  
34 first serve registration permit system or a random draw  
35 permit system to fairly allocate a limited number of  
36 permits to subsistence users in multiple villages with  
37 limited Staff to manage the winter hunt. Additionally  
38 the proponent requests flexibility in setting the  
39 harvest limit so that they can protect cows when  
40 needed, but can also allow cow harvest in the future as  
41 the population continues to grow. The ability to set  
42 sex and antler restriction also addresses hunter  
43 behavior and their ability to identify bulls without  
44 antlers.

45  
46                   And I'm going to -- instead of  
47 repeating what you've already heard on the regulatory  
48 history I'm going to kind of streamline it a little  
49 because we're still talking about the same Kuskokwim  
50



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1 hunt area as we have been for the last two.

2

3

4                   Zone 2 is primarily Federal lands and  
5 the Yukon Delta Refuge sets permits -- sets quotas.  
6 Zone 2 is much more difficult to access and quotas are  
7 not usually met. For regulatory year 2020/'21,  
8 emergency wildlife special action WSA20-05 extended the  
9 season seven days and in 2022 the Board adopted a  
10 proposal as modified by OSM to extend the fall moose  
11 season in the Kuskokwim Zone 2 hunt area. And it also  
12 established a may be announced winter season from  
13 December 1st to January 31st with a harvest limit of  
14 one antlered bull by Federal registration permit. This  
15 delegation of authority does not limit the number of  
16 permits that can be issued for the newly established  
17 may be announced winter season. The number of moose  
18 available to harvest during a may be announced winter  
19 season is based on a remaining moose quota not met  
20 during the fall season. And in December, 2022 the  
21 Board adopted a wildlife special action as modified by  
22 OSM to delegate additional authority to the Yukon Delta  
23 National Wildlife Refuge to limit the number of permits  
24 issued and set permit conditions for a winter moose  
25 hunt in Zone 2 for the 2022 and '23 regulatory year.

25

26

27                   The 2020 survey estimates roughly 4,000  
28 moose in the Kuskokwim hunt area as a whole which  
29 exceed population objectives. The bull/cow ratios are  
30 high as are calf/cow ratios which indicate a growing  
31 moose population. Since 2011 reported harvested has  
32 averaged 183 moose per year although harvest has  
33 increased as the moose population and therefore harvest  
34 quotas have increased. Federally-qualified subsistence  
35 users account for 95 percent of the moose harvested and  
36 demand far exceeds moose availability. Since 2017  
37 average harvest in Zone 2 has only been 78 moose which  
38 is well below the quota of 110 moose. Harvests from  
39 2019 to 2020 when the season was extended seven days  
40 had a harvest increase of 20 percent with 90 moose  
41 harvested in 2020, but dropped back down to 76 in 2021.  
42 Zone 2 consists of tributaries to the Kuskokwim River  
43 and requires specialized boats to access as well as  
44 longer travel times and more fuel. The unmet quota in  
45 Zone 2 is likely a function of difficulties in access  
46 rather than lack of need for moose meat.

46

47

48                   If this proposal is adopted the harvest  
49 limit would be liberalized to up to one moose and then  
50 the In-Season Manager could determine the permit

50

0200

1 allocation system, set any needed permit conditions and  
2 determine antler and sex restrictions for the may be  
3 announced winter moose season in Zone 2 of the  
4 Kuskokwim hunt area in Unit 18. Allowing the  
5 flexibility of using either a first come, first serve  
6 registration permit system or a random draw permit  
7 system to allocate permits would allow the In-Season  
8 Manager to utilize a system that is best to fairly  
9 allocate a limited number of permits to subsistence  
10 users in multiple villages with limited Staff. This  
11 would also reduce the chance of overharvest while  
12 providing increased equitable harvest opportunities for  
13 Federally-qualified subsistence users. Setting permit  
14 conditions allow the In-Season Manager to set harvest  
15 reporting requirements to track in-season harvest,  
16 ensuring that the harvest quota is not exceeded and  
17 closing the season if or when the quota is met.

18

19                   Additionally if the Board adopts this  
20 proposal the harvest limit during winter season would  
21 be liberalized and the In-Season Manager would have the  
22 flexibility to set sex and antler restrictions. And if  
23 this proposal is rejected and a winter season is  
24 announced the number of permits issued will be  
25 unlimited. This could create a conservation concern as  
26 the Zone 2 harvest quota could be quickly exceeded  
27 leaving an overharvest. Alternatively if a winter  
28 season is not announced due to conservation concerns  
29 potential harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified  
30 subsistence users is lost.

31

32                   OSM's preliminary conclusion is to  
33 support WP24-20. The delegated authority given to the  
34 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager in 2022  
35 was intended to give Federally-qualified subsistence  
36 users additional opportunities to harvest moose in Zone  
37 2 when the quota is not met during the fall season.  
38 The harvestable surplus of moose targeted for the may  
39 be announced winter season is only for the remaining  
40 quota not met during the fall season. Liberalizing the  
41 harvest limit during the winter season and delegating  
42 additional authorities to manage the winter hunt allows  
43 for flexible, adaptable hunt management that optimizes  
44 subsistence harvest opportunities and conservation.  
45 This proposal mitigates the chance of overharvest and  
46 allows for additional harvest opportunities for  
47 Federally-qualified subsistence users during the may be  
48 announced winter season in Zone 2.

49

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1 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the  
2 Council. I'll be here to address any questions.

3

4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Do we have any  
5 questions or comments for Tom at this time from the  
6 Council.

7

8 MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman.

9

10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Phillip, go ahead.

11

12 MR. PETER: Over the years Zone 2 never  
13 met their quota. And then I got question. Those of us  
14 who didn't catch a moose this fall maybe we could  
15 depend on the availability of -- availability of  
16 permits, right, availability of permits to hunt moose  
17 Zone 2 including the villages residing in like for  
18 example Quinhagak, Eek, Platinum, Goodnews Bay. And if  
19 I want to go hunt that area I have to go down to Bethel  
20 to get permit. What about if I didn't receive any  
21 permit, what happen to me. My ques -- we always got  
22 confused, we always got confusion on this situation,  
23 you know, availability of permits. Like if you  
24 allocate 110 and Zone 2 catch 68 and there's going to  
25 be 40 available permits. Those who didn't catch any  
26 moose. Even though I come -- even though I live in  
27 Akiachak I go down to Bethel and get my permit. Maybe  
28 first come, first serve, what happen if the limit  
29 stops.

30

31 That's -- you know, these regulations  
32 and proposed -- proposals are getting, you know,  
33 complicated to us because some of us don't understand  
34 this kind of regulations and proposals, Zone 1, Zone 2.  
35 Those people who don't understand that they got  
36 confuse, you know. But we need to accurately fix this  
37 Zone 2. Nobody -- nobody go hunting to -- for example,  
38 Kisaralik, (in Native) Kwethluk, Eek, Togiak area.  
39 There are only a few hunters who -- those who didn't  
40 catch moose they travel to that area to hunt because we  
41 need to fix it clearly by -- we need to fix this  
42 clearly, understandable regulations on these proposals,  
43 you know. We need to fix it. Some guy's upset in my  
44 community, not only in my community, like Akiak,  
45 Kwethluk, Tuluksak. We reviewed them, these  
46 regulations, State and Federal government, because  
47 there's two entities to serving us, to serving us.  
48 Two, two entities, one is State of Alaska, one is the  
49 Federal government. And these two are really confused

50

0202

1 systems, you know. One -- like in Unit 18 this fall 10  
2 day hunt on the State side if I'm correct, Pat, correct  
3 me.

4

5 MR. JONES: Eight days.

6

7 MR. PETER: And then there's another  
8 one on the Federal side. Reversing Federal on the Zone  
9 1, number 2, the State side. We -- even though we  
10 didn't catch moose we turn in our permit, all of us who  
11 didn't catch any. I bet nobody review who catch and  
12 who was not catching. I'm really, you know, upset  
13 because those two are mixing us up on Unit 18,  
14 especially on the Kuskokwim area.

15

16 So that's all my comments, Mr. Chair.  
17 Thank you.

18

19 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

20

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, go ahead.

22

23 MR. LANDLORD: Can you explain  
24 flexibility so I can understand why it's so stringent  
25 right now. What would that -- explain the flexibility?

26

27 MR. PLANK: Thank you Council member  
28 Landlord, through the Chair. Your -- the flexibility  
29 on this -- the may be announced winter season, say you  
30 got -- just to kind of use even numbers, say you have  
31 110 -- a quota for Zone 2 for the fall season and 60 of  
32 those are harvested so that leaves 50 left. And so if  
33 we have -- like you have an early winter or, you know,  
34 the freeze up comes up faster and it's easier access  
35 into Zone 2, those 50 in the may be announced winter  
36 hunt could be caught -- you know, harvested within a  
37 week or two. And without -- with the flexibility that  
38 allows them to just issue the 50 permits so they don't  
39 have to go out there and, you know, check every single  
40 person to make sure they shut it down before 70 are  
41 harvested. And so just basically let's everybody know  
42 it without -- lack of better way to describe it, it  
43 basically just gives them the ability to let everybody  
44 know here's 50 permits, you have until July -- January  
45 31st to fill this ticket.

46

47 Does that answer your question?

48

49 MR. LANDLORD: Yes, thank you.

50

1 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

4

5 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. -- thank  
6 you, Mr. Chair. So I agree with Phillip 100 percent.  
7 Maybe the confusion of all the language coming to our  
8 communities, especially with the language barrier some  
9 communities may have, I mean, when I would issue  
10 permits and things, licenses and permits for our tribe,  
11 I felt like I had to -- I mean, just go above and  
12 beyond to just even tell everyone what these were to me  
13 and how they're confusing. And he's right, people can  
14 get upset about certain words and even if they don't  
15 mean that scientifically or something. But there -- I  
16 wasn't there unfortunately to liaison the meeting  
17 between Quinagak and here for this special action  
18 request and I thought it went just horribly because of  
19 this language barrier. And then the confusion and --  
20 and no one wanted to explain these terms until we get  
21 to that part or unless you fill out a sheet, you know.  
22 So it's -- I mean, I guess there's that part and then  
23 there's just the part of on State and Federal lands and  
24 different regulations on both. And then on top of that  
25 there's like the elder permanent permits or and then  
26 there's two different ones for those, one for -- one  
27 for Fed and one for State. So like even -- just  
28 imagine being an elder and just trying to understand,  
29 you know, the two forever permits, but then you need to  
30 make sure your hunter has the license and hunting your  
31 permit and in the right lands.

32

33 Another thing that I think that maybe  
34 someday needs to change is just the way permits are  
35 collected. I know there's different ways like there's  
36 localized or first come, first serve or online. And I  
37 know we're getting better about broadband, but it's  
38 just in the beginning for our region and I want to just  
39 not recommend the online first come, first serve permit  
40 because of -- I mean, lack of broad -- I guess  
41 bandwidth is one. But at the same time I also don't  
42 want them traveling, you know, long distances. So I  
43 don't know of a -- of a -- like a specialized -- I wish  
44 there was some kind of specialized permit system where  
45 like everyone understands the language and can  
46 participate and have an opportunity as much as someone  
47 online or someone who has the best internet and can  
48 quickly get that permit if they wanted.

49

50

0204

1 I hope that all made sense. Thanks.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Jackie. Any  
4 more questions or comments for Tom at this time from  
5 the Council

6

7 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

8

9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

10

11 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. For the areas  
12 I know folks up -- up in our area that have commented  
13 from the Kuskokwim villages in regards to wanting to be  
14 included in this particular hunt. Because the -- one  
15 of the comment -- really strong comment that came  
16 through was if we're allowing folks to come hunt up  
17 here why can't we go hunt down there. And do we -- do  
18 folks in my area have the ability to go hunting down  
19 there if they wanted to and they'd go down and just get  
20 a harvest ticket?

21

22 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Council member  
23 Nadine Rogers, through the Chair. I'm not sure I quite  
24 understood your question, but maybe we can call up  
25 somebody from the YKDelta or Refuge or.....

26

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah.

28

29 MR. PLANK.....or him.

30

31 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Pat.

32

33 MR. JONES: Thank you. Yeah. Patrick  
34 Jones, Fish and Game. Member Rogers, you're talking  
35 about Quinhagak. So right now in Unit 18 we have four  
36 moose hunt areas and they are four different permits.  
37 So we have the Yukon and the coastal areas, we call  
38 that Unit 18 remainder and that's just a harvest  
39 ticket, general season tag. Then moving south we get  
40 to the Kuskokwim and we have a joint permit that works  
41 on Federal and State lands currently and that's the  
42 RM615 moose permit. And those are available at all the  
43 villages in the hunt area and they're available online  
44 to Alaska residents. And then moving south we get to  
45 the Quinhagak area and the Arolik area and that's the  
46 moose hunt RM617 and that one is available in the  
47 communities -- only in the communities of Eek and  
48 Quinhagak. Though if those communities wanted it  
49 available online in addition to being available in the  
50

0205

1 villages we could do that as well at their request.  
2 And then we move down to Goodnews on the south end of  
3 Unit 18. Goodnews and Platinum have their own hunt  
4 area there on the Goodnews River and that's RM620. And  
5 they actually have a winter hunt in the same area.

6  
7 So does that help?

8  
9 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

10  
11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

12  
13 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
14 Through the Chair. Thank you, Pat. I just wanted to  
15 get a quick clarification. Unit RM for the Yukon, Unit  
16 18 remainder, that's available online as well?

17  
18 MR. JONES: Yeah, through the Chair.  
19 The Yukon one, that's GM00 is what we call it or  
20 general season harvest ticket and that's available  
21 online and Fred Meyer's in Anchorage and everywhere  
22 else that Fish and Game gives out permits that's over  
23 the counter.

24  
25 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. And then  
26 another clarification, follow-up, Mr. Chair.

27  
28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Alissa.

29  
30 MS. ROGERS: RM615 is only available in  
31 Quinhagak and where?

32  
33 MR. JONES: 615 is the Kuskokwim one.  
34 617 is the Quinhagak permit and is available in  
35 Quinhagak and Eek.

36  
37 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. I'm done.

38  
39 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

42  
43 MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana, Mr. Chair. So  
44 I just wanted to further respond to Alissa. One reason  
45 I think is because moose are very new to Quinhagak and  
46 our drainages as far as moose history goes, it's  
47 they're -- you know, they're the newest big game we  
48 have there, before it was all caribou. So we're --  
49 these drainages are still in the process of populating  
50

0206

1 the moose pop -- you know, the moose population.  
2 Quinhagak did not participate in that five year  
3 moratorium back then, but the surrounding drainages  
4 did. And then I believe it's from that moratorium that  
5 we have our moose population or it's a bigger moose  
6 population and it continues to grow might be one  
7 reason.

8

9 Thanks.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. If there's no  
12 more questions from the Council we could move on.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
17 We'll move into agency comments. Alaska Department of  
18 Fish and Game.

19

20 MR. JONES: Again Patrick Jones with  
21 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. So currently  
22 the State has no position on this proposal at this  
23 time, but I can go into a little bit of the history of  
24 the situation. So there is a harvestable surplus  
25 available in Zone 2 most years. Like I said before  
26 it's not a very big number harvestable surplus, some  
27 years it's probably 10, other years it might be closer  
28 to 25. But the current -- so there's a little under  
29 800 moose the last time we counted it in Zone 2. We  
30 have a quota of 110 most years so that's about a 13  
31 percent harvest rate if we were to achieve the full 110  
32 animals. That's a high harvest rate for moose. You  
33 can only do that on a moose population that's growing  
34 rapidly. Luckily this one is currently, but we'd still  
35 measure the fact that even though people are harvesting  
36 75, 85, 90 moose in Zone 2 they're still having a  
37 measurable effect on that bull/cow ratio over time. So  
38 when the hunt started it was almost one to one, for  
39 every hundred bulls there was a hundred cows. The last  
40 time the count was done I believe in 2021 it was down  
41 to 55. In 2020 it was 65. So we can tell hunters are  
42 having an effect, that bull/cow is coming down the way  
43 it is now. Part of that is a high harvest rate for a  
44 moose population, even a productive one.

45

46 But so since the beginning of the -- of  
47 the hunt season dates have been extended in Zone 2. So  
48 we initially started 15 years ago when the -- when the  
49 hunt started. Zone 2 and Zone 1 mirrored each other,  
50



0207

1 they were I think the first year they were about 10  
2 days and then over time when the pattern, the harvest  
3 history kind of started revealing itself for Zone 2 and  
4 the effort in Zone 2 revealed itself, we kept on  
5 extending the time period in Zone 2 longer and longer  
6 and longer because it was different than Zone 1. So to  
7 put that in perspective, it's one permit for both  
8 zones, you can get one permit and you can kill a moose  
9 in Zone 1 or Zone 2, just one moose, but it's just one  
10 permit. And on average we give about 1,500 permits out  
11 and that varies from 1,300 to 1,800 depending on the  
12 year. And about 1,100 to 1,200 people report that they  
13 hunted at some point during that season.

14  
15 So it's a very competitive season and  
16 Zone 1 is normally -- now it's a seven to nine day  
17 season and we're trying to harvest somewhere between  
18 150 and 170 bulls most years. And we're reaching that  
19 if not passing that in that time period, in seven to  
20 nine days we're harvesting somewhere between 150 and  
21 250 bulls depending on the year. It's very  
22 competitive, but the access is really good in Zone 1.  
23 There's lot -- that's where all the communities are and  
24 that's where the river's the biggest and you can use  
25 any kind of boat you want and there's lots of access.  
26 So we see fast harvest rates and high harvest rates.  
27 The first day of the season we -- we've killed over 75  
28 moose in one day so it happens quick so Zone 1's very  
29 competitive.

30  
31 Zone 2 is the opposite. People are  
32 going to Zone 2, but mostly -- like this year was a  
33 high water year so people in props were getting to Zone  
34 2 pretty easily. A lot of years the water's low and  
35 you've got to have a jet boat. So that really limits  
36 the number of people that can get there. And there's  
37 less moose there, the density is lower. So it just  
38 takes longer to -- for people to harvest those animals.  
39 But it is adding up, we can see the difference when we  
40 do surveys.

41  
42 And we tried adding an additional  
43 winter season already, it wasn't very effective. We  
44 gave out all the permits, it was very competitive for  
45 giving out permits or I guess the Refuge gave out. And  
46 then only one person was able to successfully get up  
47 there and harvest a bull with an antler. And that was  
48 mostly to do with the weather and the travel  
49 conditions. And as the winter progressed last year,  
50

0208

1 you know, it wasn't very good. The snow wasn't good  
2 and the -- and the tributaries up in the mountains were  
3 open. And then the further you get into winter the  
4 less likely you are to see a bull with an antler  
5 because they start dropping their antlers pretty quick  
6 in late December.

7

8 We still believe that there's room for  
9 population growth as you heard. Zone 1 based on brow  
10 surveys we're getting really close on the main stem of  
11 how many moose we can have. They're starting to really  
12 make a difference on that habitat. And now that our  
13 habitat for Zone 2 is getting a few years old now,  
14 2019, that's probably time to do another survey in Zone  
15 2, but it was only 19 percent. That's really low,  
16 that's half -- basically half of what they can support  
17 there. So there's lots of room we think to grow in  
18 Zone 2. So it's not critical that we harvest those  
19 moose, there's room for them.

20

21 And I guess I'll leave it at that  
22 unless there's more questions.

23

24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more questions for  
25 Patrick at this time from the Council.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
30 you.

31

32 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chair.

33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Oh, sorry. John, John  
35 Andrew.

36

37 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
38 I just got one question. If you did harvest on the  
39 main stem between September 1 through -- and that's on  
40 the main stem, are you still eligible to hunt during  
41 the winter hunt? That was -- no?

42

43 MR. JONES: No.

44

45 MR. JONES: No. The.....

46

47 MR. ANDREW: Thank you.

48

49 MR. JONES: Yeah, through the Chair.

50

0209

1 The bag limit's still one moose so once you harvest one  
2 moose you're done.

3

4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I don't see anyone  
5 raising their hands. Go ahead, Brooke.

6

7 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Moving on, any  
8 Federal agency comments.

9

10 MR. MOSES: Thank you. Through the  
11 Chair. This is Aaron Moses, Subsistence Coordinator.  
12 I just wanted to comment on last year. Like Patrick  
13 said we issued permits last year. We had put in a  
14 special action last year because we were bound by  
15 trying to figure out ways to limit the hunt because we  
16 could only give out I think it was 65 permits. And so  
17 the special action went through and then the way we  
18 decided last year to make it as equal as possible is we  
19 had first come, first serve, but through a phone  
20 system. Where they -- we gave them a date, I think it  
21 was December 14th and like the phone line opens at 9:00  
22 o'clock, leave your name and phone number and we'll get  
23 back to you. That's how we did it last year.

24

25 This proposal will make it so that the  
26 Refuge Manager can do that without having to have a  
27 special action in place and be able to -- he could say  
28 that instead of an antlered bull we could just make it  
29 an antlerless hunt or anything. So it's giving the  
30 Refuge Manager a toolbox to be able to open it up for  
31 different -- different requirements.

32

33 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Aaron. Any  
34 other Federal agency comments.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 MS. McDAVID: What about any tribal  
39 comments on WP24-20.

40

41 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. For the  
42 record my name's Tom Plank with OSM. And I have a  
43 comment from ONC. And for WP24-20 this proposal would  
44 give additional authority and tools to the U.S. Fish  
45 and Wildlife Service Managers for the Zone 2 moose hunt  
46 and population control. This would allow additional  
47 hunting opportunities for those who didn't harvest  
48 moose in Zone 1.

49

50

0210

1 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Tom. Any  
2 other tribal comments.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, I don't  
7 believe we have any other RAC comments or Fish and Game  
8 Advisory Committee comments. Any written public  
9 comments.

10  
11 MR. PLANK: Again this is Tom Plank and  
12 there were no written comments.

13  
14 MS. McDAVID: Thank you. Moving on to  
15 public testimony. Would anyone in the room or online  
16 like to comment on this proposal.

17  
18 (No comments)

19  
20 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Hearing none, I'll  
21 turn it over to you, Mr. Chair, for Council  
22 recommendation.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Thank you,  
25 Brooke. What is the wish of the Council at this time.

26  
27 John Andrew.

28  
29 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
30 Motion to support.

31  
32 MS. ROGERS: Second.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Motion on the  
35 floor by John Andrew to support WP24-20, seconded by  
36 Alissa. Discussion.

37  
38 (No comments)

39  
40 MR. PETER: Question.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Stand by. Brooke, go  
43 ahead.

44  
45 MS. McDAVID: Yeah, so we do need some  
46 justification for the record if you all could share why  
47 you're in support or against.

48  
49 Thank you.

50

0211

1 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

4

5 MS. ROGERS: I am in support of this  
6 proposal because it is adding tools for the Area  
7 Manager and additional hunting opportunities for those  
8 who didn't harvest a moose in Zone 1 or Zone 2.

9

10 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Alissa. We  
13 don't need to ask the question.

14

15 MR. PETER: Question.

16

17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. The question's  
18 been called by Phillip Peter. All those in support of  
19 WP24-20 signify by saying aye.

20

21 IN UNISON: Aye.

22

23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Opposed say nay.

24

25 (No opposing votes)

26

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, motion  
28 carries. Thank you. Maybe we'll take one more and  
29 then we'll take a break.

30

31 You have the floor, Tom.

32

33 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
34 members of the Council. Again for the record my name's  
35 Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence  
36 Management. And I'll be presenting a summary of the  
37 analysis for wildlife proposal WP24-19. And this  
38 starts on Page 130 in your books.

39

40 Proposal WP24-19 was submitted by the  
41 Native Village of Quinhagak. It requests that the fall  
42 moose season within the Kanektok and Arolik River  
43 drainages in Unit 18 be extended from September 1st  
44 through the 30th to September 1st through October 15th.  
45 Moose are an important subsistence resource for members  
46 of the Native Village of Quinhagak because of increase  
47 in food costs, the village's remote location and  
48 changing environmental factors food security is a  
49 significant and growing concern. Since 2020

50

0212

1 subsistence hunters have not hunted caribou from the  
2 Mulchatna Herd due to the low population numbers. The  
3 Mulchatna Caribou Herd has historically been one of the  
4 village's primary food sources thus there is an  
5 increased reliance on moose hunting to meet subsistence  
6 needs.

7  
8                   The proponent states that the current  
9 season dates of September 1st through 30th do not  
10 provide an adequate opportunity for Quinhagak  
11 subsistence needs. Poor weather during the month of  
12 September for the past two years has resulted in a  
13 failure to reach subsistence needs before the hunting  
14 season closes. The Native Village of Quinhagak  
15 proposes that the Kanektok and Arolik River drainages  
16 moose season be extended by 15 days to provide a more  
17 meaningful opportunity for Quinhagak residents to meet  
18 subsistence needs.

19  
20                   In '98 the Board adopted a proposal  
21 which modified the hunt area descriptor for the  
22 Kanektok/Goodnews area to include the portion of Unit  
23 18 south of and including the Kanektok River drainage.  
24 The change clarifies that the hunt area included the  
25 Arolik River drainage which is located between the  
26 Kanektok and Goodnews drainages as originally intended.  
27 The minor changes -- the minor drainages north of the  
28 Kanektok drainage remained part of the lower Yukon hunt  
29 area. In 2008 the Board adopted a proposal with  
30 modification rescinding the closure and established a  
31 season in the southern portion of the  
32 Kanektok/Arolik/Goodnews hunt area, dividing the  
33 Kanektok/Arolik/Goodnews hunt areas into two hunt  
34 areas, the Goodnews River drainage and south to the  
35 Unit 18 boundaries and south of and including the  
36 Kanektok River drainage to the Goodnews River drainage.

37  
38  
39                   In 2019 and 2020 a series of  
40 coordinated regulation requests were submitted to the  
41 Board and the Board of Game relating to the Kanektok  
42 and Arolik hunt areas. In 2019 the Board of Game  
43 adopted a proposal to require a registration permit for  
44 the State moose hunt in the Kanektok/Arolik hunt area  
45 rather than just a harvest ticket. Also in 2019 the  
46 Board approved a wildlife special action with  
47 modification to delegate authority to the In-Season  
48 Manager to open a may be announced moose season for the  
49 winter and spring 2020 season. And in 2020 the Board  
50

0213

1 adopted a proposal to enlarge the Kanektok/Arolik hunt  
2 areas to match the State hunt boundary, rescinded the  
3 Federal closure and established the current Federal  
4 regulations for this hunt area.

5

6 And as Council member Cleveland stated  
7 yesterday in -- just in September after your books have  
8 gone out to print, ADF&G had released an emergency  
9 order extending the RM617 moose hunt season to October  
10 15th.

11

12 Prior to the early 2000s moose were not  
13 commonly observed in southern Unit 18. in 2002 only  
14 three moose were observed in the Kanektok and Arolik  
15 drainages. Since then the population has significantly  
16 increased to 173 in 2018 and in 2020 the minimum count  
17 was 236 moose. This represented a 36 percent growth  
18 rate between 2018 to 2020. And additionally in the  
19 emergency order released by ADF&G it states that the  
20 moose population grew another approximately 16 percent  
21 to a minimum of 275 moose in 2023. Composition surveys  
22 in 2017 yielded an estimate of 43 bulls per hundred  
23 cows and in 2017 29 calves per 100 cows. Refuge  
24 Biologists believes that these estimates are likely  
25 bias high for bulls and bias low for calves.

26

27 Between 1991 and 2019 Federal public  
28 lands in the hunt area were closed to hunting moose by  
29 all users. All legal moose harvested for the Kanektok  
30 and Arolik River drainages occurred under State  
31 regulations on State managed lands. Between 2003 and  
32 2018 reported harvest was 61 moose. Residents of  
33 Quinhagak harvested 70 percent of the total reported  
34 harvest during that time period. Since 2019 when State  
35 registration permit RN617 was implemented and the  
36 Federal land closure was rescinded, an average of 12  
37 moose have been reported harvested each year all by  
38 hunters of Quinhagak. In 2023 the harvestable surplus  
39 is 25 bulls.

40

41 If wildlife proposal WP24-19 is adopted  
42 the moose season in Kanektok and Arolik hunt area of  
43 Unit 18 would be extended providing Federally-qualified  
44 subsistence users with an additional 15 days to harvest  
45 moose and this would give Federally-qualified  
46 subsistence users more opportunity to fulfill  
47 subsistence needs which may be especially important  
48 given the reduction in other subsistence resources.

49

50

0214

1                   Effects of adopting this proposal on  
2 the moose population are unknown. On average 12 moose  
3 a year are harvested from 61 hunters with a 21 percent  
4 success rate. At these current levels the moose  
5 population continues to increase. The additional 15  
6 days of opportunity to harvest moose may result in a  
7 substantial increase in overall harvest and harvest  
8 success rates due to better hunting conditions. This  
9 may curtail the growth rate of the growing moose  
10 population.

11  
12                   Adoption of this proposal would  
13 misalign State and Federal regulations. This would  
14 increase regulatory complexity and may cause some  
15 confusion since Federal regulations require the use of  
16 a State registration permit for this hunt. However if  
17 adopted this would provide a Federal subsistence  
18 priority.

19  
20                   OSM's preliminary conclusion is to  
21 support proposal WP24-19. WP24-19 provides an  
22 additional opportunity for Federally-qualified  
23 subsistence users, there are minimal conservation  
24 concerns and as the moose population continues to  
25 increase -- continued to increase after 2019 when  
26 regulations were greatly liberalized.

27  
28                   And thank you, Mr. Chair, members of  
29 the Council. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

30  
31                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do we have any  
32 questions for Tom at this time from the Council.

33  
34                   MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

35  
36                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

37  
38                   MS. ROGERS: I have a repetitive  
39 question. Are folks from our area able to go hunting  
40 in this hunt as well?

41  
42                   Thank you.

43  
44                   MR. PLANK: They can.

45  
46                   MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

47  
48                   MS. McDAVID: For the record that was  
49 answered in the affirmative.

50



0215

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more questions or  
4 comments for Tom at this time from the Council.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing -- Richard, go  
9 ahead.

10

11 MR. SLATS: Just a simple question. On  
12 paragraph two under discussion Quinhagak with a Q and  
13 Kwinhagak with a K? I know that's an off the wall  
14 question, but I have to ask that.

15

16 MS. CLEVELAND: May I answer through  
17 the Chair?

18

19 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

20

21 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay. Kwinhagak with a  
22 K is the tribe -- tribal government and Quinhagak with  
23 a Q is for US what, GS maps. So -- and the postoffice.

24

25 (Laughter)

26

27 MR. SLATS: Okay. Thank you. Thank  
28 you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you for that  
31 clarification. Any more questions or comments for Tom  
32 at this time from the Council.

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
37 you, Tom.

38

39 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Moving on to  
40 agency comments, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

41

42 MR. JONES: To the Council, Patrick  
43 Jones, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. On wildlife  
44 proposal WP24-19, the State has no position at this  
45 time. So the community of Quinhagak has requested  
46 season extensions the last three seasons. We just did  
47 one for this season because they didn't have gas in the  
48 village for a couple weeks, to October 15th. Also for  
49 your consideration the hunt directly to the north in  
50

0216

1 RM615, Zone 2 goes to October 15th. So that would  
2 align those seasons. That might reduce some confusion  
3 with some of the users.

4

5 But things to remember and consider  
6 while you're thinking about this, this is a hunt with a  
7 very small moose population. You heard 275 animals and  
8 it's growing, but it -- this is a new population, it's  
9 just getting its good foothold. We don't have any  
10 population concerns around -- about it right now  
11 because it is growing, just something for you to  
12 consider that it is small. And then October is when  
13 moose are rutting and then their super visible and  
14 super vulnerable to hunters.

15

16 But Tom covered most of the background  
17 so I won't repeat any of that, but I am here for any  
18 questions.

19

20 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

23

24 MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana, Mr. Chair. I  
25 had a -- maybe I'm confused. In the Board of Game  
26 material that -- the proposal book that came out,  
27 didn't the State also turn in a proposal to extend our  
28 moose hunt, like the same exact proposal or was that --  
29 or is that just the emergency action one?

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay. Thanks.

34

35 MR. JONES: Through the Chair. Member  
36 Cleveland's correct, there is a -- there's actually two  
37 proposals on the State side, one from I believe the  
38 community of Quinhagak and one from the State. Yeah,  
39 so those are there on both sides. So hopefully  
40 whatever happens we can keep State and Federal  
41 regulations aligned.

42

43 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

46

47 MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana. I guess my  
48 confusion was that if you don't have a position when  
49 there's the same exact proposal out.

50

0217

1                   Thanks.

2

3

4                   MR. JONES: No, that's a good  
5 observation. We don't have a position on this proposal  
6 at this time. We will obviously before the Board meets  
7 in April. I put -- I guess the State put it in on the  
8 State side because we had talked about it at our  
9 Advisory Committee meetings and the deadline was coming  
10 up and I -- I was having trouble getting ahold of  
11 anybody. So I wanted to make sure the proposal got in  
12 so they can talk about. I know I tried. But anyway  
13 the -- the time for that came up and I was like I  
14 really wanted it to be in because we had talked about  
15 it so much for a while so I put it in just to make sure  
16 it was on the docket and it turned out to be  
17 repetitive. Not necessarily on my part, but I wanted  
18 it there to talk about it because we had spent so much  
19 time talking about it in the Advisory Committee so I  
20 didn't want it to slip through the cracks.

20

21                   And so that -- that's where we're at.

22

23                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Any more  
24 questions for Tom at this time from the Council.

25

26                   (No comments)

27

28                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
29 you.

30

31                   MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Pat. Any  
32 Federal agency comments.

33

34                   (No comments)

35

36                   MS. McDAVID: Tribal comments. I  
37 believe we have one from Native Village of Quinhagak.  
38 And maybe -- 24-19. We do have -- also have one from  
39 ONC.

40

41                   And go ahead, Tom, while Jackie pulls  
42 hers up.

43

44                   MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. For the  
45 record Tom Plank, OSM. I have a comment from ONC. And  
46 it says the ONC subsistence community felt strongly  
47 about the conservation of the moose population in  
48 remembrance of the moose moratorium. There was  
49 additional discussion over the moose statistics and

50

0218

1 hunting complications. They took no action on their  
2 motion on this.

3

4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

5

6 MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana. Through the  
7 Chair. This is -- I'll just read the letter word for  
8 word from Native Village of Quinhagak.

9

10 Dear YKDelta RAC. The Native Village  
11 of Quinhagak submitted and supports proposal WP24-19  
12 which would extend fall moose hunting season within the  
13 area surrounding Quinhagak by 15 days. Although the  
14 original proposal requested extending the moose hunting  
15 season within the Kanektok and Arolik drainages,  
16 Quinhagak has since clarified that the proposal  
17 extension would apply to the entire hunt area for the  
18 community. Moose are an important subsistence resource  
19 for members of the NDK because of increases of food  
20 costs and the village's remote location and changing  
21 environmental factors, food security is a significant  
22 and growing concerns. Mostly since 2020 subsistence  
23 hunters have not hunted caribou from the Mulchatna Herd  
24 due to low population numbers. The Mulchatna Herd was  
25 historically been -- has historically been one of the  
26 village's primary food sources thus there is an  
27 increased reliance on moose hunting to meet subsistence  
28 needs and co-incidently the moose population in the  
29 area near Quinhagak is increasing.

30

31 The current season dates of September 1  
32 to September 30 do not provide an adequate opportunity  
33 for our Quinhagak subsistence needs. Poor weather  
34 during the month of September for the past two years  
35 has resulted in the failure to reach moose quotas  
36 before the hunting season closed. Other areas adjacent  
37 to Quinhagak such as Goodnews and Eek Rivers have moose  
38 hunts that are open for longer seasons from September 1  
39 to October 15. Quinhagak proposes that its season be  
40 extended by 15 days to match those seasons and provide  
41 a more meaningful opportunity for Quinhagak residents  
42 to meet subsistence needs.

43

44 Previously the Federal Subsistence  
45 Board has extended Quinhagak's moose hunting season by  
46 emergency action request. And that was in 2021 we had  
47 -- we were granted a winter hunt and then in -- that  
48 was 2022, sorry. And then 2023 we got this extension.  
49 But we have asked -- it seems as though the -- someone  
50

0219

1 in the village it's normal to ask for either an  
2 extension or an emergency hunt in the past few years.  
3 So it was recommended by ADF&G actually to -- for us to  
4 -- we would encourage to turn in -- submit a proposal  
5 on this.

6

7 And so yes, all the reasons that were  
8 said before and our own, hopefully we get this.

9

10 Thanks. Sincerely, the Native Village  
11 of Quinhagak.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you,  
14 Jackie.

15

16 MS. McDAVID: Any more tribal comments.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 MS. McDAVID: And I don't believe we  
21 have any other RAC comments. Are there any AC comments  
22 at this time? Probably not, I don't think they've met  
23 yet.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 MS. McDAVID: Seeing none, summary of  
28 written public comments.

29

30 MR. PLANK: For the record this is Tom  
31 Plank, OSM. There were no written comments.

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 MS. McDAVID: Thank you. Would any  
36 members of the public in the room or online like to  
37 comment on WP24-19.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, I'll turn  
42 it over to you, Mr. Chair.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Brooke.  
47 What is the wish of the Council at this time.

48

49 John Andrew.

50

0220

1 MR. ANDREW: Motion to support proposal  
2 24-19.

3  
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Motion on the  
5 floor by John Andrew to support WP24-19. Do I hear a  
6 second.

7  
8 MS. ROGERS: Second.

9  
10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Seconded by Alissa.  
11 Discussion.

12  
13 (No comments)

14  
15 MR. PETER: Question.

16  
17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: The question's been  
18 called. Oh, sorry. Brooke, go ahead.

19  
20 MS. McDAVID: Phillip's jumping the gun  
21 again. We need a little discussion on the record.....

22  
23 (Laughter)

24  
25 MS. McDAVID: .....as to why you would  
26 support or oppose.

27  
28 Thank you.

29  
30 (Laughter)

31  
32 MS. McDAVID: Don't everybody talk at  
33 once. You'll get a break after this one.

34  
35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah.

36  
37 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

40  
41 MS. ROGERS: Quyana, Mr. Chair. I'm  
42 going to abstain from this vote. My justification is I  
43 have mixed feelings about this on a biological reason  
44 and also because it's still -- it's still a population  
45 that's developing. And I understand that the village  
46 of Quinhagak might be having issues because of bad  
47 weather, but we go out hunting in bad weather too and  
48 we only have eight days to go hunting and we have to  
49 fight with a lot -- not fight, retract that, we're not  
50

0221

1 fighting. We are all hunting to go hunt for our share,  
2 our fair share in Zone 1. And I don't -- I don't -- I  
3 don't -- I have mixed feelings because we -- we do the  
4 same thing too. We have -- we go when we have to go,  
5 when we need to go.

6  
7 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: We still need  
10 justification on WP24-19.

11  
12 (No comments)

13  
14 MS. McDAVID: Okay. And this is a  
15 reminder. This proposal, WP24-19 is to extend the  
16 moose season in -- to October 15th in the Kanektok and  
17 Arolik drainages in the Quinhagak hunt area if that's  
18 what it's called.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I'll go ahead and  
21 mention. I think as we heard from Jackie, I think due  
22 to foul weather and gas -- no gas in that village and  
23 having to come and ask for a number of extensions to  
24 the area, I think this will make it easier for them to  
25 be able to do their moose hunt after September 30, give  
26 them an extra 15 days for the moose hunt.

27  
28 Will that be good enough?

29  
30 (No comments)

31  
32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Good enough.

33  
34 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

35  
36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James.

37  
38 MR. LANDLORD: The RAC just adopted  
39 WP24-21 to include Quinhagak to Unit 18. And this  
40 WP24-19 adding to the two rivers.....

41  
42 MS. CLEVELAND: Extending.

43  
44 MR. LANDLORD: Extending. Okay.

45  
46 MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair.

47  
48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Brooke, go ahead.

49  
50

0222

1 MS. McDAVID: Thank you for that  
2 question, James. And someone else might be better to  
3 jump in, but I think it -- it's not adding those  
4 drainages to the Zone 2 hunt area that we talked about  
5 earlier, this is a separate hunt that occurs just  
6 locally near the community of Quinhagak. So it  
7 wouldn't extend that hunt that's up in Zone 2, this is  
8 specifically for the hunt near Quinhagak.

9  
10 Thank you.

11  
12 MR. LANDLORD: Okay. Just for  
13 Quinhagak. Okay.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: We've motioned,  
16 seconded and gave justification, I guess we are -- if  
17 there's no more discussion I think we could ask for the  
18 question.

19  
20 John.

21  
22 MR. ANDREW: Yeah.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Fred -- Phillip.

25  
26 MR. PETER: Mr. Chairman, Quinhagak  
27 alone. My question is Quinhagak alone or that Zone 2  
28 consist of Kisaralik, Kwigillingok and Kwethluk,  
29 they're included with -- included with Quinhagak and  
30 Eek. My question would be it would -- it will include  
31 residents of Akiachak, Kwethluk, Akiak on this proposal  
32 because it's on the -- inside the Zone 2?

33  
34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Pippa, go ahead.

35  
36 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Chairman Oney.  
37 Through the Chair to Phillip Peter.

38  
39 MS. McDAVID: Sorry, Pippa, I didn't  
40 mean to cut you off. I just showed him the map that's  
41 on Page 133 for this proposal.

42  
43 MR. PETER: So it's -- is this inside  
44 of the -- Mr. Chairman.

45  
46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Fred -- I keep calling  
47 you Fred. Phillip, go ahead.

48  
49 MR. PETER: On the regulatory history  
50



0223

1 if I'm correct the -- showing on the map is the --  
2 inside the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge?

3

4 MS. CLEVELAND: (In Native)

5

6 MR. PETER: (In Native)

7

8 MS. CLEVELAND: (In Native)

9

10 MR. PARKS: (In Native)

11

12 MR. PETER: Okay. Now I understand.

13 Now I understand.

14

15 Quyana. Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: We are on -- still on  
18 discussion mode at this time on WP24-19.

19

20 John Andrew.

21

22 MR. ANDREW: Question on the motion.

23

24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: John Andrew calls for  
25 the question on the motion. All those in favor of  
26 supporting WP24-19 signify by saying aye.

27

28 IN UNISON: Aye.

29

30 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Those opposed signify  
31 by saying nay.

32

33 (No opposing votes)

34

35 MS. ROGERS: Abstain.

36

37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Let the record show  
38 there's one abstention. Motion carries. Oh, excuse  
39 me. Two abstentions. Motion carries.

40

41 MS. McDAVID: And for the record the  
42 second abstention was member Cleveland.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MS. ROGERS: Do I need to give my  
47 justification for my abstention?

48

49 MS. McDAVID: As previously stated,

50

0224

1 member Rogers. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Let's go ahead  
4 and take a 10 minute break. And then we'll come back  
5 and finish up the proposals for our area. Hopefully we  
6 get it done by -- and then be excused for the night.

7

8 Thank you. Ten minute break.

9

10 (Off record)

11

12 (On record)

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Next on the  
15 agenda we do have WP24-22, Unit 18, establish a  
16 customary and traditional use determination for  
17 mainland muskox.

18

19 Pippa Kenner, OSM, Anthropology, you  
20 have the floor.

21

22 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
23 welcome, and members of the Council. Before I forget  
24 the beginning of this analysis in your Council book is  
25 on Page 142. That's Page 142. Okay. So this is  
26 proposal WP24-22. My name is Pippa Kenner and I work  
27 here at the Office of Subsistence Management in  
28 Anchorage.

29

30 This proposal was submitted by the  
31 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory  
32 Council and it's a request for the Federal Subsistence  
33 Board to recognize customary and traditional uses of  
34 muskox in the mainland area of Unit 18 by residents of  
35 Unit 18. So the mainland area of Unit 18 refers to  
36 those areas that are not on Nunivak or Nelson Island.  
37 And in regulation the mainland area of Unit 18 is  
38 called the remainder area. So we may be using that  
39 interchangeably, but we mean the mainland area that are  
40 not Nunivak Island or Nelson Island. So we're not  
41 talking about those muskoxen, we're only talking about  
42 muskoxen in the mainland or remainder area.

43

44 There's a companion proposal that will  
45 follow, WP24-23 and it's going to request you -- the  
46 Board to establish a Federal hunt for muskoxen in the  
47 mainland area if this proposal is adopted by the Board.  
48 So if the Council does not support this proposal we  
49 will not move on to a hunt because you need to have a  
50

1 recognized use, a customary and traditional use  
2 determination in order to have a hunt.

3

4

5 So the Council stated that muskoxen  
6 were reintroduced to Alaska with the intention that one  
7 day the population would grow enough that they could be  
8 hunted and provide food for subsistence. Muskoxen have  
9 migrated from Nelson Island over the past 50 years to  
10 various parts of Unit 18, the mainland area, and have  
11 been observed by local residents across various parts  
12 of the region to be increasing in numbers and expanding  
13 their range. Much of their current habitat is on  
14 Federal public lands of the Yukon Delta National  
15 Wildlife Refuge. The proponent continues that  
16 recognizing the customary and traditional uses of  
17 muskoxen by residents of Unit 18 is the first step to  
18 allow these animals to be potentially hunted by  
19 Federally-qualified subsistence users in the region.  
20 The proponent ends by saying that residents of Unit 18  
21 desire the opportunity to harvest muskoxen for  
22 subsistence whenever a harvestable surplus is  
23 identified and believe the additional opportunity could  
24 help alleviate food security concerns.

24

25

26 So at the beginning of the Federal  
27 Subsistence Management Program that brought us the  
28 Board and our Councils in 1992 the Board -- the Federal  
29 Subsistence Board adopted most of the existing State  
30 customary and traditional use determinations into the  
31 Federal regulations. And since then they've been  
32 changed by -- as we get proposals. At that time the  
33 State did not recognize customary and traditional uses  
34 of muskoxen in Unit 18 and as a consequence the Federal  
35 Subsistence Board adopted a determination of no  
36 subsistence priority. These are very rare in our  
37 regulations, we do not adopt negative determinations  
38 any more, but this is one of those that's still  
39 standing. And there's reasons for that and we'll talk  
40 about it in a minute.

40

41

42 In 2018 this Council submitted a  
43 proposal requesting the Board to recognize the  
44 customary and traditional uses of muskoxen on Nunivak  
45 Island by residents of Nunivak Island. And the Board  
46 followed the Council's recommendation and rejected the  
47 proposal. And part of that justification was that  
48 residents of Mekoryuk relayed that the current  
49 management of muskox was working fine for local  
50 subsistence hunters and expressed concern that

50

1 establishing C&T for muskox may lead to complications  
2 down the road that could have a negative impact on the  
3 local economy and Nunivak Island residents that work as  
4 hunting guides and transporters during the State sport  
5 hunt. So the Council given that testimony rejected its  
6 own proposal and so did the Board.

7  
8 Now another thing to keep in mind is  
9 that on the mainland area that this proposal is  
10 concerned with there's never been an open hunting  
11 season for muskox. The State has established sport and  
12 general hunting seasons and harvest limits for muskoxen  
13 in the Nunivak Island and Nelson Island areas of Unit  
14 18. So they've been hunting for decades on those  
15 islands, but not on the mainland, there's never been an  
16 open hunt. So this is for all the communities in Unit  
17 18 to be able to hunt muskoxen in Unit 18 during open  
18 hunting seasons. So there's 38 wild -- widely  
19 disbursed communities and about 25,000 people in this  
20 area. And just to let you know the population has  
21 almost tripled over the past 60 years. So unlike other  
22 areas of Alaska where we're seeing fewer people, in our  
23 region we are seeing more.

24  
25 One of the things I'm going to go over  
26 because we have new Council members is what is a C&T  
27 determination. We -- the Board adopts customary and  
28 traditional use determinations to identify people who  
29 have customarily and traditionally used these  
30 resources. And a community or area's customary and  
31 traditional use is generally exemplified through eight  
32 factors. And these eight factors are in our  
33 regulations. One is a long term consistent pattern of  
34 use excluding interruptions beyond the control of the  
35 community or area. I'm on Page 146. The second factor  
36 is a pattern of use recurring in specific seasons for  
37 many years. Number 3 is a pattern of use consisting of  
38 method and means of harvest which are characterized by  
39 efficiency and economy of effort and cost conditioned  
40 by local characteristics. Number 4 is the consistent  
41 harvest and use of fish or wildlife as related to past  
42 methods and means of taking near or reasonably  
43 accessible from the community or area. Five, a means  
44 of handling, preparing, preserving and storing fish or  
45 wildlife which has been traditionally used by past  
46 generations including consideration of alteration of  
47 best past practices due to recent technological  
48 advances where appropriate. Number 6, a pattern of use  
49 which includes the handing down of knowledge of fishing  
50

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1 and hunting skills, values and lore from generation to  
2 generation. Number 7, a pattern of use in which the  
3 harvest is shared and distributed within a define --  
4 definable community of persons. And the last, number  
5 8, is a pattern of use which relates to reliance upon a  
6 wide diversity of fish and wildlife resources of the  
7 area and which provides substantial cultural, economic,  
8 social and nutritional elements to the community or  
9 area.

10

11 So I'd like to continue to talk about  
12 these eight factors. So the Board makes customary and  
13 traditional use determinations based on a holistic  
14 application of these eight factors. In addition the  
15 Board takes into consideration reports and  
16 recommendations of any appropriate Regional Advisory  
17 Council regarding customary and traditional use of  
18 subsistence resources. The Board makes customary and  
19 traditional use determinations for the sole of purpose  
20 of recognizing the pool of users who generally exhibit  
21 some or all of the eight factors. The Board does not  
22 use such determinations for resource management or  
23 restricting harvest. If a conservation concern exists  
24 for a particular population the Board addresses that  
25 concern through the imposition of harvest limits or  
26 season restrictions rather than by limiting the  
27 customary and traditional use finding.

28

29 We have very little information about  
30 use of muskoxen by people in Unit 18 except on Nunivak  
31 Island and a little bit more on Nelson Island. And  
32 that's because the State has received proposals for  
33 customary and traditional use of muskoxen including use  
34 on those islands. And people went in and talked and  
35 collected traditional knowledge from residents of  
36 Mekoryuk. And so what I've done in this analysis is  
37 I've taken that information about how over the decades  
38 people on Nunivak Island have incorporated the harvest  
39 and use of muskoxen into their seasonal found. Their  
40 use is patterned, it's not arbitrary, it's not sport  
41 hunting, they have certain things they look for, they  
42 use the whole animal, they share the animal. And so  
43 what I'm proposing is that we can use that information  
44 to show that when people in Unit 18 mainland area who  
45 currently don't have access to muskoxen to legally  
46 hunt, once they -- once that hunting starts they too  
47 will quickly incorporate it into their seasonal round.  
48 The fact that there's no muskoxen or very few muskoxen  
49 and no open hunting season in Unit 18 remainder is  
50

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1 beyond the control of the people who live there and  
2 that's why we're not seeing a lot of demonstrated use.

3  
4                   People in Unit 18, they use a wide  
5 diversity of resources that has been documented many,  
6 many times through many ways, ethnographic and harvest  
7 surveys and sharing is widespread, subsistence  
8 resources are not hoarded, they are always shared with  
9 others. Sometimes we have hunters and collectors who  
10 are really good in a community, fishers who do most of  
11 the harvesting and then share it with others and this  
12 has been documented too through these harvest surveys,  
13 levels of hunting.

14  
15                   And so I am going to now go to Page 150  
16 and talk about what the effects of this proposal is  
17 just to make sure we're all on the same page. So if  
18 the Board adopts this proposal it would recognize the  
19 customary and traditional uses of muskoxen in the  
20 mainland area of Unit 18 by the residents of Unit 18.  
21 Adopting this C&T -- this customary and traditional use  
22 determination would have no immediate affect on  
23 people's ability to harvest muskoxen until a season and  
24 harvest limit were established which is the next  
25 proposal if you choose to support this proposal. If  
26 this proposal is adopted then the Board will consider  
27 the next proposal, WP24-23, which is the proposal for a  
28 season and a harvest limit. If the proposal is not  
29 adopted there will be no effect on subsistence users  
30 and the Board cannot consider proposal WP24-23 to  
31 establish a muskox hunt in the Unit 18 mainland area.

32  
33                   The OSM preliminary conclusion for all  
34 the reasons we've just discussed is to support the  
35 proposal and I'm available to answer any questions that  
36 you may have throughout the rest of your discussion and  
37 deliberation.

38  
39                   Thank you very much for your time.

40  
41                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Pippa. Do  
42 we have any questions from the Council for Pippa at  
43 this time.

44  
45                   (No comments)

46  
47                   CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none,  
48 thanks.....

49  
50

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1 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, go ahead.

4

5 MR. LANDLORD: Yes, thank you. Seems  
6 like if I remember correctly I seem to recollect their  
7 ask before the -- they wanted to hunt muskox here on  
8 the mainland. And someone answered or suggested that  
9 maybe they had to go through customary and traditional  
10 knowledge process first. And this proposal is  
11 requesting that, 22. And now the analysis say can't do  
12 it that way, right?

13

14 MS. KENNER: Thank you for the  
15 question. Through the Chair, Mr. Landlord. So this  
16 analysis is looking at what are the customary and  
17 traditional uses of muskoxen in the mainland area. In  
18 our conclusion, the OSM preliminary conclusion for you  
19 to consider is that you should support it. There are  
20 customary and traditional uses when muskox -- when  
21 there is an open season that people are able to  
22 participate in, they will quickly integrate these  
23 animals into their seasonal round of subsistence  
24 harvesting. So our preliminary conclusion for you to  
25 consider is to support the proposal. The next step  
26 then will be to get a season and harvest limit.

27

28 MR. LANDLORD: Okay. Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more questions or  
31 comments for Pippa at this time on WP24-22.

32

33 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chair.

34

35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: John, go ahead. John  
36 Andrew.

37

38 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman, Guyana. I  
39 have mixed feelings on this because for years because  
40 they introduced them down to Nunivak, some of them  
41 migrated up to Nelson Island. All these years nobody  
42 allowed the subsistence hunt down on Nunivak and Nelson  
43 Island and they open it up to sport hunters, but never  
44 to the rest of the villages. Like you said 30 of them  
45 had -- 38 of them have no C&T history. And if they do  
46 open it it'll open up to well over 20,000 hunters out  
47 this way. There's a good chance of literally wiping  
48 them out. They -- they're not like moose and caribou  
49 that always run away, they wait for you to -- when  
50

0230

1 they're in defensive mode.

2

3

4 So I'm pretty uncomfortable with this  
5 one, both of these proposals because like I said it  
6 doesn't feel right to me. And a lot of us -- we know  
7 they're out there, a lot of us were never allowed to  
8 harvest any of them since they were introduced to that  
9 area, especially down Mekoryuk or Nelson Island.

9

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11

12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, John. Any  
13 more questions or comments for Pippa at this time.

14

15 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

16

17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

18

19 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
20 Through the Chair. Thank you, Pippa, appreciate it. I  
21 did have a question. So this proposal is allowing to  
22 identify customary and traditional use of muskox being  
23 hunted on the mainland, correct?

24

25 (No audible response)

26

27 MS. ROGERS: Okay. And then the other  
28 thing is this would only be on Federal land?

29

30 (No audible response)

31

32 MS. ROGERS: And this would only be for  
33 Federally-qualified users, right?

34

35 MS. KENNER: Thank you for the  
36 question. This is correct.

37

38 MS. ROGERS: And it's not going to be  
39 open to State hunting like Nunivak or Nelson?

40

41 MS. KENNER: Thank you for the  
42 question. Through the Chair. This is Pippa Kenner for  
43 -- with OSM for the record. Our regulations never  
44 apply to non-subsistence uses -- users. They only  
45 apply to subsistence users. Now we can close Federal  
46 public lands to the harvest of say moose by non-  
47 subsistence users, people who aren't in the C&T, but in  
48 general our regulations only apply to us. So if the  
49 State doesn't have an open season then people outside  
50



0231

1 of the people in the customary and traditional use  
2 determination cannot hunt under our regulations. They  
3 can only hunt under State regulations. It's  
4 complicated.

5

6 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

9

10 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. For a follow-  
11 up. So I can hear what John's saying in regards to it  
12 being -- becoming something like Nunivak and Nelson  
13 Island in which we're not -- that's -- we don't want  
14 that. But we want -- that origination of this proposal  
15 was to have only those with Federally-qualified  
16 subsistence users with C&T allowed to hunt muskox on  
17 the mainland because a lot of them can't travel to  
18 Nunivak or Nelson Island for muskox.

19

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21

22 MS. KENNER: Yeah. So this is Pippa  
23 Kenner with OSM. So just to add to that. This would  
24 only be open to residents of Unit 18. I think one of  
25 the things that member Andrew was referring to is how  
26 many hunters are in Unit 18. So what he's asking is  
27 how would we distribute permits, I mean, what would  
28 there be, like five for 20,000 people. And I can't  
29 answer that, that's in the next proposal. If anybody  
30 wants to help me, if the Refuge maybe has an idea of  
31 how that opportunity would be distributed, it would be  
32 -- maybe this would -- we would discuss it now rather  
33 than in the next proposal.

34

35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Richard, go ahead.

36

37 MR. SLATS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
38 Being from Chevak and it was also mentioned -- let's  
39 see, 145 community characteristics and it said that  
40 Yup'ik villages or Cup'ig or Cup'ik on Nunivak Island  
41 at Hooper Bay and Chevak. You know, as I've grown --  
42 as I was growing up throughout all these years my  
43 community members have been cited for shooting (in  
44 Native) because it was -- you know, they shot and it --  
45 the -- you know, when they were not allowed to be shot.  
46 And it's also that Christopher is right that I believe  
47 that muskox are not migrating into the mainland because  
48 of the conditions of the ice and things of that nature.  
49 But it's also that I wanted to point out that it was  
50

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1 back in the '70s when those -- early '70s that the  
2 answer -- that muskox were being transported to Bethel  
3 when I was a kid, high school. And they were brought  
4 to the island. But then I don't know if that would  
5 qualify as a traditional or cultural, but I just want  
6 to point out to everyone here that the sightings of  
7 muskox are rare and isolated. That's why I was  
8 bringing up Christopher's point about I think we would  
9 have been seeing a lot more if they were migrating into  
10 the mainland.

11

12 So I just wanted to point that out.

13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more questions or  
16 comments for Pippa at this time.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
21 you, Pippa.

22

23 Brooke.

24

25 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
26 Moving on to agency comments. Alaska Department of  
27 Fish and Game.

28

29 MR. JONES: Thank you, Council. This  
30 is Patrick Jones, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.  
31 So I guess we had a lot of agency comments in the  
32 beginning because I -- this is an important to -- I  
33 guess both proposals are important for the State,  
34 that's why I put that presentation together for you  
35 guys to talk about it. There was a lot to go over.  
36 But I'll just run over the position I guess of the  
37 Department and then maybe we can take questions if  
38 anybody has any.

39

40 So like I said before the Department is  
41 opposed to this proposal. Fish and Game recommends  
42 that the Federal Subsistence Board and this Council  
43 thoroughly and carefully review the data on the harvest  
44 and use patterns of muskox specific to Unit 18, the  
45 mainland, in relation to the relevancy to the eight  
46 criteria that this Council's asked to look at. And I  
47 guess I have an opposing -- the State has opposing  
48 views from Pippa's version of how the eight criteria  
49 should apply to these animals. And in this population  
50

0233

1 it's not a reintroduction down here. In the North  
2 Slope it was a reintroduction where they existed and  
3 they had subsistence findings up there. Down here in  
4 our region it's just an introduction, they weren't here  
5 historically. They were used historically and this  
6 population on the mainland hasn't been hunted before so  
7 there's no hunt history and there's no use pattern.

8

9 And I guess I'll leave it there.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any questions for  
12 Patrick at this time from the Council.

13

14 Alissa, go ahead.

15

16 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Have you guys  
17 done any population estimate, aerial surveys to find  
18 out actually how much moose we have or is that -- is  
19 this -- allowing this proposal to go through will work  
20 with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to find an accurate  
21 or close to accurate of how much muskox we actually on  
22 the mainland? I wasn't here.

23

24 MR. JONES: So I guess through the  
25 Council, Alissa. I gave a presentation earlier and I  
26 talked about all the surveys we have done. So we've  
27 done surveys on the mainland twice. I don't know,  
28 maybe somebody has a handout they can share with you  
29 with a map on it of my talk earlier today, if not I  
30 have one you can -- you can look at. Then there if you  
31 -- there's a slide -- let me see. There's a slide  
32 towards the back that has a map of Unit 18 and it's got  
33 a bunch of red lines on it so you can see where I have  
34 done a survey. So the long and the short of it is we  
35 intensely survey the islands, we're trying to count  
36 every animal that is on the island. We do a direct  
37 census. The map, Alissa, looks like this one. And so --  
38 and so on the mainland we've tried to look at the area  
39 twice now. The area that we've looked at is basically  
40 all of Unit 18 north of the Kuskokwim, but south of the  
41 Yukon so that big chunk in the middle of the Unit. We  
42 know there are muskox north of the Yukon by Mountain  
43 Village and up there by Kotlik on the east on the  
44 Andrafsky. We know there's some -- there have been  
45 sightings north of Russian Mission on those Hills and  
46 we know there are sightings south of the Kuskokwim  
47 towards Platinum, Goodnews and even into Unit 17.  
48 There's starting to be a fair number of them upriver in  
49 Unit 19 now. The last count was I believe 74 up there  
50

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1 by the Portage Mountains that kind of borders 21E and  
2 19A. We've seen them as far upriver as McGrath and  
3 Holitna and on the Yukon we've seen them up there by  
4 Holy Cross. So their range is definitely expanding and  
5 it's mostly bulls that go off and explore new areas.

6  
7 But the key point -- one of the key  
8 takeaways I tried to bring out this morning in my talk  
9 is there's not very many, we've counted 174 and then if  
10 you break that down a little further that's 29 adult  
11 bulls and 53 adult cows. So there's just not very many  
12 adults yet, it's mostly orientated towards young  
13 animals which is encouraging to me that that population  
14 has reproduction and growth in it, it has the potential  
15 to grow if we just give them more time. They would get  
16 -- we want to start a hunt when we hit 300 animals.  
17 That's what the State is looking for. And the State  
18 can have hunts with a negative C&T. We have a negative  
19 C&T for Nunivak and Nelson Island for example and we've  
20 been hunting Nunivak since 1975 and we've been hunting  
21 Nelson since 1981. So a C&T finding -- a positive  
22 finding is not necessary for a hunt on the State side.  
23 And there is a regulation -- there is a proposal, a  
24 sister proposal, I believe put in by the same person on  
25 the State side to -- asking for a hunt on the State  
26 side as well.

27  
28 So just so everybody is aware.

29  
30 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more questions or  
33 comments for Patrick at this time.

34  
35 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

36  
37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

38  
39 MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana, Mr. Chair. Can  
40 we go back to the eight criteria now that it's laid out  
41 here and can you tell us which criteria that you think  
42 is not met?

43  
44 Thanks.

45  
46 MR. JONES: I guess we're using the  
47 definition of use in -- differently. Pippa mentioned  
48 that if this animal is used by somebody somewhere it  
49 qualifies for everybody everywhere. The State would  
50

0235

1 disagree that we go by population by population.

2

3 MS. CLEVELAND: Which number was that  
4 then? That's okay.

5

6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, did that answer  
7 your question?

8

9 MS. CLEVELAND: Yes. Quyana.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you. Any  
12 more questions for Patrick at this time.

13

14 MS. EVAN: I have a comment.

15

16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Norma.

17

18 MS. EVAN: In Marshall area region we  
19 did not see any muskox as we did the previous year,  
20 2022 in the spring. We did not see any this year,  
21 nobody reported. But when they're seen they like to  
22 tell everybody.

23

24 That's my comment. Thank you, Mr.  
25 Chair.

26

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
28 you. Thank you. And go ahead, Brooke.

29

30 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Continuing with  
31 agency comments. Any Federal agency comments.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 MS. McDAVID: Are there any tribal  
36 comments on WP24-22.

37

38 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Brooke. Yes,  
39 there are and I'll find them in a minute. This is  
40 Pippa Kenner with OSM for the record. Through the  
41 Chair. I'm going to present the point of view of the  
42 Orutsararmut Native Council in Bethel. And their  
43 Subsistence Committee met and would like to see a  
44 muskox hunt, but they also want to support the muskox  
45 population sustainability. These proposals will allow  
46 the language to be established in the regulations. ONC  
47 wanted to be a part of the hunting regulation  
48 development when the time comes. And that was to  
49 support the proposal.

50

0236

1 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Pippa. Any  
2 other tribal comments.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Moving on, RAC  
7 comments or other RAC Regional Advisory Councils or  
8 Fish and Game Advisory Committee comments.

9  
10 (No comments)

11  
12 MS. McDAVID: Moving on, summary of  
13 written public comments.

14  
15 (No comments)

16  
17 MS. McDAVID: We have not received any.  
18 Would any members of the public like to testify on  
19 WP24-22 to establish C&T for muskox on mainland Unit  
20 18.

21  
22 (No comments)

23  
24 MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, Mr. Chair,  
25 I'll turn it back over to you for Council  
26 recommendations.

27  
28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Brooke.  
29 What is the wish of the Council on WP22-24 -- 24-22.

30  
31 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

34  
35 MS. ROGERS: I think if -- excuse me,  
36 sorry. Would we able to take both W23 and 24 up at the  
37 same time?

38  
39 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Brooke, go ahead.

42  
43 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
44 Through the Chair, member Rogers. Unfortunately no,  
45 because we didn't start out that way. We've taken one  
46 of them up so we'll have to continue and vote on this  
47 one and then we can move into the next one.

48  
49 And as a reminder this one is for the  
50

0237

1 C&T, it doesn't actually deal with putting a hunt, it's  
2 just recognizing the customary and traditional use.  
3 And then if you support this one we can move into the  
4 next one. The caveat is you do -- you won't take up  
5 the next one unless you do support this one.

6  
7 Thank you.

8  
9 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

10  
11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

12  
13 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
14 Through the Chair. I guess that brings me to my second  
15 question. In order to find customary and traditional  
16 use it doesn't mean that we have to make a hunt, right,  
17 it's just find -- this proposal is just to find a  
18 customary and traditional use of muskox on the  
19 mainland. I'm getting hot.

20  
21 MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead. Who had  
24 their hand on.

25  
26 MS. McDAVID: Oh, I just wanted to  
27 respond to member Rogers.

28  
29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Oh, sorry.

30  
31 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Sorry. That --  
32 that's correct, Alissa. This does not establish a  
33 hunt, it's just for the customary and traditional use.

34  
35 MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

36  
37 MS. McDAVID: Yeah.

38  
39 MS. ROGERS: Motion to support.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. There's a motion  
42 on the floor by Alissa to support WP24-22. Do I hear a  
43 second.

44  
45 MR. LANDLORD: Second.

46  
47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by James  
48 Landlord. Discussion.

49  
50

0238

1 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: John Andrew.

4

5 MR. ANDREW: On discussion. None of  
6 the 38 villages never have met the eight required  
7 criteria in establishing C&T.

8

9 (In Native) quyana.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more discussion on  
12 WP24-22.

13

14 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

15

16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

17

18 MS. ROGERS: Since we currently don't  
19 have any information of customary and traditional use  
20 in our current -- where would it go, in our law book or  
21 would it be just in cust -- in general to find a C&T?  
22 Sorry.

23

24 MS. McDAVID: In regulation.

25

26 MS. ROGERS: Can I ask Pippa.

27

28 MS. KENNER: This is Pippa Kenner with  
29 OSM for the record. Through the Chair. Could you  
30 repeat your question.

31

32 MS. ROGERS: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Through  
33 the Chair.

34

35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Alissa.

36

37 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. My question  
38 was if this does get passed where will the information  
39 be stored?

40

41 MS. KENNER: Got it, yes. Thank you.  
42 So it will be in our regulations. It's under customary  
43 and traditional use determination where there's a long  
44 list of area, species and who's eligible to hunt.

45

46 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
47 This -- I guess for my discussion item in support of  
48 this proposal is to create the customary and  
49 traditional information to have it established in the  
50



0239

1 books. So when we do get to a threshold of being able  
2 to create a hunt later down the road, we've already  
3 taken that first step. And then if the population gets  
4 more in abundance to where it looks like we can get a  
5 hunt then we wouldn't have to start all over again.

6  
7 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Any more  
10 discussion.

11  
12 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

13  
14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, go ahead.

15  
16 MR. LANDLORD: Yes, it's just a process  
17 we have to follow through. There's never been a C&T in  
18 our region or the mainland so in the future if you want  
19 to establish -- want a hunt you can bring our books,  
20 all we'll have to do is set a hunting time.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more discussion on  
23 WP24-22.

24  
25 (No comments)

26  
27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I think I'd  
28 follow Alissa's recommendation that we adopt this C&T  
29 just so we have it on our books in hope of having a  
30 muskox hunt for the future. And I think that's where  
31 ADF&G will be able to at least come to us and see what  
32 the population is doing from time to time. So as long  
33 as we have it in our books that'll give us an  
34 opportunity at some point in time to open up a moose  
35 hunt. I mean, not a moose hunt, but muskox hunt.

36  
37 Richard, go ahead.

38  
39 MR. SLATS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
40 thought that -- maybe I picked up the wrong -- picked  
41 something up wrong, but WP24-22 C&T determination for  
42 main -- mainland muskox. If we determine that  
43 customary and traditional use has been being practiced  
44 while on those eight factors, this would -- if we move  
45 that would that open up -- establish a hunt for  
46 mainland muskox?

47  
48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Pippa, go ahead.

49  
50

0240

1 MR. SLATS: I thought that was my  
2 understanding that those -- these two go hand in hand.

3  
4 MS. KENNER: Thank you for the  
5 question. And this -- for the record this is Pippa  
6 Kenner with OSM. Through the Chair to member Slats.  
7 No, it would not. There would -- it would have  
8 virtually no effect. However when you receive a  
9 proposal that requests a season and a harvest limit you  
10 would be able to adopt it or to modify it and adopt it  
11 or support it. Whereas if you don't have a customary  
12 and traditional use determination in our regulations,  
13 in Federal regulations, the Board cannot adopt a hunt,  
14 a season or harvest limit. There are exceptions. So  
15 beginning of the program the Alaska Department of Fish  
16 and Game didn't have customary and traditional use  
17 determinations for everything out there. And generally  
18 if they didn't have one it came into our regulations  
19 that all rural residents are eligible. So we still  
20 have people hunting seasons and harvest limits that  
21 don't have a customary and traditional use  
22 determination, instead all rural residents of the State  
23 are eligible. So I just wanted to be accurate.

24  
25 The reason why there is a no Federal  
26 subsistence priority on muskox in Unit 18 is because  
27 the Federal program thought this was -- we were going  
28 to be temporary and the State was going to regain the  
29 authority to manage subsistence on Federal public  
30 lands. And they didn't want to interfere with the  
31 State system or adopt regulations that were going to  
32 make it difficult for them. For instance there was  
33 this thriving sport industry that was growing. And so  
34 instead we adopted it with no Federal subsistence  
35 priority. So you're in an unusual situation. Usually  
36 it would have been open to all Federally-qualified  
37 users, instead it came over no subsistence. And but  
38 you have to adopt a customary and traditional use  
39 determination before you can establish a hunt season or  
40 harvest limit.

41  
42 I probably gave you more information  
43 than you wanted, but I wanted to tell you -- explain to  
44 you how we got here. And it's not our usual situation.

45  
46 MR. SLATS: Thank you.

47  
48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more discussion on  
49 WP24-22.

50

0241

1 MR. SLATS: So my question, Mr.  
2 Chair.....

3  
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Richard, go ahead.  
5

6 MR. SLATS: .....this is Richard Slats.  
7 I -- to establish a customary and traditional use and  
8 that is it -- it's not to move on to the next and then  
9 establish a hunt. Am I correct to say that?

10  
11 (No comments)

12  
13 MR. SLATS: Okay. Thank you.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more discussion on  
16 WP24-22.

17  
18 (No comments)

19  
20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, is there --  
21 is there a question.

22  
23 MS. ROGERS: Question.

24  
25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Question's been  
26 called. I know before one of the members asked for a  
27 roll call vote. So I'll go ahead and ask for a roll  
28 call vote at this time.

29  
30 Mr. Secretary. Those that support  
31 WP24-22 signify by saying aye, those opposed signify by  
32 saying nay.

33  
34 MR. SLATS: Roll call vote?

35  
36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Roll call vote.

37  
38 MR. SLATS: Okay. This is a roll call  
39 vote for WP24-22.

40  
41 Henry Parks, how do you vote.

42  
43 MR. PARKS: Aye.

44  
45 MR. SLATS: Norma T. Evan.

46  
47 MS. EVAN: Yes.

48  
49 MR. SLATS: John W. Andrew.

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0242

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MR. ANDREW: Nay.

MR. SLATS: Walter A. Morgan, Sr.

MR. MORGAN: Yes.

MR. SLATS: Jacqueline K. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Yes.

MR. SLATS: James C. Landlord.

MR. LANDLORD: Yes.

MR. SLATS: Alissa Nadine Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. SLATS: Phillip K. Peter, Sr.

MR. PETER: Yes.

MR. SLATS: Wassilly B. Alexie.

MR. ALEXIE: Yes.

MR. SLATS: Raymond J. Oney.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Aye.

MR. SLATS: Myron P. Naneng, Sr.

(No comments)

MR. SLATS: Myron P. Naneng, Sr.

(No comments)

MR. SLATS: Robert J. Hoffman.

(No comments)

MR. SLATS: Robert J. Hoffman.

MR. SLATS: Richard B. Slats votes no.  
Mr. Chairman, we have nine ayes, two nos, two absent.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Mr.  
Secretary. Thank you, Secretary Richard. The motion

0243

1 carries.

2

3 Thank you. Moving on to WP24-23. Unit  
4 18, establish a hunt for mainland muskox.

5

6 Tom Plank, OSM. Go ahead. Go ahead,  
7 Tom.

8

9 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
10 members of the Council. Again for the record my name's  
11 Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist with the Office of  
12 Subsistence Management and I'll be presenting a summary  
13 of the analysis for wildlife proposal WP24-23. And  
14 this starts on Page 154 in your books.

15

16 WP24-23 was submitted by this Council  
17 requests establishing a Federal subsistence hunt for  
18 muskox in the mainland portion of Unit 18. And as  
19 Pippa pointed out, the mainland portion of Unit 18  
20 refers to the areas not on Nunivak or Nelson Islands.  
21 In regulation the mainland area of Unit 18 is called  
22 the remainder area of Unit 18.

23

24 There is a desire to see mainland  
25 muskox hunting opportunities for Federally-qualified  
26 subsistence users residing in Unit 18. Muskoxen have  
27 migrated from the Nelson Island Herds over the past 50  
28 years to previous parts -- to various parts of mainland  
29 Unit 18. Muskoxen have been observed by local  
30 residents across various parts of the region to be  
31 increasing in numbers and expanding their range.  
32 Muskoxen were reintroduced to Alaska with the intention  
33 that one day the population would grow enough that they  
34 could be hunted and provide food for subsistence uses.  
35 It was suggested that harvest limits and seasons be  
36 based on the harvestable surplus of the various  
37 mainland herd populations. Updated population  
38 assessments may need to be completed to determine these  
39 amounts. Even if the harvestable surplus numbers are  
40 low any new subsistence hunt opportunity could help  
41 alleviate ongoing food security concerns in the region.  
42 To ensure that any permits are made easily accessible  
43 and available to hunters in rural communities near the  
44 herds and like Pippa pointed out this is a companion  
45 proposal to WP24-22.

46

47 A muskox hunt has never occurred in  
48 Unit 18 outside of Nunivak Island or Nelson Island  
49 under Federal or State regulations. Muskoxen were  
50

1 extirpated in Alaska by the late 1800s and perhaps  
2 hundreds of years earlier on the Seward Peninsula. And  
3 in the 1930s ADF&G introduced the first group of  
4 muskoxen to Nunivak Island in the 19 -- then in the  
5 1960s 31 muskoxen were moved from Nunivak Island to  
6 Nelson Island. One of the struggles with populations  
7 on Nelson Island is that the muskoxen have been  
8 documented moving back and forth between the island and  
9 the mainland. These movements are believed to be  
10 temporary. Muskoxen have been tracked on the mainland  
11 of Unit 18 for up to two years before they returned to  
12 Nelson Island and in 2010 a minimum count of a hundred  
13 muskoxen in Unit 18 remainder and then in 2015 that  
14 number was up to 200.

15  
16 Muskoxen live in small groups and  
17 mature bulls are important for predator defense,  
18 foraging and group cohesion in addition to breeding.  
19 For example mature bulls may protect groups of females  
20 with calves against predators effectively increasing  
21 calf survival and recruitment. Therefore muskoxen may  
22 be more sensitive to selective harvest of mature males  
23 than other species. No legal muskox harvest has ever  
24 occurred in Unit 18 outside of Nunivak or Nelson Island  
25 under Federal or State regulations. We did come up  
26 with one alternative which is considering a delegation  
27 of authority to manage the muskox hunt to the Yukon  
28 Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager and this would  
29 provide the most flexibility and the greatest  
30 subsistence hunting opportunity.

31  
32 The proposal as submitted did not  
33 specify seasons, harvest limits or permit types and  
34 currently there is limited knowledge regarding this  
35 population of muskoxen. As more information is  
36 gathered flexibility will be necessary to address  
37 potential conservation concerns while optimizing  
38 subsistence hunting opportunities. If this proposal is  
39 adopted a Federal muskox hunt will be established for  
40 the mainland portion of Unit 18. This will provide  
41 greater subsistence opportunity to residents of Unit 18  
42 and could help alleviate food insecurities given the  
43 concerns with other species in the region. Effects on  
44 the muskox population are unknown as little biological  
45 and harvest information is currently available. Due to  
46 the lack of data it is unknown if a hunt is sustainable  
47 at this time. It should not be assumed that mainland  
48 Unit 18 muskox hunting will occur in the near future.  
49 Strategies will need to be developed to manage the  
50

0245

1 Nelson Island population different from the Unit 18  
2 mainland population with the understanding that muskox  
3 move on and off Nelson Island.

4

5 OSM's preliminary conclusion is support  
6 proposal WP24-23 with the modification to establish a  
7 may be announced season and delegate authority to the  
8 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager to manage  
9 the hunt via delegation of authority letter.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the  
12 Council. I'd be happy to address any questions.

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Tom. Do we  
15 have any questions for Tom at this time from the  
16 Council.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
21 you. Brooke.

22

23 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Thank you, Mr.  
24 Chair. We'll move on to agency comments. Alaska  
25 Department of Fish and Game.

26

27 MR. JONES: Patrick Jones, Alaska  
28 Department of Fish and Game. As I stated earlier in  
29 the presentation we are opposed to this proposal, it's  
30 not time yet. We want to see a population of 300  
31 animals before we consider a hunt. That's what we've  
32 done everywhere else we've had muskox. The last count  
33 was in 2019 and we found 174 animals. It -- it's just  
34 too early and it's going to be a while, they just don't  
35 have a fast population growth. And so it's not time to  
36 put a hunt on the books. We have lots of time to see  
37 what happens, hopefully we can get some research money  
38 to figure out where they're going and how many we have  
39 and their movement patterns.

40

41 So it's just too early in the State's  
42 opinion.

43

44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any questions for  
45 Patrick at this time.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank

50

0246

1 you. Brooke.

2

3 MS. McDAVID: Any Federal agency

4 comments.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 MS. McDAVID: Any tribal comments.

9

10 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair and for  
11 the record Tom Plank with the Office of Subsistence  
12 Management. And I will repeat the same comment that  
13 Pippa had done for 24-22. And that's from the ONC.  
14 The ONC Subsistence Committee would like to see a  
15 muskox hunt, but they are -- they also want to support  
16 a muskox population sustainability. These proposals  
17 will allow the language to be established in a  
18 regulation. ONC wanted to be part of the hunting  
19 regulation development when the time comes. And they  
20 supported it.

21

22 MS. McDAVID: Thank you. Any other  
23 tribal comments at this time.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, moving on,  
28 Advisory Group comments, Regional Advisory Councils or  
29 Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 MS. McDAVID: Were there any written  
34 public comments.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 MS. McDAVID: Okay. No written public  
39 comments. Would any members of the public like to  
40 testify on WP24-23.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 MS. McDAVID: No one's jumping up so  
45 I'll turn it back over to you, Mr. Chair, for Council  
46 recommendation.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50



0247

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Brooke.  
2 What is the wish of the -- recommendation of the  
3 Council at this time to WP24-23.

4  
5 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, I have a  
6 question.

7  
8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

9  
10 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
11 Through the Chair. Brooke, if you could help me.  
12 After discussion in the last proposal can we just go  
13 directly to say that we oppose this and -- or do we  
14 have to go through make the motion to support and then  
15 turn it down?

16  
17 Thank you.

18  
19 MS. McDAVID: So the motion does need  
20 to be in the affirmative. The motion would be to  
21 support the proposal and then if you were opposed you  
22 could vote nay against.

23  
24 Thank you.

25  
26 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Mr. Chair, I'd  
27 like to put a motion to support.

28  
29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Motion on the  
30 floor by Alissa to support WP24-23. Is there a second.

31  
32 MR. PARKS: I second.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by Henry Parks.  
35 Discussion.

36  
37 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

40  
41 MS. ROGERS: After all the agency  
42 reports and data has been reviewed, due to the ADF&G  
43 population count in 2019 there is not enough -- there  
44 is -- excuse me, let me retract. There is not a large  
45 enough population to sustain a hunt in Unit 18  
46 remainder at this time.

47  
48 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49  
50

0248

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Any more  
2 discussion.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 MS. ROGERS: Question.

7  
8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: The question's been  
9 called. I'll go ahead and ask for a roll call vote on  
10 this one too, on WP24-23. An aye vote would be in  
11 support of 24-23 with OSM's modification and a nay vote  
12 would not adopt WP24-23.

13  
14 Mr. Secretary, can you do a roll call.

15  
16 MR. SLATS: This is a roll call vote  
17 for item WP24-23.

18  
19 Henry Parks.

20  
21 MR. PARKS: Aye.

22  
23 MR. SLATS: Norma T. Evan.

24  
25 MS. EVAN: Nay.

26  
27 MR. SLATS: John W. Andrew.

28  
29 MR. ANDREW: Nay.

30  
31 MR. SLATS: Walter A. Morgan, Sr.

32  
33 MR. MORGAN: Yes.

34  
35 MR. SLATS: Jacqueline K. Cleveland.

36  
37 MS. CLEVELAND: Abstained.

38  
39 MR. SLATS: Abstain.

40  
41 MS. CLEVELAND: Abstain.

42  
43 MR. SLATS: Okay. James C. Landlord.

44  
45 MR. LANDLORD: Yes.

46  
47 MR. SLATS: Alissa Nadine Rogers.

48  
49 MS. ROGERS: No.

50

0249

1 MR. SLATS: Phillip K. Peter, Sr.

2

3 MR. PETER: No.

4

5 MR. SLATS: Wassilly B. Alexie.

6

7 MR. ALEXIE: Yes.

8

9 MR. SLATS: Raymond J. Oney.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Nay.

12

13 MR. SLATS: Myron P. Naneng, Sr.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 MR. SLATS: Myron P. Naneng.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 MR. SLATS: Robert J. Hoffman.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 MR. SLATS: Robert J. Hoffman.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 MR. SLATS: Richard B. Slats votes nay.

30 Mr. Chairman, we have four ayes, six nays, one

31 abstention and two absent.

32

33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you, Mr.

34 Chairman. Motion fails.

35

36 Moving on to -- we -- do we have  
37 crossover and Statewide proposals. It is for Western  
38 Interior. This would be WCR24-43, Unit 19A remainder  
39 closed to moose hunting except by residents of  
40 Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Aniak,  
41 Chuathbaluk and Crooked Creek.

42

43 Tom Plank, OSM Wildlife. Tom.

44

45 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Did  
46 you want me to start right into this or would you like  
47 a blurb about why it's being brought before you before  
48 I actually get into it.

49

50

0250

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

2

3

4 MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair, just to  
5 clarify. I think Tom is just wanting to make sure if  
6 you guys definitely want to take it up or if you'd like  
7 to hear just a little snapshot about what it's about  
8 and why it's coming before you and then you could  
9 decide if you want to take it up or not.

9

10 MS. ROGERS: Yes.

11

12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, take it up.

13

14 MS. ROGERS: Listen -- listen to --  
15 listen to -- before.....

16

17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay.

18

19 MS. ROGERS: .....you decide.

20

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. You got the  
22 floor. Go ahead, Tom.

23

24 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
25 one here is WC -- wildlife closure review WC24-43. And  
26 it's on Page 166 of your meeting book. And the reason  
27 that this was a crossover for your Council is because  
28 there are a -- a few folks in your area that are --  
29 have customary and traditional use which you can see  
30 that list on Page 168. I do believe it is Tuluksak is  
31 the one village I noticed right off the bat that it  
32 would be a part of this. The others look like they're  
33 in Unit 19. So -- oh, and Lower Kalskag and Kalskag.

34

35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead. Do you guys  
36 wish to take it up, Council.

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Walter, it's in your  
41 area, any comment, do you wish to take it up.

42

43 MR. MORGAN: Well, I think we should.  
44 It's a low population up there, it wouldn't make a  
45 impact. My personal opinion.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Thank you,

50

0251

1 Walter. We could go ahead and -- go ahead, Tom, move  
2 on.

3

4

5 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
6 members of the Council. And again for the record my  
7 name is Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist, Office of  
8 Subsistence Management. And wildlife closure review  
9 WCR24-43 pertains to the closure of moose hunting in  
10 Unit 19A remainder to everyone except residents of six  
11 local communities. And Unit 19A remainder is depicted  
12 in Map 1 on Page 168 and includes the western portion  
13 of Unit 19A.

13

14

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Unit 19A remainder was closed under Federal regulations in 2007 because of conservation concerns including low productivity, low bull/cow ratios and high hunting pressures. A Section .804 analysis determined residents of Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk and Crooked Creek to be the most dependent on the Unit 19A remainder moose population. Authority was delegated to the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager to annually establish harvest quotas and number of permits. The closure for the Lime Village management area was eliminated in 2020 and in 2022 the Board of Game adopted proposal 171 dividing Unit 19A into two sub-units, 19A and 19E. And you can see that map on Page 171.

Unit 19A remainder primarily falls in the Aniak survey area. ADF&G surveys this area opportunistically. While the moose population in Aniak survey area appears relatively stable between 2006 and 2010, in 2017 it increased significantly to 4,100 moose. Density estimates for Aniak survey area in 2017 were well above management objective and the highest ever recorded. ADF&G also surveyed the entire western portion of Unit 19A for the first time in 2017 and density estimates for the larger area were just below management objectives. In 2020 the western portion of Unit 19A increased to 5,200 moose with a density of .9 moose per square mile. While bull/cow ratios are within management objectives they're on the lower end in 2016 and 2017 averaging 21 bulls per 100 cows. Calf/cow ratios have met or exceeded management objectives since 2011. Predation likely influences moose abundance in Unit 19 and may be limiting population growth.

0252

1 In 2019 ADF&G estimated that the  
2 harvestable surplus for Unit 19A remainder at 160 to  
3 165 moose per year. And total reported harvest is  
4 roughly 150 moose per year. However low bull/cow  
5 ratios from 2016 through 2018 suggest few surplus bulls  
6 are available for harvest.

7

8 OSM's preliminary conclusion is to  
9 maintain the status quo in Unit 19A. No change in the  
10 closure in Unit -- western Unit 19A is recommended due  
11 to bull/cow ratios remaining on the lower end of  
12 objectives and because reported harvest approximates  
13 the harvestable surplus. Additional density estimates  
14 are below management objectives and the Yukon Delta  
15 Refuge Manager has delegated authority to adjust in-  
16 season harvest parameters as needed.

17

18 Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the  
19 Council. I'm happy to field any questions.

20

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do we have any  
22 questions for Tom at this time on WCR24-43.

23

24 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

27

28 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Is this came  
29 about because there's a biological reason that the  
30 population might be reducing?

31

32 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, member  
33 Nadine Rogers. Are you asking why this closure review  
34 is coming up or about.....

35

36 (No audible response)

37

38 MR. PLANK: Okay. The closure review  
39 comes up because all of our closures are reviewed every  
40 four years and this happened to be the cycle where this  
41 closure is actually being reviewed. And in four years  
42 from this season you'll see it reviewed it again. That  
43 way we make sure that none of our closures remain  
44 closed longer than they need to.

45

46 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more questions or  
49 comments for Tom at this time from the Council.

50

0253

1 James, go ahead.

2

3 MR. LANDLORD: This proposal would be  
4 like WCR24-38, continue to be closed, right?

5

6 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Council  
7 member Landlord, correct. This one -- right now it  
8 would stay closed unless you -- it is decided otherwise  
9 by you all's recommendation to the Board.

10

11 MR. LANDLORD: Okay. Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more questions or  
14 comments for Tom from the Council at this time.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
19 you. Brooke.

20

21 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
22 Moving into agency comments, Alaska Department of Fish  
23 and Game.

24

25 MR. JONES: I don't know if anybody  
26 else from the Department's on, that's not my area to  
27 manage so I can't -- I'm not going to comment on it. I  
28 don't know if Mark Burch or anybody else is online that  
29 can answer those.

30

31 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Is there anyone online  
32 from ADF&G that could respond.

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
37 you. Brooke.

38

39 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
40 Moving on, any Federal agency comments.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 MS. McDAVID: Any tribal comments.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 MS. McDAVID: Other RAC or Fish and  
49 Game Advisory Committee comments.

50

0254

1 (No comments)

2

3

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5

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MS. McDAVID: I don't think Western Interior has -- they're meeting today and tomorrow so they haven't taken this up yet. Any written public comments.

MR. PLANK: This is Tom Plank, Office of Subsistence Management. There were no written public comments.

MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Tom. Would any members of the public like to comment on wildlife closure review 24-43.

(No comments)

MS. McDAVID: Hearing none, Mr. Chair, I will turn it back over to you. And just as a reminder since this is a closure review a motion in the affirmative would be to maintain the closure.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Brooke. What is the wish of the Council, what is the Council recommendation on WCR24-43.

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

MS. CLEVELAND: Is it okay to make a motion now?

(No audible response)

MS. CLEVELAND: Okay. So I make a motion to support the closure of -- maintain the closure of the moose hunt except by residents of Tuluksak, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Aniak, Chuathbaluk and Crooked Creek.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Jackie. Motion on the floor by Jackie to remain status quo on WCR24-43. Is there a second.

MR. ANDREW: Second.



0255

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by John Andrew.  
2 Discussion.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 MR. ANDREW: Question.

7  
8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Quest -- we'll need to  
9 find justification to support WCR24-43.

10  
11 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

12  
13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

14  
15 MS. ROGERS: The justification would be  
16 to mirror the justification from U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
17 to retain this -- sorry. Yes, it is right. Retain the  
18 status quo, that the moose population has increased  
19 over the years, but remains at the lower end of the  
20 State's population goals and estimates, harvest surplus  
21 is usually met. The existing closure is necessary to  
22 allow the moose population to continue to grow while  
23 still providing for FQSU most dependent on the resource  
24 priority and opportunity on Federal public lands. The  
25 affected area should remain closed to hunting -- moose  
26 hunting until the population recovers to allow  
27 increased hunting pressure.

28  
29 I -- can I also add to that, Mr. Chair,  
30 on -- in the -- as a discussion item?

31  
32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: For justification.

33 Yeah.

34  
35 MS. ROGERS: Okay. I'm going to ask  
36 Patrick a quick question. Do you -- is the population  
37 out there currently stable or in regards to the  
38 bull/cow ratio?

39  
40 MR. JONES: Yeah, it's been stable for  
41 a while and it's right on that line whether it meets  
42 the criteria or if it's above that criteria, yeah.

43  
44 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Patrick. Mr.  
45 Chair, I would also like to add that the population is  
46 still currently stable and we would like to continue to  
47 see it closed.

48  
49 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

0256

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Thank  
2 you, Alissa. It's been motion, seconded and discussed.  
3 And the discussion has been recorded and the question's  
4 been called by John Andrew. All those in favor signify  
5 by saying aye.

6  
7 IN UNISON: Aye.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Opposed say nay.

10  
11 (No opposing votes)

12  
13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, motion  
14 carries. Thank you.

15  
16 Moving on, there's two proposals that  
17 are not in our area. And this is Northwest Arctic  
18 which is WP24-28/29 and also a Statewide proposal which  
19 is WP24-01. Oh, I'm sorry, these two.

20  
21 MS. McDAVID: They're all in one.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah. Okay. There is  
24 two proposals that we have on our agenda. One is the  
25 Western Interior which is WCR24-43 and the other one is  
26 Northwest Arctic which is WP24-28/29. What is the wish  
27 of the Council. Take no action.

28  
29 MS. ROGERS: I have a question, Mr.  
30 Chair.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

33  
34 MS. ROGERS: Does this caribou come  
35 through our area and would we be harvesting on this  
36 caribou herd at all?

37  
38 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Tom, go ahead.

39  
40 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Ms.  
41 Nadine Rogers. This is for the Western Arctic Caribou  
42 Herd and the reason it's being brought to you is  
43 because there's a few people who have -- a few areas  
44 that have customary and traditional tradition  
45 determination in the northern portion of your region  
46 for Unit 22A, but they do not come down this far. No,  
47 ma'am.

48  
49 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, do you -- I  
50

0257

1 guess the next question is do we have any feedback from  
2 and who -- who has customary and traditional?

3

4 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. You can  
5 see that on Page 198 in your book.

6

7 MS. McDAVID: I could read that for you  
8 if you'd like, member Rogers.

9

10 MS. ROGERS: Just for our area, but  
11 not.....

12

13 MS. McDAVID: Sure. So residents of  
14 Kotlik, Emmonak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Chevak,  
15 Marshall, Mountain Village, Pilot Station, Pitka's  
16 Point, Russian Mission, Saint Mary's, Nunam Iqua,  
17 Alakanuk have customary and traditional use  
18 determination for caribou in Unit 22A. So I guess it  
19 would be up to you all if folks hunt up in 22A, if  
20 that's something you want to take up.

21

22 And as a reminder 22A is that area up  
23 near St. Michael, Unalakleet, Shaktoolik Rivers, up in  
24 there.

25

26 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

29

30 MS. ROGERS: I'm -- the question that  
31 I'm having for this one I guess as my comment for the  
32 last one, anyway for this one specifically if there's a  
33 biological reason why the population -- the hunting bag  
34 limit is being reduced?

35

36 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair.  
37 Essentially the population -- let's see, give me just a  
38 second. So from 2003 when it was at 490,000, the most  
39 recent population data has it 164,000 now.

40

41 MS. ROGERS: 409,000?

42

43 MR. PLANK: 490.

44

45 MS. ROGERS: Oh, 490. And then what is  
46 it now?

47

48 MR. PLANK: Now is 164, 164,000.

49

50

0258

1 MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

4

5 MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana, Mr. Chair. So  
6 I make a motion to take no action on WP24-28/29.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. There's a motion  
9 on the floor by Jackie to take no action on WP24-28/29.  
10 Do I hear a second.

11

12 MR. PARKS: I second the motion.

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by Henry Parks.  
15 Discussion.

16

17 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

18

19 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

20

21 MS. ROGERS: For the purpose of  
22 discussion I believe that we should take up this  
23 proposal in regards to one, we have customary and  
24 traditional uses in that area and I know a lot of  
25 people from Alakanuk, Stebbins area actually travel up  
26 north to go fishing, getting crab and halibut and  
27 getting other forms of subsistence foods out of that  
28 area. They travel for a couple days to go all the way  
29 up and then they come back down. But also seeing in  
30 the biological standpoint going from 490,000 to 164 is  
31 alarming to me. Knowing that our Mulchatna Caribou  
32 Herd when we start crying for help, no one helped us.  
33 And I believe we should be helping our fellow -- fellow  
34 Alaska Natives regardless of if we are actively hunting  
35 there or not.

36

37 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

38

39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Alissa. Any  
40 more discussion on WP24-28/29.

41

42 James, go ahead.

43

44 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair, yeah.

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James.

47

48 MR. LANDLORD: Yeah, thank you. No  
49 action means refer it back to Northwest Arctic?

50

0259

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, that's my  
2 understanding. If we don't take no action then the  
3 Arctic -- Northwest Arctic will be the one that'll be  
4 making the decision.

5  
6 MR. LANDLORD: Okay. Do we have a map  
7 of Northwest. I see a map on Page 207. Is that the  
8 Northwest? There's no -- it's around Nome, Nome area?

9  
10 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Mr.  
11 Landlord, it's going to be Unit 23 is Northwest Arctic.  
12 You can see that on Page 203.

13  
14 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

15  
16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, go ahead.

17  
18 MR. LANDLORD: Can we say we support  
19 them because we -- Brooke.

20  
21 MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Brooke, go ahead.

24  
25 MS. McDAVID: James, if you would like  
26 to support the proposal you can vote down the motion to  
27 take no action and then we can move forward, Tom can  
28 present the analysis and then you can vote to support  
29 the proposal. So if we want to support the proposal we  
30 have to go through the steps that we've been going  
31 through for the other ones.

32  
33 MR. LANDLORD: Okay. And maybe this  
34 would support Alissa's concerns about Alakanuk going up  
35 and other villages going up rather than saying no  
36 action do we have -- we don't -- we don't support them,  
37 but if we support them we will support Alakanuk.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Richard, go ahead.

40  
41 MR. SLATS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm --  
42 I lean towards moving with whatever Mr. Landlord is  
43 doing mainly because Chevak is being mentioned in  
44 there. And so are the two other communities from my  
45 immediate area. So I -- and it's just what -- Brooke  
46 had just mentioned that we can support just I guess for  
47 the sake of supporting because of those communities  
48 that are named in this.

49  
50

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1                           And not only that its customary and  
2 traditional users have been determined by those  
3 communities that are listed.

4  
5                           Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6  
7                           CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Any more  
8 discussion on WP24-28/29 from the Council.

9  
10                          MR. LANDLORD: There's.....

11  
12                          CHAIRMAN ONEY: James. James, go  
13 ahead.

14  
15                          MR. LANDLORD: .....there's a motion on  
16 the floor for no action.

17  
18                          MS. McDAVID: Mr. Chair.

19  
20                          CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Brooke.

21  
22                          MS. McDAVID: Yes. So for procedures  
23 if you all agree that you would like to move forward  
24 with taking up this proposal you could ask for the  
25 second to be rescinded and the motion to be withdrawn.  
26 Sorry.

27  
28                          Thank you.

29  
30                          CHAIRMAN ONEY: Jackie, go ahead.

31  
32                          MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
33 Can I withdraw my motion?

34  
35                          CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, let the record  
36 know that Jackie's withdrawing her motion. And, Henry  
37 Parks.

38  
39                          MR. PARKS: Yep, Mr. Chairman. Quyana.

40  
41                          CHAIRMAN ONEY: And Henry Parks  
42 rescinds his motion.....

43  
44                          MR. PARKS: Yes.

45  
46                          CHAIRMAN ONEY: .....also.

47  
48                          MR. PARKS: Thank you.

49  
50

0261

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Brooke.

2

3 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We  
4 can move forward with the presentation of the analysis.

5

6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Tom, you got the  
7 floor.

8

9 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
10 members of the Council. Again for the record my name  
11 is Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence  
12 Management. And this is the summary of the analysis  
13 for wildlife proposal WP24-28/29 which starts on Page  
14 184 in your books.

15

16 WP24-28 was submitted by the Western  
17 Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, requesting a  
18 reduction in the caribou harvest limit across the range  
19 of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd to four caribou per  
20 year per hunter, only one of which may be a cow.  
21 Specific areas include Units 21D remainder, 24B  
22 remainder, 24C, 24D and all caribou hunt areas within  
23 Units 22, 23 and 26A.

24

25 WP24-29 was submitted by the Northwest  
26 Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council requesting  
27 a reduction in the caribou harvest limit in Unit 23  
28 only to four caribou per year per hunter, only one  
29 which may be a cow.

30

31 The Western Arctic Caribou Herd has  
32 continued to decline with the most recent estimate  
33 being 164,000 caribou. The proponents are greatly  
34 concerned about the precipitous decline of the Western  
35 Arctic Caribou Herd and feel that action is needed to  
36 slow the decline and prevent the herd from reaching a  
37 point of no return.

38

39 Northwest Arctic Council recognizes  
40 that Federally-qualified subsistence users are already  
41 facing food insecurities, but this large reduction of  
42 caribou harvest is a means to help protect the caribou  
43 herd over the long term while still allowing some  
44 harvest.

45

46 There is a vast regulatory history that  
47 starts on Page 353 and in the interests of time I want  
48 to keep this brief. The State and Federal regulation  
49 changes in 2016 were the first time that harvest

50

1 regulations had been implemented for the Western Arctic  
2 Caribou Herd and Teshekpuk Caribou Herd in over 30  
3 years. In 2017 the Board of Game adopted a proposal  
4 that required registration permits for residents  
5 hunting caribou within the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk  
6 Herds in Units 21, 23, 24 and 26. This was similar to  
7 the proposal passed for Unit 22 in 2016. In 2018 a  
8 proposal was adopted to close all Federal public lands  
9 within a 10 mile wide corridor along the Noatak River  
10 to non-Federally-qualified users. The Board also  
11 adopted a proposal requiring State registration permits  
12 for caribou in Units 22, 23 and 26A. In 2022 the Board  
13 approved WSA21-01A with modification to close Noatak  
14 National Preserve including the Niukluk River portion  
15 of the Preserve in Units 26A and BLM managed lands  
16 between the Noatak and Kobuk Rivers in Unit 23 to  
17 caribou hunting by non-Federally-qualified users from  
18 August 1st through September 30th for the 2022/'23 and  
19 '23/'24 regulatory years. In June 2023 the Board voted  
20 to reject wildlife special action request WSA22-05 and  
21 06 which requested the same change as this proposal  
22 being presented to you now. The Board stated that  
23 immediate reduction to four caribou per year per hunter  
24 would be detrimental to subsistence needs. The Board  
25 acknowledged the need to focus on caribou conservation  
26 and that the reduction in harvest limits may be needed  
27 in the future. Additionally the Board suggested a more  
28 robust discussion of potential alternatives to harvest  
29 reduction is essential. The Board stated that the  
30 Federal regulatory process -- proposal process is a  
31 more appropriate avenue to allow an analysis to be  
32 written and reviewed by the public, all of the affected  
33 Councils and our Federal and State agency partners in  
34 the range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd resulting  
35 in formal recommendations.

36  
37 The Western Arctic Caribou Herd, the  
38 Teshekpuk Caribou Herd and the Central Arctic Caribou  
39 Herd have ranges that overlap in Units 26A and 24B  
40 which you can see on Map 1 on Page 314. The Teshekpuk  
41 Caribou Herd primarily occupies Unit 26A and the  
42 Central Arctic Caribou Herd mostly occurs in Unit 26B.  
43 There can be considerable mixing of these three herds  
44 during the fall and winter. For the last 10 years the  
45 management objective of the Teshekpuk Herd of 15,000  
46 caribou has been met and in 2023 the minimum count was  
47 approximately 61,000 caribou. The Western Arctic  
48 Caribou Herd population has fluctuated over time from a  
49 low of 75,000 in 1970s to a peak of approximately  
50



1 490,000 in 2003. Between 2003 and 2016 the Herd  
2 declined at an average annual rate of 7.1 percent. In  
3 2017 there was an uptick to 259,000 from the previous  
4 approximate 200,000 in 2016. This could possibly be  
5 attributed to improved photography technology when  
6 ADF&G switched from film to high resolution digital  
7 cameras in 2017. Between 2017 and 2019 there was an  
8 approximate 6 percent total decline to 244,000 caribou.  
9 The next photocensus in 2021 estimated 188,000 caribou  
10 and this was an additional decline of about 24 percent.  
11 The population estimate in 2022 was 164,000  
12 representing an additional 12 percent decline.

13

14 As for the composition data in 2017 the  
15 bull/cow ratio was its highest since 1998 at 54 bulls  
16 per 100 cows. In 2021 that ratio fell slightly to 47  
17 bulls per 100 cows which still exceeded the critical  
18 management level of 30 bulls per 100 cows. The  
19 patrician rate from 2020 to 2022 was 66 percent which  
20 is below the long term average of 70 percent. During  
21 the same time period the young -- the short yearling  
22 recruitment has remained average at 17 per 100 adults.  
23 The adult female survival has been below the long term  
24 average of 81 percent since 2017. And although factors  
25 contributing to the 2003 to present decline are not  
26 known with certainty, increase of adult cow mortality  
27 and decreased calf recruitment and survival are likely  
28 playing a role.

29

30 The potential effects of this proposal  
31 span communities and traditional territories of Inupiat  
32 of the North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Seward Peninsula,  
33 Yup'ik communities in the southern portion of the  
34 Seward Peninsula and northern portions of the Yukon  
35 region, Koyukon Athabascans of the western and eastern  
36 interior. Individual hunters often hunt for more than  
37 one household. As we have heard from the Councils  
38 generally more people use caribou than harvest caribou  
39 because of the cultural value of harvesting and sharing  
40 subsistence foods to provide for these -- for those who  
41 do not have a hunter in the household. Subsistence  
42 surveys conducted by ADF&G gives estimates on caribou  
43 harvest in units in this proposal and the average  
44 number of caribou harvested per successful household  
45 per survey year across all communities in Unit 23 is  
46 8.1. In Unit 26 plus Anuktuvuk Pass the number is 8.8.  
47 In Unit 22 the average number of caribou harvested per  
48 successful household per survey year was 4.6. In Unit  
49 24 the number is 3.1 caribou and in Unit 21D remainder  
50

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1 the number is even less. However this information is  
2 not up to date and gaps remain including the number of  
3 individuals rather than households harvesting caribou  
4 during past survey years. Of note the availability of  
5 bulls during the ideal harvest time in Unit 23 has  
6 declined as delayed fall migration means that bulls are  
7 in rut once they arrive in traditional harvest areas.

8  
9 From 1999 to 2018 the range wide  
10 average estimated total harvest from the Western Arctic  
11 Caribou Herd was about 14,000 caribou per year ranging  
12 from 12 to 16,000 caribou per year. Year specific  
13 harvest estimates have not been generated since 2018 in  
14 part because they are not very accurate. Household  
15 survey data demonstrates that local community harvest  
16 parallels Western Arctic Caribou Herd availability  
17 rather than population trends. Local hunters account  
18 for approximately 95 percent of the total Western  
19 Arctic Caribou Herd harvest and residents of Unit 23 on  
20 average account for a majority of the total harvest.  
21 On average 76 percent of the Western Arctic Caribou  
22 Herd harvested by non-locals are harvested in Unit 23.  
23 Between 2016 when Federal land closures began and 2020  
24 reported caribou harvest by non-local hunters in Unit  
25 23 averaged 254 caribou. The Western Arctic Caribou  
26 Herd Working Group voted to place this herd in a  
27 preservative declining level in 2021 and in 2022 which  
28 prescribed a harvest of six to 10,000 caribou. With  
29 the 2022 population estimate of 164,000 the harvestable  
30 surplus is roughly 7,872 caribou. While all these  
31 harvest estimates are above the preservative harvest  
32 levels specified in the Western Arctic Caribou Herd  
33 Management Plan and indicate unsustainable harvest  
34 levels actual harvest is unknown and could be much  
35 lower due to caribou being unavailable for harvest near  
36 local communities.

37  
38 This herd affects a large group of  
39 subsistence users and during public hearings for  
40 wildlife special action 22-05 and 06 we heard a lot of  
41 concerns and recommendations. And we have tried to  
42 capture many of the alternatives from the public and  
43 our Federal and State partners and these start on Page  
44 227.

45  
46 In summary WP24-28 if adopted would  
47 apply the same harvest limit reduction across the  
48 entire range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd  
49 including Units 22, 23, 26A and portions of Unit 21D  
50

1 and 24. The decreased harvest limits and more  
2 restrictive cow harvest would reduce subsistence  
3 hunting opportunity and harvest under Federal  
4 regulations, however if the Board of Game does not  
5 adopt a similar regulation Federal regulations would be  
6 more restrictive than State regulations and all Alaska  
7 residents could still harvest five caribou per day  
8 under State regulations on most Federal public lands.  
9 The reduced Federal harvest limits could also impact  
10 sharing networks which are an important cultural  
11 component for subsistence users in these areas and  
12 contribute to food securities for many families and  
13 elders who depend on the super households to provide  
14 caribou meat. However designated hunter permits could  
15 reduce this impact.

16  
17 WP24-28 if adopted may cause  
18 unnecessary hardship and restrictions for subsistence  
19 users in areas on the edge of the Western Arctic  
20 Caribou Herd's range where there is overlap with other  
21 herds or local caribou populations where reduction may  
22 not be necessary. Caribou movements and distributions  
23 are highly variable. In recent years no collared  
24 Western Arctic Caribou Herd have migrated into Unit 22  
25 or 21D remainder, but that could -- they could return  
26 in the future. A resident caribou herd may be present  
27 in Unit 22 and harvest limit restrictions -- harvest  
28 limit reductions under Federal regulations would  
29 curtail harvest of these caribou.

30  
31 The Teshekpuk and the Central Arctic  
32 Caribou Herd occupies Unit 26A remainder and Unit 24B  
33 remainder. These herds have not experienced  
34 substantial population declines like the Western Arctic  
35 Caribou Herd therefore reducing the harvest limits in  
36 Unit 26A remainder and Unit 24B remainder may not  
37 substantially effect Western Arctic Caribou Herd  
38 harvest or conservation and could unnecessarily  
39 restrict subsistence harvest from the Teshekpuk and  
40 Central Arctic Caribou Herds.

41  
42 OSM's preliminary conclusion is to  
43 support proposal WP24-28 with a modification to exclude  
44 that portion of Unit 26A north and east of a line  
45 running from the east north bank of Wainwright Inlet to  
46 the headwaters of the Ketik River to the headwaters of  
47 the Awuna River to the Colville River at Umiat and east  
48 of Dalton Highway at Sagwon.

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1 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

4

5 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 Just so I don't get lost in this huge justification  
7 thing what was the reason for the modification added,  
8 if you can make it short, sweet and simple. I'm  
9 falling asleep here.

10

11 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Ms.  
12 Nadine Rogers. The reason for it is because it cuts  
13 out the main portion of the Teshekpuk Herd's area where  
14 they primarily are at and the Western Arctic Caribou  
15 Herd are more on the outskirts of that one. So we're  
16 trying to carve out a section that may not be as  
17 productive of providing conservation needs.

18

19 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can  
20 I make a friendly recommendation, Mr. Chair?

21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, I believe so.  
23 Go ahead.

24

25 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In  
26 light of time and my attention span can you wrap it up  
27 quick so we can make this decision?

28

29 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. And in  
30 closing, thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the  
31 Council.....

32

33 (Laughter)

34

35 MR. PLANK: .....I'd be happy to field  
36 any questions.

37

38 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Do we have  
39 any questions for Tom at this time from the Council on  
40 WP24-28/29.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank  
45 you, Tom. Go through the process.

46

47 Brooke.

48

49 MS. McDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

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1 Moving on to agency comments. Alaska Department of  
2 Fish and Game.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 MS. McDAVID: No comments here in the  
7 room. If anyone's online with Fish and Game you're  
8 welcome to comment.

9  
10 (No comments)

11  
12 MS. McDAVID: Any Federal agency  
13 comments.

14  
15 (No comments)

16  
17 MS. McDAVID: Any tribal comments.

18  
19 (No comments)

20  
21 MS. McDAVID: Advisory Group comments,  
22 Regional Advisory Councils, Fish and Game Advisory  
23 Committees.

24  
25 MR. AYERS: Hi, good afternoon. This  
26 is Scott Ayers with OSM. I just wanted to let the  
27 Council know that Western Interior has not yet taken  
28 this up. They plan to take it up first thing tomorrow  
29 morning.

30  
31 MS. McDAVID: Yeah, Eastern Interior  
32 took no action or didn't take it up.

33  
34 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair, really quick.

35  
36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa go ahead.

37  
38 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Did  
39 you say they haven't taken it up yet?

40  
41 MS. McDAVID: Eastern Interior met  
42 already and they did not take up this proposal. But  
43 Western Interior will take it tomorrow.

44  
45 Any written public comments.

46  
47 (No comments)

48  
49 MS. McDAVID: None. Okay. Would any  
50

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1 public like to testify on WP24-28/29.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 MS. McDAVID: Okay. Back to you, Mr.  
6 Chair. Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Brooke.  
9 What is the recommendation from the Council on WP24-  
10 28/29.

11

12 MS. ROGERS: Motion to support.

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Motion on the floor by  
15 Alissa to support. Is there a second.

16

17 (No comments)

18

19 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do I hear a second.

20

21 MS. EVAN: Second.

22

23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by Norma.

24 Discussion.

25

26 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

29

30 MS. ROGERS: I see that we have  
31 customary and traditional use in that area. Knowing  
32 folks from Alakanuk and Stebbins and those villages  
33 including Mountain Village have actually traveled up to  
34 that region to go fishing and subsistence gathering,  
35 also from a biological standpoint and the population  
36 from -- going from 490,000 to 164,000 decrease, that is  
37 an alarming -- that sends red flags and is alarming  
38 because that's the same thing that happened to  
39 Mulchatna Caribou Herd. But instead when we tried  
40 asking for help there was no help given to us. So I  
41 believe that they're asking for our help to help their  
42 moose -- sorry, caribou population be sustainable  
43 instead of plummeting and going into moratorium like we  
44 are.

45

46 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Any more  
49 discussion on WP24-28/29.

50

0269

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, is there  
4 a question.....

5

6 MS. ROGERS: Question.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: .....call for the  
9 question. The question has been called. I'll go ahead  
10 and those are -- in support of WP24-28/29 signify by  
11 saying aye.

12

13 IN UNISON: Aye.

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Those that oppose  
16 signify by saying nay.

17

18 (No opposing votes)

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, motion  
21 carries.

22

23 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa, go ahead.

26

27 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
28 Making -- can I make a recommendation we adjourn for  
29 the night, I'm running out of words to -- or recess,  
30 sorry, recess until tomorrow morning. My mind's not  
31 functioning.

32

33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Let's go ahead  
34 and recess for the evening. We'll start up again,  
35 tomorrow is our final day so it's going to be real  
36 tight. So.....

37

38 MS. McDAVID: Start at 8:30.

39

40 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, we could go ahead  
41 and start at 8:30. Tomorrow we'll start at 8:30. Be  
42 here before 8:30. We'll recess for the evening.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

47

48

49

50

