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EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

PYKE'S WATERFRONT LODGE

Fairbanks, Alaska

October 9, 2024

9:00 am

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Wright, Sr., Chair

Donald Woodruff

Susan Entsminger

Linda Evans

Eva Burk

Andrew Bassich

Dorothy Shockley

Amanda Pope

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

Recorded and transcribed by:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 10/09/2024)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Calling this meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Welcome, everybody.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, everyone, welcome back to day two of the Eastern Interior fall 2024 Council meeting. Yesterday we left off on the agenda -- we got through FCR 25-02, the Nome Creek closure, and this morning after public comments on non-agenda items, we'll pick up with the Western Interior crossover proposal FP25-16. We do have some items that will be out of order on the agenda this afternoon. After lunch we are gonna [sic] do a couple of presentations for folks that aren't available tomorrow, and those are kind of gonna be centered around salmon. So, we thought we'd start with Yukon River Water Monitoring update from USGS, and then a Yukon River Salmon Management update from Fish and Wildlife. And then we'll have a presentation from Eva with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. And we'll also hear from Gail Vick with the BBAYK coalition and the Fairbanks Advisory Committee. So, just wanted to make folks aware of those changes so, you could expect that today after lunch, and in a few moments I'll turn it back to Mr. Chair and we'll do public comments on non-agenda items. Actually, we'll do roll call and then public comments on non-agenda items. Teamwork, teamwork, guys. And if you're in the room and you would like to comment on anything related to subsistence, you can fill out a blue card and pass that to me and I'll get that to the Chair, and if you're online today and you'd like to give a comment, you can press star five on your phone. And -- or after folks in the room are finished, you could also call out to Mr. Chair and we'll be sure to call on you. So, thank you all very much for being here again, and back to you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, thank you. Donald, can you please do a roll call for us, thank you.

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. Sue Entsminger.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Here.

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: Amanda Pope. Amanda Pope,  
2 are you here?

3  
4 MS. MCDAVID: Amanda let me know, she is  
5 driving to Fairbanks this morning, so she'll be joining  
6 us a little bit later, thanks.

7  
8 MR. WOODRUFF: Linda Evans.

9  
10 MS. EVANS: Here.

11  
12 MR. WOODRUFF: Eva Burk.

13  
14 MS. BURK: Here.

15  
16 MR. WOODRUFF: Andrew Bassich.

17  
18 MR. BASSICH: Here.

19  
20 MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie Wright.

21  
22 MR. WRIGHT: Here.

23  
24 MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie Jagow.

25  
26 MS. MCDAVID: Charlie will not be joining  
27 us.

28  
29 MR. WOODRUFF I'm here, Donald Woodruff.

30  
31 MR. WOODRUFF: Dorothy Shockley.

32  
33 MS. SHOCKLEY: Good morning, I'm here.

34  
35 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Dorothy.

36  
37 (Pause)

38  
39 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.  
40 We have seven of nine Council members currently present.  
41 We have a quorum.

42  
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.

44  
45 (Pause)

46  
47 Good morning, people. We want to do  
48 introductions for some people that weren't here  
49 yesterday to try to save time and move on. So, if anybody  
50 wants to come up to the mic and introduce yourselves,

1 that'd be really nice, thank you. Yeah, and get in line,  
2 we don't have a microphone to hand around so, in thinking  
3 about time, you guys could come up and line up and come  
4 run yourself through really quick.

5  
6 MR. NELSON: I'm the first one. Thank  
7 you, Mr. Chair. My name is Mark Nelson, I'm with the  
8 Alaska Department of Fish and Game northeast area  
9 biologist for Wildlife. So, I'll be here all day today  
10 and tomorrow morning. So, thank you.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you very much  
13 for being here.

14  
15 MS. MONCRIEFF: Hi, good morning, Mr.  
16 Chair and Council members, my name is Catherine  
17 Moncrieff. I'm with the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries  
18 Association, the staff anthropologist, and I did  
19 announce myself yesterday when I was on the call. But  
20 me and a couple other YRDFA staff members will be here  
21 today and tomorrow morning, thanks.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
24 for being here.

25  
26 MS. KIRKEY: Good morning, Mr. Chair and  
27 Council members, my name is Grace Kirkey. I'm a new hire  
28 with the YRDFA Yukon River Drainage Fisheries  
29 Association. I'm the community-based program  
30 coordinator -- project coordinator. I'm happy to be  
31 here, excited to attend the meeting, thanks.

32  
33 MS. IRWIN: (In Native) Olivia (In  
34 Native) Good afternoon, everyone, my name is Olivia  
35 Henaayee Irwin, and I'm the Policy Coordinator for the  
36 Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. I'm also the  
37 Co-Chair of the Minto-Nenana Advisory Committee.

38  
39 MS. ERICKSON: (In Native) Diloola Ann  
40 (In Native). Good morning, my name is Diloola Ann, my  
41 family comes from Kaltag, that's where I'm a tribal  
42 member. I also have family ties to the community of  
43 Galena. And I was predominantly raised on Tlingit on in  
44 the Village of Hoonah in southeast. I am the Tribal  
45 Resource Stewardship Division Director with Tanana  
46 Chiefs Conference. And I'll be giving a report later  
47 today, I missed yesterday's morning session, but I was  
48 here yesterday afternoon, so I just want to introduce  
49 myself.

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you all so  
2 much for coming and joining us today and part of this  
3 very important work as we go forward, thank you. Okay,  
4 well we can -- oh, I forgot about the folks online. If  
5 anybody online wants to introduce herself, please do so  
6 now, thank you.

7  
8 MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff, Western  
9 Chair, Regional Chair and monitoring your meeting, thank  
10 you.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thanks, Jack.

13  
14 MS. CRAVER: Amy Craver, Subsistence  
15 Coordinator for Denali National Park and Preserve.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Morning, Amy.  
18 Anybody else out there want to introduce their selves?

19  
20 (No response)

21  
22 Hearing none, we'll move on with public  
23 testimony. Good morning to everybody. First one will be  
24 Ross Martin, I think that says.

25  
26 MR. MARTIN: Yes, my handwriting is a  
27 challenge. Hello, everyone, my name is Ross Martin, and  
28 I'm here because I'm doing my PhD research on subsistence  
29 and kind -- the human dimension of climate change in  
30 Alaska. As you all know, things are changing really  
31 quickly here. And that's what I want to focus my research  
32 on. And as I've -- I come from the Yale School of The  
33 Environment. So, I'm a long way from Connecticut, but I  
34 live in Fairbanks now. And when I learned about these  
35 regional meetings, I saw them as a really rich,  
36 historical record and, you know, current source of  
37 knowledge about what's happening to people and  
38 ecosystems in Alaska. So, as part of my research, I'd  
39 like to analyze the transcripts going back 30 years from  
40 these meetings to see what I can learn about what has  
41 been happening, how the Advisory Councils have helped  
42 management decisions and whatnot. So, I'm just here to  
43 introduce myself. I want to be transparent about my  
44 research and hopefully gather your feedback and learn  
45 from you. So, I'll be in and out today. I take classes  
46 at UAF, and my Gwich'in teacher says that if I keep  
47 missing class, I'm going to forget all my verbs. So, if  
48 you don't see me, I'm at class, but I'll be in and out.  
49 So, thank you.

50

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: Can I ask a question?

2

3 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Sure. We have a  
4 question for you here, thank you.

5

6 MR. WOODRUFF: Have you looked at the  
7 jukebox?

8

9 MR. MARTIN: Like the one that you put  
10 quarters in or.

11

12 (Indiscernible)

13

14 MR. MARTIN: The what?

15

16 MR. WOODRUFF: Project Jukebox.

17

18 MR. MARTIN: Uh, no.

19

20 MR. WOODRUFF: I think that would be  
21 interesting to pursue and I think you can contact Park  
22 Service a little bit about that, thank you.

23

24 MR. MARTIN: Great, thank you.

25

26 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. One other  
27 source you might look at, the Yukon River Panel has  
28 minutes and transcripts dating back to 2000, when they  
29 first started meeting officially. So, if you want to  
30 track impacts with salmon, that's pretty rich resource.  
31 And in November, there will be a meeting here in  
32 Fairbanks of the Yukon River Panel that you might be  
33 able to talk with some of the Canadian elders that have  
34 -- that are participating in that. You won't be allowed  
35 in the meeting itself, but it might be an opportunity  
36 to do some interviews with people. There's been a lot  
37 of discussion in regards to salmon. With climate change  
38 and impacts to subsistence through that organization.

39

40 MR. MARTIN: You said it was the Yukon  
41 River Panel?

42

43 MR. BASSICH: Correct.

44

45 MR. MARTIN: Great, thank you.

46

47 MS. ENSTMINGER Yeah, just wanted to add  
48 that Project Jukebox has a lot of people that were  
49 interviewed that are deceased, and there's a lot of  
50 information there, thank you.

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MS. BURK: Thank you, would you mind leaving your contact information? Cause I think there's a few of us that want to send some resources your way, possibly.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, I will leave that with Brooke.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, thank you so much. We got some info for you. Mark Richards, next, please.

(Pause)

MR. RICHARDS: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the Council. For the record, my name is Mark Richards, I'm the Executive Director of Resident Hunters of Alaska. Our organization formed in 2016, we're up to about 3,500 members now. And I just wanted to tell you what our primary focus is, and that is, we advocate for sustainable wildlife management policies, with an emphasis on protecting and enhancing resident hunting opportunities. Now, part of the problem with the State system versus the Federal system and what we've been dealing with the Federal Subsistence Board, just wanted to talk to you guys a little bit about it. So, I wanted to start with the Fortymile Herd. So, as we all know, the Fortymile Herd has been decreasing and opportunities have diminished. Now since our inception in 2016. We have asked the Board to limit non-resident hunters of the Fortymile Herd, it's an intensive management herd important for feeding Alaskans. When it's under the intensive management objective, we don't see any reason to allow any non-resident hunting opportunity at all. Now we're in the case right now, what is happening with the RACs is they're submitting ever more proposals to limit or restrict non-federally qualified users. And I want to talk to you guys about how that's affecting ordinary Alaskans. Now, speaking for myself, I'm like many others, I lived out in the bush for a long time for over three decades, I lived a subsistence lifestyle.

I moved to Fairbanks in 2015. Nothing about how I hunt or why I hunt has changed, and I'm one of thousands of Alaskans who, for whatever reason, whether it's education, health, be closer to family, has moved out of their rural residence into urban communities. And so, we're no longer federally qualified

1 users. Now, I think everybody on this Council would agree  
2 that if we have problems, if wildlife populations are  
3 diminished, the first group of people that need to be  
4 limited or restricted are non-resident hunters. And the  
5 problem with the Federal system is it doesn't allow --  
6 it looks at all Alaskans and all people that live out  
7 of the State who don't have a zip code in a rural area,  
8 the same. So, what's happening when we get all these  
9 proposals to limit non federally qualified users are  
10 restricted -- it affects a lot of Alaskans who can't  
11 come home to hunt. And so, what I've been advocating for  
12 with the RACs around the State is like this issue of the  
13 Fortymile Herd. We had a proposal last year to limit  
14 non-resident hunters of the Fortymile Herd. I'm not sure  
15 if this Council is aware of it, but non-residents  
16 currently take 25% of the harvest of Fortymile Caribou  
17 and we don't agree with that. Now we wanted to restrict  
18 non-residents completely, but we worked out an agreement  
19 with the air taxis and Tok and Delta to limit, to  
20 restrict all non-resident hunting except for Zone 2. And  
21 that was a compromised position we took to help the air  
22 taxi so they could still fly in some non-resident hunters  
23 into Zone 2. The Board of Game didn't pass it.

24  
25 Now there's talk here, you know, about  
26 Fortymile Caribou, and we're afraid again that the RAC,  
27 you know, might be interested in trying to limit or  
28 restrict non-federally qualified users. And what we  
29 would like the RACs to do is instead of doing that, to  
30 first go to the Board of Game and propose to the Board  
31 of Game to limit or restrict non-resident hunters.  
32 There's no reason to restrict your fellow Alaskans when  
33 things get bad, when we could first limit non-resident  
34 hunters. And so that's a problem we're seeing and there's  
35 ever more proposals that are based on competition alone.  
36 Nobody likes competition, but it's a fact of life that  
37 we have competition in the field. And so, for RACs to  
38 submit proposals to restrict non-federally qualified  
39 users based on competition alone, we've never believed  
40 that that complies with ANILCA, and we've told the  
41 Federal Subsistence Board this. So, we would really  
42 appreciate it if the RACs would work with us, you know,  
43 try to first use the Board of Game process so you don't  
44 have to restrict your fellow Alaskans from hunting and  
45 from returning home to hunt.

46  
47 And I wanted to make one other  
48 statement, there was some talk yesterday, you know,  
49 about competition and boats and 100,000 dollar you know,  
50 motorhomes and all this. And I, you know, personally, I



1 don't have a lot of money, I never have, but I've never  
2 begrudged somebody who has money, who has an airplane,  
3 who has a jet boat, who has a motorhome. I don't view  
4 them any differently than myself because they have money  
5 and because they have these forms of equipment. And I  
6 don't think it's a good idea to try to, you know,  
7 denigrate those people or look at them any differently.  
8 I mean, there's plenty of people in rural areas that  
9 have got lots of snow machines and big fancy boats, and  
10 so it's not -- I just don't like to hear that. And  
11 something else that, you know, Dr. Simon made a comment  
12 yesterday, he said these animals are owned by the  
13 citizens of Alaska, and that's something I really want  
14 the RACs to understand. These are all of our animals,  
15 all Alaskans, we're supposed to all be equal. Now, that  
16 doesn't mean we don't support a Federal subsistence  
17 priority, we do, organization does support that. But we  
18 want the RACs to start to look more at the Alaskans that  
19 they're inflicting with some of these proposals to limit  
20 or restrict non-federally qualified users.

21  
22 Now, we've spoken to our congressional  
23 delegation, there's nothing they can do to change the  
24 way the Federal Subsistence Board works. But I think you  
25 guys would all agree it's absolutely ridiculous, they  
26 look at me and other Alaskans just like somebody from  
27 New York City or Timbuktu, that's just wrong. I don't  
28 know how we ended up that way, that the Federal system  
29 -- Subsistence Board first look at limiting or  
30 restricting non-residents before they limit or restrict  
31 residents. So, that's my plea to you. I'm asking for  
32 your help on some of these issues. So, if you do get to  
33 a point where, like with the Fortymile Herd and you're  
34 concerned as you should be, that the harvest is, you  
35 know, opportunities are diminishing and the herd is  
36 declining, we'd rather you go to the Board of Game first  
37 and try to limit or restrict non-residents before  
38 submitting a Wildlife Special Action Request to limit  
39 or restrict all non-federally qualified users. So, thank  
40 you, Mr. Chairman, and again, thank you all for the work  
41 you do, for the time you take out of your lives to  
42 represent your region and the subsistence opportunities  
43 that you should continue to have. I'm happy to take any  
44 questions.

45

46 MR. WOODRUFF Good morning, Mark.

47

48 MR. RICHARDS: Good morning, Don.

49

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: I'm good, one question I  
2 -- does your organization support youth hunt?

3  
4 MR. RICHARDS: Yes.

5  
6 MR. WOODRUFF: And non-resident youth  
7 Hunt?

8  
9 MR. RICHARDS: Well, we're not happy with  
10 the way that works out, you know, but yes, I mean, we  
11 support the statute that we have for youth hunts in  
12 Alaska. Now, that does allow non-resident youth that  
13 have family up here to participate, and so that's nothing  
14 that we're really -- it's a small issue so, it's not  
15 something that really is concerns us.

16  
17 MR. WOODRUFF: Then you mean that because  
18 of the minimal take that you sort of have a benign  
19 feeling about it.

20  
21 MR. RICHARDS: Well (indiscernible) so,  
22 I'm sure you all are aware of this, but the hunting  
23 trends are going downward, there's -- continually going  
24 down, we're losing hunters. We're especially losing our  
25 new hunters who are absorbed with their phones and don't  
26 want to get outside anymore. So, I wrote an article for  
27 an Alaska magazine about this. We're trying to do the  
28 three R's, recruit, retention and reactivation. We need  
29 new hunters. We need to keep our hunting traditions  
30 alive. And if we don't have youth hunts and get youth  
31 out there when it's not as crowded, you know, to  
32 experience a hunt, maybe have some success our hunting  
33 traditions are going to decline. So, the issue you  
34 mentioned, you know, about, I don't know how many it is  
35 non-resident youth that might be able to come up here  
36 and hunt with a family member, maybe their parents are  
37 divorced, their dad's still up here, their mom. We don't  
38 have an issue with that. We want youth hunting, we  
39 support youth hunts.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other  
42 questions?

43  
44 MR. RICHARDS: Thanks, Charlie.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Next, we  
47 have Brian Ridley. Good morning, Chief.

48  
49 MR. RIDLEY: Hello, there we go. Well,  
50 let me start out by saying I've got enough gray hair

1 that I do know what Jukebox are, so. I'm Brian Ridley,  
2 I'm the Chief Chairman of the Tanana Chiefs Conference,  
3 and I'm from the Native Village of Eagle on the Yukon  
4 River at the Canadian border. TCC is a consortium of 42  
5 tribal communities, which includes 37 federally  
6 recognized tribes located in Interior Alaska. TCC serves  
7 over 18,000 Alaskan natives, both in Fairbanks and in  
8 our rural villages located along the 1400 miles of the  
9 Yukon River and its tributaries. Our villages are  
10 remote, often without road access, and are primarily  
11 only accessible by plane or boat. TCCs member tribes and  
12 beneficiaries depend on salmon as a significant portion  
13 of their diets. In fact, it represents more than 50% of  
14 their subsistence harvest. Salmon provide the bulk of  
15 our people's nutritional needs, and they don't always  
16 have access to store bought foods, and when they do,  
17 it's very expensive. Over the last ten years, the salmon  
18 crisis has contributed to a rise in the number of  
19 diabetic and pre-diabetic patients due to increased food  
20 insecurity and lifestyle changes. Since 2019, TCC has  
21 found that the number of diabetic and pre-diabetic  
22 patients has increased by 25% and 70%, respectively.  
23 This can be directly linked with declines in salmon  
24 abundance, harvesting and consumption. The nutritional  
25 profile of chum salmon makes it invaluable food source,  
26 particularly in Alaska's harsh and remote environments.  
27 Chum salmon is a complete protein, offering 20g of  
28 protein per 100g of fish, as well as B vitamins  
29 potassium, phosphorus, selenium, and omega three fatty  
30 acids.

31  
32 The previous availability made salmon a  
33 dietary staple for many, as it could be harvested,  
34 preserved, and stored for extended periods, crucial  
35 during months when fresh food is limited. A diet rich  
36 in chum salmon and other traditional foods supports the  
37 health of indigenous Alaskans who face elevated rates  
38 of lifestyle related conditions like heart disease,  
39 diabetes, and stroke. Essential nutrients in salmon play  
40 a key role in mitigating these risks. So, with that,  
41 we've got four asks of all of you. TCC asks the EIRAC  
42 to put forth achievable and trackable action items on  
43 salmon management at the RAC level, such as a  
44 conservation corridor proposal. TCC asks you to submit  
45 a letter urging the State Board of Fish to take similar  
46 actions on salmon management at the State level, most  
47 specifically regarding the reduction of bycatch in Area  
48 M. We ask you to submit a letter to the North Pacific  
49 Fisheries Management Council to ask them to take action  
50 to reduce their bycatch. And this last ask, I realize

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1 it is on your agenda later, but I apologize, I bounce  
2 from fire to fire, big meeting to big meeting. So,  
3 tomorrow I have to chew out other regions healthcare to  
4 try to get them to get along and quit wasting our money.  
5 So, additionally, the last ask is that your hunter  
6 education -- Hunter Ethics Education and Outreach  
7 Initiative Working Group includes trespass education in  
8 their work and the inclusion of Native allotments and  
9 Native owned land on all hunting maps. Thank you.  
10 Marsicho.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Brian,  
13 any questions for Brian? Clearing -- oh, go ahead.  
14

15 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, thank you for  
16 being here. It's really good to see you. Last time I saw  
17 you, actually in person was when you were about that  
18 big. So, it's really great to see you again and see you  
19 in the leadership role. I often speak about how important  
20 leaders are, and you're doing a good job. I wanted to  
21 just make some comments to you. I know you're in touch  
22 with a lot of different people. We are currently working  
23 on a lot of this outside the RAC. I'm glad you brought  
24 these subjects up. And I'm curious, I picked up on the  
25 hunter ethics trespass yesterday with some comments that  
26 were made by other people. Are there any other issues  
27 regarding Hunter Ethics that you would like to see us  
28 address in the region there, are there anything that you  
29 think are our needs? Because that's something that we're  
30 really working hard to develop and expand on. So, even  
31 if you don't have something right now, contacting Brooke  
32 so, that we can work on those. I think it's really  
33 important initiative.  
34

35 MR. RIDLEY: So, I hope this is an  
36 appropriate place or time to bring this up. But, you  
37 know, we just got through the fall hunting season. And  
38 as the Chief of a region almost the size of the state  
39 of Texas, I get tons of pictures and posts on social  
40 media and whatnot of wanton waste. So, groups like yours  
41 and others, you know, we try to tackle the issue as best  
42 we can. And I try to explain to people, you know, our  
43 people were lucky if there's anything left when we shoot  
44 something. I mean, we're taking internal organs and  
45 everything, as we should. But I don't know how many  
46 times I've seen pictures, which is sad of moose taken  
47 downriver where all they took was the horns and the  
48 backstrap, and so things like that, I think the more we  
49 can try to tackle that issue together, because obviously  
50 in the, you know, protection and we want our folks to

1 be able to get out and harvest, fish and game and  
2 whatnot. But we wanna [sic] make sure that, you know,  
3 to address this issue as best we can, because nobody  
4 wants to see waste like that out there.

5  
6 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. On another  
7 topic, I just wanted to express thanks for the efforts  
8 of TCC for salmon replacement programs that you've done.  
9 I know TCC has funded a tremendous amount of salmon  
10 being brought into the communities purchased through --  
11 throughout Alaska. And I want you to know that that's  
12 really important, not only for food security, but for  
13 the cultural aspect of it. And I think that's one of the  
14 things that it's mentioned a lot, but I don't think  
15 people who don't live in that culture understand how  
16 important that is for retaining the culture. So, I just  
17 wanted to say thank you. I think that's a super  
18 worthwhile program that you're doing, and it's one of  
19 those meaningful actions that we're talking about. So,  
20 I don't know if you get much feedback on that, but it  
21 is really important. And I applaud TCC for expending  
22 those quite a bit of money.

23  
24 MR. RIDLEY: Yeah.

25  
26 MR. BASSICH: On that, thank you.

27  
28 MR. RIDLEY: Thank you for that. I'd say  
29 initially we tried to save money and go through the  
30 SeaShare Program, but what we learned pretty quickly was  
31 when fishermen are hanging on to the bycatch or whatever,  
32 there's not really any incentive to take care of those  
33 fish and so, we had a lot of diseased and spoiled fish  
34 and whatnot. So, we completely got rid of that. We spend  
35 pretty close to \$1 million a year sending salmon out to  
36 our communities, which I wish we didn't have to do that,  
37 you know, I want to find a path forward to where we can  
38 rebuild wild stocks as best we can. And I know our tribes  
39 have been very clear that as much as we can keep the --  
40 what do you call them? Hatchery fish and whatnot out of  
41 the Yukon and other areas, that's what we're aiming to  
42 do but it's been a tough thing, because I even take heat  
43 from some folks for giving handouts and things like that.  
44 But as you said, the one thing that we found was we have  
45 kids growing up that, you know, we were used to being  
46 in fish camp, but they've never even seen a fish camp.  
47 So, we're doing those things to try to make sure that  
48 we don't miss generations of the fish camp type  
49 experience. And, you know, just like harvesting an  
50 animal, the feeling you get and the happiness and joy

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1 when you're putting food away and things like that, you  
2 know, we have generations that are missing out on some  
3 of those opportunities. So, thank you.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
6 Brian and listening to your comments there on trespass  
7 and stuff and knowing that we have a Hunter Ethics  
8 Program here, it'd be really nice to see a joint effort  
9 to go forward on these issues and problems that we're  
10 having, I think -- what do you think about that?

11  
12 MR. RIDLEY: Well, I can never pass up  
13 an opportunity for a joke. So, I always tell people, I  
14 know we're supposed to forgive those that trespass  
15 against us, but boy, we've had times where we put up  
16 trespass signs and folks are tearing them down, and I  
17 think one of the worst cases we had was we had signs up  
18 and folks turned a Native allotment into a gravel pit.  
19 So, we've got a lot of pretty outrageous things happening  
20 out there with trespass, and it's tough and we're doing  
21 the best we can and we're trying to you know, what's the  
22 word? Convict those wrongdoers that are knowingly going  
23 on Native allotments, Native land. But we're also trying  
24 to work with Doyon and make sure that the maps and  
25 everything are out there so people know what's Native  
26 land or not. So, thank you.

27  
28 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, one more thing, I'm  
29 not a very fast writer, and you said those three things,  
30 did you have that printable or?

31  
32 MR. RIDLEY: Yes, we -- I can share that  
33 with you so I can send it over.....

34  
35 MS. ENTSMINGER: I would sure like to  
36 have it.

37  
38 MR. RIDLEY: Okay.

39  
40 MS. ENTSMINGER Thank you. I think just  
41 texting it to Brooke and we'd have it, thank you.

42  
43 (Simultaneous speech - distortion)

44  
45 MS. Burk: That was Dorothy.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.

48  
49 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi, thank you, Brian I  
50 really appreciate your making an effort to come and

1 address the EIRAC Board. But I just wanted to make a  
2 comment, and maybe, I don't know if you're doing this,  
3 but you know, when we had a program here in Manley Hot  
4 Springs through the Bean Ridge Corporation and partnered  
5 with Minto Village Corporation and at one point Tanana.  
6 But, you know, one of the things that we learned is or,  
7 and we're encouraged to do is every trespass issue  
8 whether the troopers do anything or not, need to be  
9 reported so that it's on record. And if you can encourage  
10 people that are making contact with TCC to do that as  
11 well.

12  
13 MR. RIDLEY: Yes, and I guess I'll just  
14 mention we've been partnering with Doyon the last two  
15 or three years, and we're trying to come up with a good  
16 app, I think it is to where we can track all of that  
17 electronically and things can get reported. So, that is  
18 something we're working on. But again, it's a new realm,  
19 I think, for us kind of stepping into. And so, I was  
20 told this fall, this hunting season we didn't quite work  
21 out, I think all the kinks. And so, we're continuing to  
22 work on that and make improvements so that it can be  
23 used more widespread across our region. Hopefully by  
24 any, anyone out there that sees trespass issues going  
25 on.

26  
27 MS. SHOCKLEY: Well, that's great.  
28 (Distortion) thank you.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Dorothy.  
31 Go ahead, Eva.

32  
33 MS. BURK: Thank you. Thank you for your  
34 testimony. I honed in on the conservation corridor, and  
35 I think maybe for other people that might not be  
36 familiar. And I've been, you know, in the room while TCC  
37 is bringing quite a few people into advocate. Can you  
38 shed a little more light on, like, things like the  
39 conservation corridor that TCC has been working on, like  
40 the 2023 February Board of Fish meeting and also this  
41 April, this past April 2024, the chum bycatch and how  
42 you and -- I saw you testify with other leaders from  
43 Kawerak and AVCP and just the level of effort and expense  
44 that you all are taking to advocate for this conservation  
45 corridor. I think it would be important for other people  
46 here to understand that, thank you.

47  
48 MR. RIDLEY: Well, now that you're  
49 putting me on the spot a little bit, I might call my  
50 lifeline and see if maybe Diloola can help out a little

1 bit. And while she's coming up, I'll just say that  
2 overall, you know, I've only been in this role for about  
3 two and a half years and the protection, especially of  
4 our salmon, has been one of the biggest things I've been  
5 asked to do. And as I said, more than anything, we just  
6 wanna try to protect and bring back the wild stocks. You  
7 know, ultimately, my hope is that we can have it back  
8 to what it once was back in the 70s and 80s like it used  
9 to be in Eagle, and there was more fish to go around,  
10 and you didn't have to worry about the numbers and things  
11 like that. But I think that's going to take a lot of  
12 time before we can get back to that. But ultimately  
13 that's our end goal with that.

14  
15 MS. ERICKSON: Yeah, you'll hear a little  
16 bit more about this in my report later today too. But  
17 as far as like Tribal Resource Stewardship's engagement  
18 around salmon advocacy so, I'm new to TCC, I joined in  
19 April, and so it's only been five months since I've been  
20 here. But I know that TCC has spent a lot of funds  
21 equipping, educating, and prepping our advocates and  
22 getting them from their rural communities to these urban  
23 settings for these meetings so that our voices are heard.  
24 And then this year, we also entered into a cooperating  
25 agency with NOAA NMFS on that chum salmon bycatch EIS.  
26 And we submitted four co-drafted sections that TCC and  
27 the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission co  
28 drafted together to ensure that our relationship with  
29 salmon and our understanding, and our historical  
30 management of salmon is included in that EIS, and to --  
31 we also submitted a letter for preferred preliminary  
32 alternatives to NOAA NMFS.

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Donald.

35  
36 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. Brian,  
37 thank you for your testimony. And I think that the --  
38 your money is well spent because the youth of the Alaska  
39 tribes especially get to handle these fish where they  
40 would never be able to do that and that's a really  
41 important. We can't lose that process, thank you.

42  
43 MR. RIDLEY: Thank you.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Linda.

46  
47 MS. EVANS: I was wondering if there was  
48 any effort to educate through the schools, the students,  
49 cause I know when I was working in Rampart, if there was  
50 an issue, you know, we'd talk about it in the school.



1 And these kids go home and they tell their parents, you  
2 know, about this thing, you know, what's going on. And  
3 I think that might be another avenue to get his  
4 conservation efforts out to the public, thank you.

5  
6 MS. ERICKSON: Yes, thank you. We have  
7 started having conversations about that. Our Tribal  
8 Resource Stewardship team is also all brand new. They  
9 all joined in like the last three months also. So, we're  
10 fully staffed, and you'll hear a little bit more about  
11 this in my report too. But that is some of the efforts  
12 that our outreach coordinator is working on, outreach  
13 plan. And we've included our rural schools and then also  
14 like engaging in culture camps and the wellness  
15 gatherings that a lot of communities have been holding.  
16 So, ensuring that we're engaging in those spaces, too.  
17 So, we're trying to hit every avenue of outreach, and  
18 it's a big ask. I only have one outreach coordinator for  
19 the whole TCC region. But it is on our radar, thank you.

20  
21 MR. RIDLEY: I guess I would add real  
22 quick that one of the things that we do at TCC is we  
23 donate 10,000 per tribe if they're putting on a culture  
24 camp. And so that's one of the other ways that we try  
25 to do what we can to keep our culture going. So, it's  
26 kind of related to that. And this year, I think we had  
27 over half of our tribes across our entire region had  
28 culture camps this summer, and some of them they have  
29 winter camps and spring camps and things like that. So,  
30 that's something that we're continuing to do.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

33  
34 MS. BURK: Thank you, we're just so  
35 excited to have you guys here today. You mentioned you  
36 have comments on a preliminary preferred alternative.  
37 Is it possible to share that letter yet or?

38  
39 MS. ERICKSON: I'll have to check in with  
40 our partners, but I'm pretty sure we could share it with  
41 the RACs. I could send that to Brooke, And then if once  
42 the EIS is published too, if you guys are interested in  
43 seeing our EIS sections that we drafted. I can also  
44 share that with Brooke for your winter meeting.

45  
46 MR. BASSICH: Good, yeah. Circling back  
47 to Linda's question through the Yukon River Panel  
48 Communications Committee, we're trying to expand --  
49 working towards expanding into an educational exchange  
50 with youth, focused on youth. Over in Canada, they have

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1 a program that's long running program salmon in the  
2 schools. And we're also looking to expand that so that  
3 there is both collaboration between Canadian youth and  
4 Alaskan youth and building capacity in, you know,  
5 getting young people into the to the salmon world. So,  
6 hopefully -- stay tuned. I'll put it that way, but I  
7 would love to have connections with your organization,  
8 and I'm looking at a lot of the funding through OSM and  
9 other, opportunities there. So, we can build  
10 partnerships to develop that within the state of Alaska  
11 as well. So, yeah, that's really important, thank you.  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd like to add that  
14 I was honored to be a part of the TCCs feasibility  
15 study done on the Yukon this summer, and we done it  
16 right when the Cold Creek Camp in Tanana was happening,  
17 and they got to participate in some drifting and  
18 measuring and seeing how exactly how we did that study,  
19 and they got really excited about that. It's really good  
20 to expose them to that. So, it's really good job having  
21 that happen at the same time. And ichthyophonous program  
22 was going on so, they actually got to cut fish at the  
23 same time due to the using those fish that were -- that  
24 died during that study. And so, it's good to see things,  
25 good things like that going on and opportunities for the  
26 kids to participate in on both sides. Really commend  
27 y'all on that and thank you so much for your testimony  
28 today. Anybody else have anything to say? Anybody online  
29 have any questions for Brian and Diloola this morning?  
30

31 (No comment)

32  
33 Thank you so much for your testimony,  
34 both of you.

35  
36 MR. RIDLEY: Thank you.

37  
38  
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for being  
40 here.

41  
42 MS. ERICKSON: Thank you.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We got one more. Mr.  
45 Jim Simon, you're next.

46  
47 MR. SIMON: Thank you, for the record,  
48 Jim Simon. I'm just providing some personal comments,  
49 following up from some things I shared about my extended  
50 family yesterday, as well as relating to some of what

1 Mr. Richards from Resident Hunters of Alaska was  
2 discussing. You know, just to quickly recap, yesterday  
3 I talked about how my multi-generational non-Native  
4 family, you know, is no longer federally qualified  
5 because, you know, some of the previous generations  
6 before me, you know, passed away, and then the rest of  
7 us have moved to non-rural areas for employment  
8 opportunities. And just want to, you know, demonstrate  
9 how the subsistence law, both State and Federal, aren't  
10 working from my perspective. You know, I believe that  
11 the issues that Mr. Richards raised is a problem with  
12 the State subsistence law, not ANILCA Title 8. And, you  
13 know, the issue of addressing non-resident uses is  
14 clearly captured in the State Subsistence Priority Law.  
15 The law that you all operate off of is distinguishing  
16 customary and traditional federally qualified users  
17 hunting and fishing rights for a Federal priority versus  
18 non-Federal uses, which yes, include non-rural and non-  
19 resident uses. You don't have the authorities only to  
20 exclude non-residents, right? It's non-Federal  
21 subsistence uses. So, my cousins and I never got an  
22 opportunity to hunt for Nelchina Caribou Herd because  
23 we weren't old enough to get a tier -- State Tier 2  
24 permit. So, yeah, when we went out with our parents or  
25 uncle -- uncles, you know, to go and participate, but  
26 we didn't have the ticket ourselves, right. So, we were  
27 disenfranchised through the State system. When all  
28 Alaskan residents became eligible subsistence users.  
29 That put many of my uncles and my grandfather out of  
30 business. They were big game hunting guides. And then  
31 there were no opportunities. Most -- mostly German  
32 hunters, is who my dad guided for, took out. And so,  
33 then under the Federal system, you know, we were non-  
34 Native rural residents who qualified and, you know, I've  
35 gotten a Federal tag. But as I said yesterday, the  
36 Federal lands open for us to use that Federal priority  
37 we're so far away, it was just easier for us -- for me  
38 to follow my parents, you know, on a caribou hunt.

39  
40 So, you know, now we're disenfranchised  
41 from those Federal rights. But we also recognize that  
42 all of this wasn't intended to address us. The original  
43 plan was that ANILCA would have an Alaska native  
44 preference, so - and this conversion to where you live,  
45 your permanent residence also doesn't work for my  
46 family. We have houses in rural Alaska and houses in  
47 non-rural. My grandparents, my aunt, my uncles, we all  
48 still have maintain we're bi what we're bi, right. We  
49 live in both places at the same time. And it -- you know  
50 my -- I stay in my great grandmother's cabin so it

1 doesn't have plumbing or anything, but my uncles and my  
2 cousins houses, there's not really much difference  
3 between their house at Sheep Mountain -- their houses  
4 at Sheep Mountain versus their houses in Palmer. But so,  
5 it doesn't address our needs. But I know that the impacts  
6 of that to my family members is not equivalent to the  
7 impacts on my Alaska native friends and neighbors. The  
8 fact that where you live full time is the only measure  
9 as to whether or not an indigenous person can continue  
10 their customary and traditional relationships with the  
11 animals, and lands, and waters is a big problem, and it  
12 needs to be addressed because, as ANILCA 8 -- Section  
13 801 points out as to why this law exists for 43 years  
14 is that with resource population decline and an  
15 increasing human population, there is this thing called  
16 a Federal rural priority, right?

17  
18 I think there would be more resources  
19 available for Mr. Richards' group and other Alaskan,  
20 non-Native Alaskan residents if we recognized a tribal  
21 hunting and fishing right in Alaska, because there's --  
22 that's 20% of our population. You know, the fact that  
23 the 804 Subsistence User Prioritization for Nelchina,  
24 you know, as I was telling, you know, had there been  
25 data from the 50s, 60s and 70s, my family's history  
26 would've been better reflected in that analysis. But we  
27 don't qualify, and as I also mentioned, an urban family  
28 bought my childhood home, they don't qualify, you know.  
29 So, these opportunities based on simple residency,  
30 permanent residency served to disenfranchise everyone  
31 from their relationships. But I'm only talking back to  
32 grandparent and great grandparent. That is not 10,000  
33 years of intergenerational relationships with these  
34 resources. So, I think it's time that the State actually  
35 fulfilled their legislatively directed responsibilities  
36 to restrict non -- State non-subsistence uses in times  
37 of shortage and prioritize subsistence. And it's time  
38 for the Federal program to reconsider what the original  
39 intention was through the Statehood Compact Act, through  
40 ANCSA, you know, this promise to ensure the protection  
41 and continuation of Alaska native customary and  
42 traditional uses and relationships with the fish and  
43 wildlife, and land, and waters of the region. I think  
44 that's about all I have, thank you.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
47 for that testimony. Is there any questions for Jim today?

48  
49 MS. BURK: Thank you, Dr. Simon. I really  
50 appreciate your testimony and that perspective and the

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1 history and kind of giving more nuances, you know,  
2 explaining those nuances I think is really informative.  
3 So, I just wanted to really thank you for that.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Eva. Any  
6 questions online before he runs away.

7

8 (No Comment)

9

10 Hearing none. We have another blue card,  
11 Tonya Garnett, welcome.

12

13 (Pause)

14

15 MS. GARNETT: Okay. Hi, Tonya Garnett.  
16 I'm here on behalf of the Arctic Village Council, Native  
17 Village of Venetie Tribal Government and Venetie Village  
18 Council. We're here -- we just wanted to make some  
19 comments about the air traffic going on this past summer  
20 in Arctic Village. There's been, like, an increase of  
21 air traffic coming through Arctic Village, and there's  
22 a new airline, I think it's called Kavik Air. And I like  
23 most, the other pilots, the other companies they know  
24 and respect, like our tribal laws, and they -- when they  
25 pass through and they follow like the rules and -- but  
26 this new company they were like disrespectful when we  
27 went down to the airport and like, they even got into,  
28 like, a heated match like words exchanged, but  
29 basically, like, we're -- so, this past year there was  
30 an increase in air traffic, a lot of airline -- planes  
31 flying really low. They even flew -- flew really low  
32 over -- during a burial. They're flying really low,  
33 scoping out the rivers and the lands to -- and not always  
34 bringing their clients to where they were going to bring  
35 them because we spoke to some of them that were leaving.  
36 They were waiting for their transport out, and they said  
37 that they were supposed to go to one area, but then they  
38 said, oh, we're gonna bring you to this area because  
39 there's no -- there's more caribou here. And it resulted  
40 in a lot of -- cause we all know caribou is easily  
41 disturbed and we have our rules and our laws, you know,  
42 let the first herd go through don't take too much. And  
43 so, we don't even know what's going on, we don't even  
44 know where they're dropping them off to hunt. We don't  
45 know if they're hunting in the Refuge and where they're  
46 not supposed to be. The caribou, they weren't as -- they  
47 didn't -- we had to go far to go hunt this year. And  
48 we're thinking maybe, you know, that could've  
49 contributed to them dispersing out or not coming near  
50 the village because of all the air traffic, and they

1 were scaring the caribou away, the moose away. There was  
2 a group of our guys that went up to go hunt at Red Sheep  
3 Creek, and they didn't see any sheep, and they're  
4 thinking they're scaring them as well. Cause while they  
5 were up there, they saw flights being flown around. And  
6 usually it's not you know -- cause this is the Arctic  
7 Village Sheep Management Area. And so, we don't even  
8 know -- they didn't get the number on that. We got a few  
9 of the plane numbers and we reported it and we did do a  
10 report to the Fish and Wildlife and they have an  
11 investigation open. But we wanted to make our comments  
12 here because it's created a hardship for our people. And  
13 then we don't even know if they're transporting the meat,  
14 if they're, you know, the folks that we were able to see  
15 and talk to them, they had to meat with them so, they  
16 didn't -- they weren't wasting. And we don't even know,  
17 yeah, we don't know what they're doing, but it's -- and  
18 then, sorry, I'm looking over my notes. Yeah, and then  
19 they flew over really close to a burial in Arctic  
20 Village, and you can see what's going on, you see where  
21 our funeral's at, and they flew real low and it was, it  
22 was very disrespectful.

23  
24 And then you know, like the -- that  
25 airline, they were disrespectful to us when we went down  
26 there and tried to explain to them our tribal laws and  
27 then saying that they can do whatever they want and they  
28 can come here anytime they want or something, and we're  
29 like, no, you can't. And then -- and so, like, we don't  
30 even know if they're wasting anything until we, you know  
31 -- cause there's a vast land up there and it's just,  
32 it's really just created a hardship and we're worried.  
33 We're worried that if this continues, the caribou is  
34 gonna not come, we had to go further out this year to  
35 go hunt. And they didn't get no sheep this year so far  
36 and moose, yeah, same thing. And so, we want to -- I  
37 don't know what EIRAC can do in regards to this, but  
38 maybe put the word out and that, yeah, just that this  
39 is going on and our people are not happy. And that our  
40 concludes my comments, thank you.

41  
42 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I'm curious, I'm  
43 curious. This new air taxi, do you know if it's from the  
44 Lower 48 or if it's Alaskan?

45  
46 MS. GARNETT: I don't know, it's called  
47 Kavik and we put in a -- so, we're meeting with FAA soon  
48 to discuss some of this, too. And we put in a report to  
49 the Fish and Wildlife, and they have an investigation  
50 open. So, I'm assume [sic] -- I'm hoping that they find

1 out cause I don't know anything about this new airline,  
2 we didn't even know there was a new airline until we  
3 went down to find out what was going on to the airport.

4  
5 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I just wanted to  
6 add that when they come in from the Lower 48, they fuel  
7 up at Tok at Fortymile Air, because that's where their  
8 AvGas gas is and then I have been told by people that  
9 are gassing these people up that yeah, there's more air  
10 taxis. I actually was told this ten years ago. So, that's  
11 why I'm asking now is.....

12  
13 MS. GARNETT: Yeah.

14  
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: You know, they're --  
16 they come in, in groups and then they go to different  
17 areas where there's caribou mostly out west, I think it  
18 was and yeah, I think we're gonna see more of that,  
19 unfortunately, yeah, thank you.

20  
21 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, for the  
22 record, I did a little googling about Kavik. Just so you  
23 know, the Alaska Business Records show they're based out  
24 of Palmer. That's all I know, though so, just wanted to  
25 share that, thanks.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
28 for your testimony, and I think it's really smart to get  
29 things like this on the record. So, it's good that you  
30 came here to report. I really appreciate you coming.

31  
32 MS. GARNETT: All right, thank you.

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody have  
35 questions online for Tonya before she moves to leave the  
36 seat there?

37  
38 MS. GARNETT: I'm not sure if anyone else  
39 but I know some people called in, I don't know if they  
40 have comments.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Great, thank you.

43  
44 (Pause)

45  
46 Just one more question, is there any  
47 more public commenters online?

48  
49 (No comment)

50

1 All right, I think we're gonna take a  
2 little bathroom break, and before we get back into  
3 proposals, and so, I'm gonna say five minutes, this time  
4 and say know that'll be ten, thank you.

5  
6 (Off record)

7  
8 (On record)

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Let's find our  
11 seats, please.

12  
13 (Pause)

14  
15 Okay, at this time, proposal FP 25-16.  
16 Kanuti River and Bonanza Creek gear types and harvest  
17 limits. Cory Graham, you got the floor.

18  
19 MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair and  
20 members of the Council. This is Cory Graham, fisheries  
21 biologist with OSM. So, as Charlie just said, we're gonna  
22 discuss Fisheries Proposal FP25-16, which can be found  
23 on page 211 of your Council book. This proposal was  
24 submitted by the Western Interior Council and request  
25 the Board modify regulations in the Bonanza Creek  
26 drainage and a portion of the Kanuti River drainage to  
27 allow rod and reel gear only, and an Arctic grayling  
28 harvest and possession limit of ten per day. The Western  
29 Interior Council submitted this proposal to establish a  
30 Federal subsistence priority, maintain healthy  
31 populations of fish, and align Federal regulations in  
32 the area. I'll briefly discuss some important regulatory  
33 history. These drainages were closed under Federal  
34 subsistence regulations for a long time since the start  
35 of the Federal program. The closures were reviewed  
36 during the last fisheries regulatory cycle and the  
37 Board, following the recommendations of multiple  
38 Councils, removed the closure to non-salmon fish only.  
39 So, now the harvest of non-salmon fish is allowed under  
40 Federal regulations. Federal subsistence harvest is  
41 unrestricted for all legal gear types other than rod and  
42 reel, and for rod and reel, Federal limits match State  
43 sportfish limits. To where these drainages? Both Bonanza  
44 Creek and the Kanuti River drainages, are along the  
45 Dalton Highway just south of Wiseman and Coldfoot. What  
46 fish are present in the drainages? These systems have  
47 grayling, burbot, whitefish, longnose sucker, and  
48 northern pike.

49  
50



1                   We don't have many population estimates  
2 in these areas, but the analysis does summarize local  
3 and traditional knowledge for the species in the Koyukuk  
4 River drainage. So, who can fish here? Under Federal  
5 regulations, all residents of the Yukon northern area  
6 can harvest non-salmon fish in these drainages. And like  
7 I alluded to earlier, the closest rural communities are  
8 Wiseman and Coldfoot. What are the effects of this  
9 proposal? If the proposal is adopted, only rod and reel  
10 could be used to harvest fish in Bonanza Creek and the  
11 Kanuti River drainages under Federal regulations.  
12 Federal harvest limits will match State sport fish  
13 limits, except for grayling, which will have a harvest  
14 and possession limit of ten per day. This is larger than  
15 the current State sport fish limit of five grayling per  
16 day. This proposal will align Federal regulations in the  
17 area, increase harvest opportunity for grayling by  
18 federally qualified subsistence users, and provide a  
19 subsistence priority as mandated by ANILCA. However,  
20 this proposal will misalign Federal and State limits for  
21 Grayling, which may increase user confusion, regulatory  
22 complexity, and enforcement concerns. The OSM  
23 preliminary conclusion is to support fisheries proposal  
24 FP25-16. In adopting, this proposal will benefit  
25 federally qualified subsistence users and help maintain  
26 healthy populations of fish in the Bonanza Creek and the  
27 portion of the Kanuti River drainage that's being  
28 considered with this proposal. So, that concludes my  
29 presentation. I'll stand by for any questions you may  
30 have, thank you.

31  
32                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

33  
34                   MS. BURK: Thank you. Thank you, this is  
35 Eva. Thank you for your presentation. I was just curious  
36 in this proposal. Why would it -- why wouldn't you align  
37 with the five, the possession limit of five per day  
38 versus ten? It seems to me like you would've said, I  
39 support with modification and have a limit of five. That  
40 seems more reasonable, but can you explain why?

41  
42                   MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, through the  
43 Chair. So, the Western Interior RAC thought that this  
44 would add an additional Federal subsistence priority.  
45 Jack may -- is probably online. He can probably speak  
46 to this more, but there isn't, like, it's not anticipated  
47 that there's gonna be a lot of harvest. So, is Jack  
48 available?

49  
50

1 MS. MCDAVID: Jack is online. Jack, would  
2 you like to speak to the Council about the ten-grayling  
3 limit? Thank you.

4  
5 MR. REAKOFF: Through the Chair, Jack  
6 Reakoff Western Interior Regional Council Chair. There  
7 is -- this area is about 50 miles south of where most  
8 of the people -- there's only 12 people that live in  
9 Wiseman, there's a few people live in Coldfoot. It's not  
10 a large population base that would have -- be utilizing  
11 this fishery. Those grayling population can well support  
12 a ten grayling per day harvest limit. With -- we cannot  
13 fish on the Yukon, everybody's -- nobody's fishing on  
14 the Yukon so, we can't fish on the Yukon. So, we're  
15 starting to use more of these local stocks. And there's  
16 a lot of grayling in those drainages down there. Those  
17 have -- those fish fall back into the Kanuti Flats. They  
18 have better overwintering, the upper drainages here  
19 where we live, we have -- we can use under State permit,  
20 we can use gillnet and fyke-net predominantly in these  
21 drainages and these drainages up here where we live have  
22 really small fish. And so, we've -- we want to -- people  
23 here would like to be able -- if we were going by there,  
24 we would like to be able to take ten grayling instead  
25 of five, that's not -- that's you know, you can -- I can  
26 easily eat ten grayling myself. So, that's just one meal  
27 per person. So, that's basically -- it's despair to the  
28 State (distortion) the Federal subsistence regulations  
29 would prioritize towards rural residents that have  
30 customary and traditional use of various species of  
31 freshwater stocks here. This does not impact salmon  
32 stocks, and we've avoided the salmon take issue by  
33 eliminating salmon from our original lifting and the  
34 closure. Thank you, ma'am -- Mr. Chair.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that,  
37 Jack. Any other questions?

38  
39 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, so you said there  
40 wasn't a lot of data on this. Is this stream surveyed  
41 at certain intervals to keep an eye on populations or  
42 abundance at all? I'm just curious. You know, once you  
43 change regulations, it's probably not a bad idea to have  
44 a baseline of what was there before the regulation  
45 change, and then also get a baseline after a regulation  
46 change to see the impacts. So, I'm just exploring that.

47  
48 MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, through the  
49 Chair. So, my understanding is there isn't a lot of  
50 research that our population assessments that have been

1 done on either of these systems. There is one on Bonanza  
2 Creek in the 1990s, but it ADF&G said was really low  
3 precision, so, it's not a very good estimate anyway. But  
4 yeah, to my understanding, there aren't consistent  
5 assessments being done and I don't know of any future  
6 ones that are planned, but maybe the State or somebody  
7 else may have more information about that.

8  
9 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, so, maybe this is a  
10 question for you, Jack. Do you think that it would be  
11 worthwhile for local community-based people to do -- set  
12 up a, some sort of a monitoring plan every couple of  
13 years or whatever, just to try and assess the abundance  
14 there and impacts. I'm just thinking about -- we're  
15 trying to develop more community-based monitoring  
16 programs throughout the drainages. Non-salmon species  
17 are going to continue to be harvested at greater rates  
18 during these low salmon production years. So, I'm just  
19 wondering your thoughts on that. Just exploring possible  
20 future involvement of people with the resources and  
21 partnering with agencies, thank you.

22  
23 MR. REAKOFF Mr. Chair, through the Chair  
24 answer to Andy's question, you have to realize that there  
25 are literally thousands of hunters going by here. And  
26 there's hunters that stay in these drainages hunting  
27 moose in the fall with a lottery draw permit. There's  
28 catch and release, there's a lot of fishers in the  
29 summertime catching and releasing fish. The sport, I'll  
30 refer to that as the sport harvest and incidental harvest  
31 mortality with catch and release. And I asked about catch  
32 and release, incidental harvest mortality at our meeting  
33 in Galena last week. Incidental harvest mortality is  
34 gonna be greater than the subsistence harvest. So, what  
35 needs to be monitored more closely is actually not --  
36 the subsistence harvest, I doubt there would be over 50  
37 grayling taken by the subsistence users because it's  
38 distant from here. When you go down there, you're gonna  
39 wanna catch fish. You're gonna want to bring home enough  
40 for a couple of days or something. So, there's a lot of  
41 sport harvest on these populations. And so, a lot of  
42 them are caught and released. But I couldn't get a --  
43 an indices of what the incidental harvest mortality is  
44 with catch and release. You know, I see people -- I've  
45 watched people dragging grayling up on the bar and  
46 beating them all up and then ripping the hook out of  
47 their mouth and tossing them back into the creek. So, I  
48 do feel that there's other things, you know, that need  
49 to be monitored. The Sport Harvest survey that sent out,  
50 it's a random thing, it doesn't actually target the

1 number of people that -- there are thousands -- when we  
2 had a check station at the Yukon River Bridge, there  
3 were 2000 hunters going by in year 2000 and 2001 with a  
4 big caribou limit increase up north. There were  
5 thousands of hunters up here and a lot of them got bored  
6 and started, you know, they're fishing for grayling  
7 also. So, subsistence use is gonna be a minor impact to  
8 the overall impact from the -- there were trucks, and  
9 trucks sitting at the South Fork Bridge. They all had  
10 airboats in the river there, there's a lot of other uses  
11 there that probably should be monitored, but the impact  
12 by subsistence is going to be minimal. Thank you, Mr.  
13 Chair.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Jack. Any  
16 other questions online?

17  
18 (No response)

19  
20 Okay, we're gonna go to report on Board  
21 consultation, tribal, ANCSA corporations. Cory you can  
22 go to that.

23  
24 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, there were no  
25 comments with tribal or consultation or ANCSA  
26 Corporation comments, and there were also no public  
27 comments too just, so to that item, thank you.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
30 Okay, we'll move on to agency comments ADF&G.

31  
32 MS. STUBY: Good morning, Lisa Stuby. The  
33 Area Management Biologist for the Yukon River, excluding  
34 the Tanana, Division of Sport Fish. And the State  
35 position on this is we are neutral. The reason we were  
36 neutral is we had recommended to, you know, a harvest  
37 of five fish to align with sport fish regulations and  
38 the other species. However, am I, as a manager, overly  
39 concerned with people from low population centers,  
40 federally qualified users from Coldfoot and Wiseman? No.  
41 Do I think other federally qualified users are gonna  
42 drive up the rather rough Dalton Highway? Probably not.  
43 But you know, we don't have a good handle on population  
44 estimates in these two drainages. So, you know we  
45 recommended to align with Sport fish regulations, but  
46 at the same time, you know, not overly concerned.  
47 Therefore, we are neutral.

48  
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50

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, any  
2 questions? Hearing none, we appreciate you. Thank you.  
3 Federal agencies.

4  
5 (No response)

6  
7 And there was no tribal -- that's what  
8 you said? Okay.

9  
10 MS. MCDAVID: That was for consultations.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay so, I'll ask  
13 anyway. Okay, at this time, we'll ask any tribal entities  
14 Native, tribal village or other. You have any comments  
15 at this time?

16  
17 (No response)

18  
19 Hearing none, we'll move on to advisory  
20 group comments, other regional Councils.

21  
22 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair. So, Yukon-  
23 Kuskokwim Delta RACs supported this proposal. The  
24 Council noted the importance of non-salmon fish harvest  
25 during times of salmon conservation. Grayling  
26 populations are healthy and can support the harvest,  
27 support for subsistence harvests of fish that prey on  
28 juvenile salmon, and the additional harvest opportunity  
29 of grayling for federally qualified subsistence users.  
30 North Slope RAC took no action, they deferred to home  
31 region, Western Interior supported and if Jack online,  
32 he may be able to provide more info on that if you want,  
33 if you'd like.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, at this time  
36 it's Fish and Game Advisory Committees.

37  
38 (No response)

39  
40 Subsistence Resource Commissions.

41  
42 (No response)

43  
44 Summary of written public comments.

45  
46 (No comment)

47  
48 Any public testimony?

49  
50 (No response)

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Okay, we're on number seven regional Council recommendations.

MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy Bassich. I would like to make a motion that the Eastern Interior RAC support proposal FP25-16 as presented to us.

MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don, I'll second, thank you.

MR. BASSICH: And I guess support speaking to the motion, I'm gonna be in support of this. It appears that there is not a conservation concern with this fisheries. We've heard from State and others on there being no concern for conservation. Is it recommended, supported by the substantial evidence, such as biological, traditional, ecological knowledge? I think the managers have assured us that biologically this increase will be non-threatening to that stock, and traditional knowledge of local people is well documented before us. Will the recommendation be beneficial or detrimental to subsistence? It will certainly be much more beneficial to local, federally qualified subsistence users in the area without creating a conservation concern. And will the recommendation unnecessarily restrict other uses? No, there is plenty of opportunity through State sport fisheries for other users. So, therefore, Mr. Chair, I'm gonna support this, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, can we reinstate the motion before we vote?

MR. BASSICH: (Indiscernible) sorry, thank you. Question has been called so, to repeat the motion, the motion is that the Eastern Interior RAC would like to support FP25-16 as presented to us.

MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi, this is Dorothy Shockley, I have comments please.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.

MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi, I'm not going to support this. As I stated yesterday, I think you know, with most of our fish and game populations going south, I think it's really important that we conserve every species. And, you know, history shows that, you know, we say, oh, you know, this is not going to hurt anything

00031

1 or anybody. And you know, it does so, just FYI, I'm a  
2 no -- I'm a no vote on this, thank you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Dorothy.  
5 Go ahead, Eva.

6

7 MS. BURK: Thank you, this is Eva. I  
8 appreciate what you're saying, Dorothy. At first, I felt  
9 the same way, thinking there should be a ten limit or a  
10 five limit versus ten. But after listening to Jack in  
11 understanding who will actually get to finish this, and  
12 also understanding being somebody who likes to fish  
13 grayling like it is a trip to go. And so, it is nice to  
14 be able to get a few more, especially if you're doing  
15 it for subsistence purposes and it's not a sport fishing.  
16 So, for those reasons, that's why I'm going to actually  
17 support now. So, I appreciate WIRAC and Jack helping  
18 provide some more context for me as somebody who doesn't  
19 participate in that particular grayling fishery, thank  
20 you.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, hearing Dorothy  
23 say that you don't support. We'll go for a roll-call  
24 vote. Please, Donald.

25

26 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
27 I'll start at the top of the list, Sue Entsminger.

28

29 MS. ENTSMINGER: Support.

30

31 MR. WOODRUFF: Amanda Pope.

32

33 (No response)

34

35 Linda Evans.

36

37 (Indiscernible)

38

39 MS. EVANS: Linda Evans, support

40 proposal.

41

42 MR. WOODRUFF: Eva Burke.

43

44 MS. BURK: Support.

45

46 MR. WOODRUFF: Andrew Bassich

47

48 MR. BASSICH: Support.

49

50 MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie Wright.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Support.

MR. WOODRUFF This is Donald Woodruff, I support.

Dorothy Shockley.

MS. SHOCKLEY: No.

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, the motion passes 6 to 1.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you everybody. Okay, now we move on to the South Central. Proposal FP25-03A Tolsona C&T Salmon in Copper River (indiscernible - distortion). And this is on page 229 in your book.

MS. VOORHEES: Good morning, this is Hannah Voorhees anthropologist for OSM. I'll be presenting proposal FP25-03A. And this was submitted by Tolsona Community Corporation and requests that the Board recognize the customary and traditional use of salmon in the Chitina subdistrict of the Upper Copper River district by residents of Tolsona. There is also a companion proposal which is FP 25-03B, which requests C&T for Tolsona residents for freshwater fish in the Copper River drainage, and that is next on your agenda. The proponent states that residents of Tolsona have customarily and traditionally harvested salmon in the Chitina area. The proponent describes Tolsona as a small community with strong ties between residents who rely on one another to survive in an environment that lacks economic opportunities. Tolsona Community Corporation provided written information, which was submitted with the proposal describing residents histories of fishing salmon in the O'Brien Creek south of the Chitina-McCarthy Road bridge.

The proponent states that use of subsistence resources is vital not only to the survival of Tolsona residents, but also to their sense of identity and connection to others. On page 232, you'll find a map of communities and areas that currently have a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Chitina subdistrict. The area affected by this proposal is the Federal public waters of the Chitina subdistrict



1 of the Upper Copper District within and adjacent to the  
2 exterior boundaries of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park  
3 and Preserve. In regulatory history, between 2000 and  
4 2005, the Board added communities to the C&T  
5 determination for salmon in the Chitina subdistrict.  
6 However, in 2002, the Board rejected proposals to add  
7 residents of Delta Junction and Lake Louise due to lack  
8 of substantial evidence.

9  
10 In 2023, the Board rejected a proposal  
11 to add residents of Serendipity subdivision to the  
12 determination in deference to the South Central Council,  
13 because residents did not demonstrate the necessary  
14 criteria. Last year, the Board also rejected a proposal  
15 to add permanent rural residents who live between the  
16 named communities along the Alaska Highway from the U.S.  
17 Canada border to Dot Lake to the determination. This was  
18 in deference both to the South Central and Eastern  
19 Interior Councils, due to lack of proximity or  
20 substantial evidence of a long-term pattern of use and  
21 sharing of the resource.

22  
23 In community characteristics, Tolsona  
24 is located in traditional Ahtna territory and has an  
25 estimated population of 11 residents. Tolsona and  
26 neighbouring Nelchina and Mendeltna are small Glenn  
27 Highway communities, they lack distinct population  
28 centers and are interconnected residentially as well as  
29 economically. The Tolsona census designated place is  
30 relatively new, dating to 2000. Since then, the highest  
31 population documented occurred in 2013 when it was  
32 estimated to be 33. During a subsistence survey for the  
33 2013 study year, researchers found that several  
34 households that self-identify with the community of  
35 Tolsona but lie outside of the CDP boundaries. So,  
36 residents, sorry, researchers found that several  
37 households self-identify with the community of Tolsona,  
38 but actually are located outside of the CDP boundaries,  
39 falling either within the Mendeltna CDP or the  
40 Glennallen CDP. And the takeaway from that is that some  
41 people who consider (distortion) freshwater fish in the  
42 area (distortion).

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: Hey, Hannah, we're gonna  
45 have to stop you for a minute. You cut out. If you could  
46 go back about 30s to what you were saying, thank you.

47  
48 MS. VOORHEES: Okay, do you know what I  
49 was -- where like, what the topic was when I cut out.

1 MS. MCDAVID: You had just finished  
2 talking about the CDP's and Tolsona and Mendeltna and  
3 Glennallen.

4  
5 MS. VOORHEES: Okay so, some people who  
6 consider themselves residents of Tolsona but live within  
7 the Glennallen CDP already have a C&T determination for  
8 both salmon and freshwater fish in the areas considered  
9 in this analysis. As part of the Prince William Sound  
10 area, Tolsona residents are already federally qualified  
11 to harvest salmon in the Glennallen subdistrict. They  
12 are also federally qualified to take salmon in the  
13 remainder of Prince William Sound area, which includes  
14 areas further from Tolsona than either the Chitina or  
15 Glennallen subdistricts. When conducting a customary and  
16 traditional use determination analysis, eight factors  
17 are considered and you can find them listed on page 237  
18 of your book. And please keep in mind that these factors  
19 are not a checklist. The Board makes customary and  
20 traditional use determinations based on a holistic  
21 application of these eight factors, as well as the  
22 reports and recommendations of your Council.

23  
24 Subsistence surveys conducted by  
25 Division of Subsistence provide important information  
26 on communities patterns of subsistence use. 2013 is the  
27 only year for which subsistence survey data specific to  
28 Tolsona are available. There were earlier surveys  
29 conducted in the 1980s, but they did not separate Tolsona  
30 from the communities of Mendeltna or Nelchina so, those  
31 data are of limited use. Based on the results of a 2013  
32 survey, residents of Tolsona exhibit reliance upon a  
33 wide diversity of fish and wildlife resources in the  
34 area. Residents harvested an estimated 311 pounds of  
35 wild foods per person, and on average, surveyed  
36 households harvested nine different resources. Salmon,  
37 in particular made up an estimated 41% of the total  
38 harvest, and was used by 88% of surveyed households.

39  
40  
41 Sockeye salmon was the top resource used  
42 by the community in terms of edible weight and Tolsona  
43 households both received and gave away salmon. Most of  
44 the sockeye salmon harvest was obtained through fish  
45 wheels, with much smaller amounts harvested by rod and  
46 reel and dipnet. Chinook salmon were also harvested in  
47 small amounts. An important note is that even in 2013,  
48 the most recent survey year for which Tolsona was for  
49 the most part studied independently from the other East  
50 Glenn Highway communities, salmon search and use areas

1 were still mapped collectively so, it's impossible to  
2 separate mapped information about Tolsona's fishing  
3 areas from that of Mendeltna or Nelchina. However,  
4 findings for the East Glenn Highway communities combined  
5 are presented. The Copper River near Chitina was one of  
6 the areas residents of this area, this combined East  
7 Glenn Highway area fished for sockeye, chinook and coho  
8 salmon in 2013. The proponent included written testimony  
9 about subsistence practices by residents of Tolsona,  
10 going as far back as 1946. You can find this testimony  
11 on -- in appendix starting on page 247. It's unknown how  
12 many of these individuals are still living in the area.  
13 Those who provided information referenced personal  
14 histories of fishing and O'Brien Creek south of Chitina  
15 Bridge over many years, sometimes with other families,  
16 including youth, as well as harvesting and using other  
17 subsistence resources in the area. One resident  
18 remembered that between 1954 and 1970.....

19  
20 MS. MCDAVID: Hannah.

21  
22 MS. VOORHEES: Yes?

23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: Hannah, sorry to stop you  
25 again. You're cutting in and out.

26  
27 MS. VOORHEES: Okay.

28  
29 MS. MCDAVID: You're cut -- your line is  
30 cutting in and out a little bit. We're having trouble  
31 hearing you. Brent is here, and he has something to say.

32  
33 MS. VOORHEES: Okay, thanks.

34  
35 MR. VICKERS: Hi, Hannah. Hi, everyone.  
36 I just want to -- this is Brent Vickers from Office of  
37 Subsistence Management. I have the rest of Hannah's  
38 presentation if you would like me just to finish it up,  
39 since we're having some connection problems.

40  
41 MS. VOORHEES: Sure, go ahead. Thank you,  
42 Brent.

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: They did say online. They  
45 can.....

46  
47 MS. BURK: Do you have -- a are you  
48 looking at a PowerPoint or do you guys have a  
49 presentation, I wanted to say this earlier. In the other,  
50 it is really -- when it was like flipping back and forth,

1 it would be really -- and some people do provide  
2 PowerPoints. I feel like it would be very helpful for  
3 us in the future to make sure that these things have  
4 power points. Like especially yesterday's 804 analysis  
5 that really needed a power point. So, just wanted to  
6 share that, thank you.

7  
8 MR. VICKERS: Yes, I agree. We're trying  
9 to -- for some reason in the past, sorry, Brent Vickers,  
10 OSM again for some reason there -- well not for some  
11 reason, but because of difficulties in rural settings  
12 in the past they -- at OSM said no PowerPoints because  
13 we don't want to have issues when we're in rural settings  
14 and don't have them. So, that has been sort of the  
15 guideline for a while, but we're coming out of that and  
16 we're trying to -- (indiscernible) say maybe that's not  
17 one rule shouldn't apply in all contexts. And, but we  
18 are so, we are incorporating the more. Sometimes it's  
19 hard to put them all together. With dealing with other  
20 things right before a Council meeting. But given the  
21 opportunity, we are trying to use this more. And so,  
22 your feedback is very welcomed because that helps us to  
23 move in that direction. So, thank you.

24  
25 Okay, I will continue where I believe  
26 Hannah had left off or I'll go a little bit before. So,  
27 she left off pretty much saying the proponent include a  
28 written testimony about subsistence practices by  
29 residents of Tolsana going back to at least 1946. The  
30 testimony is in an appendix on page 247. It is unknown  
31 how many of these individuals in the testimony are still  
32 living in the area. Those who provided information  
33 referenced personal histories of fishing in O'Brien  
34 Creek, south of the Chitina bridge over many years,  
35 sometimes together with other families, including youth  
36 or both, as well as harvesting and using other  
37 subsistence resources in the area. One resident  
38 remembered that between 1954 and 1970, there was only  
39 one small grocery store in Glennallen and Tolsona  
40 families were quote unquote relied on these Copper River  
41 salmon as primary food source.

42  
43 Currently, residents of Tolsona can fish  
44 for salmon in the Chitina subdistrict under sport  
45 fishing regulations or by participating in the State  
46 Chitina personal use dipnet fishery. Sport fishing data  
47 are not available. No permits were issued to residents  
48 of Tolsona for the State Chitina subdistrict dipnet  
49 fishery between 2002 and 2023. However, between 2014 and  
50 2023, a total of 13 Federal subsistence permits were

1 issued in error to residents of Tolsona in the Chitina  
2 subdistrict. For permits, fish, the average harvest was  
3 29 salmon. I'll just add right now that we don't know  
4 why this is just looking back and saying, wait, there  
5 were actual permits issued, but we have no idea why they  
6 were wrongly issued. In the State Glennallen subdistrict  
7 subsistence fishery. An average of 2.6 permits were  
8 issued to residents of Tolsona per year between 2002 and  
9 2023. For years when data were available, residents  
10 harvested an average of 163 sockeye salmon and  
11 approximately 3 chinook salmon per year.

12  
13 Effects of the proposal. If this  
14 proposal is adopted, residents of Tolsona would become  
15 federally qualified to harvest salmon in the Chitina  
16 subdistrict under Federal subsistence regulations, which  
17 are more liberal than State personal use regulations for  
18 Chitina Subdistrict. If the proposal is rejected,  
19 residents of Tolsona could continue to harvest salmon  
20 in the State personal use dipnet fishery or under sport  
21 fishing regulations in the Chitina subdistrict as well  
22 as in the Glennallen subdistrict under Federal  
23 subsistence regulations. OSM preliminary conclusion is  
24 to support FP25-03A. Tolsona resident's patterns of  
25 fishing exhibit the characteristic of customary and  
26 traditional uses of salmon in the Chitina subdistrict.  
27 Sockeye salmon is one of the top two most important  
28 resources for Tolsona residents in terms of edible  
29 weight harvested, and is also widely shared, as  
30 documented in a comprehensive subsistence survey.  
31 Comprehensive subsistence surveys have not  
32 differentiated between salmon search areas used by  
33 residents of Tolsona versus residents of the wider East  
34 Glenn Highway area, which includes Mendeltna -- sorry,  
35 I wasn't ready to read some of these in Nelchina. While  
36 residents of East Glenn Highway have had the Chitina  
37 subdistrict documented as search area, is unknown  
38 whether the search area was specifically used by  
39 residents of Tolsona. However, use of salmon by Tolsona  
40 residents within the Chitina subdistrict has been  
41 documented through reported harvests under Federal  
42 permits that were issued in error and by written  
43 testimony submitted with the proposal which details  
44 residents histories of the use of Chitina subdistrict  
45 extending back to the 1940s.

46  
47 I think that's it -- I could there's one  
48 public comment. One public comment was received which  
49 was in opposition to the proposal. The comment came from  
50 an individual who said that he had been living in Tolsona

1 community for 43 years. He stated that he and his  
2 neighbors were unaware of the proposal and the  
3 proponents does not represent him. He states that the  
4 individuals listed in the proposal have short lived  
5 residency in the area, and some have not lived in the  
6 area for 20 years. Additionally, he believes that there  
7 is ample opportunity for fish in the O'Brien Creek under  
8 State regulations. He does not think that most of the  
9 community has used local Federal lands for subsistence  
10 purposes, thank you.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
13 Okay. Go ahead, Sue.

14  
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, my question is,  
16 could it be that those permits were issued because they  
17 had a Glennallen address and that wasn't further looked  
18 into. Thank you.

19  
20 MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair, Can you  
21 hear me now?

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT Yes.

24  
25 MS. VOORHEES: Okay, I'm not sure if  
26 Brent just nodded or answered that question and I didn't  
27 hear. But yes, that could be the case, but we just don't  
28 know for sure.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. And did  
31 we -- I guess we're going to move on to the procedure.  
32 We will move reports -- thank you and for your time  
33 there, thank you for helping out, really helped out a  
34 lot. So, right now we want to ask if there was any tribal  
35 report in on Board consultation from tribes and ANCSA  
36 Corporations.

37  
38 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, this is Brooke.  
39 Mr. Orville Lind informed me that there was not, Thank  
40 you.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Orville.  
43 Okay, moving on to agency comments ADF&G.

44  
45 (No comment)

46  
47 The Federal agencies.

48  
49 (No comment)

1 Tribal entities.

2

3

(No comment)

4

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Okay, right at this time, we'll call  
6 Karen Linnell.

7

8 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
9 apologize I didn't hear about the tribal consultation  
10 until the day of and wasn't able to call in at that time  
11 because I was otherwise engaged. In regards to this  
12 proposal, I feel this is -- that people who have used a  
13 personal use dip netting under State regulations and are  
14 now trying to expand into Federal qualifications; the  
15 folks that are mentioned in their testimony, O.A. Nelson  
16 died in the 70s before the Wrangell-St. Elias National  
17 Park was formed. And then the Whites have either moved  
18 away or not been in the area for quite, quite some time.  
19 Ken and Evelyn Bunch, I went to school with Bibi and  
20 Holly. They moved away after graduation, I graduated in  
21 81 with Bibi, and they haven't really come back. Again,  
22 the park formed and so, the people that they've mentioned  
23 in here with that use, they have no connection to anybody  
24 currently using the park. And so, basing it on somebody  
25 else's history, had this been something that was wanted  
26 -- Kirk Wilson or people who are permanent residents of  
27 Tolsona area would have made that request. There's a lot  
28 of transient cabins there now or seasonal cabins where  
29 people come out and recreate they have access to  
30 Crosswind Lake, and so they'll go there, but the -- I  
31 know just from talking with my tribal folks and neighbors  
32 that a lot of these people are no longer there.

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In regards to Marcy W. That's Marcy  
White, her brother lives in Tazlina now or Silver Springs  
and he does have a Federal permit that he uses. And  
again, a lot of these folks that they mentioned have  
been gone or dead since the -- at least the 90s, I think  
Ken Bunch passed in the 90s. Nut yeah, basing it on  
historical versus what's happening, what's the practice,  
who's been participating in? You heard from Kirk Wilson,  
who's an avid fisherman and lives in Tolsona year round,  
there are several folks there, Michelle Heaton who lives  
right there at the lake and owns the lodge now. Her late  
husband, Bruce Heaton, who was from Chitina. They didn't  
put in for this, they -- he just passed a year, year and  
a half ago, maybe two now, he's my ex-husband's cousin,  
so, I have familial connections. But they didn't put in  
a request for this traditional use and customary and  
traditional permits. I feel that they want to change

1 their personal use fishery in the Chitina subdistrict  
2 from 30 to up to 200, is it Barbara? Under the Federal  
3 permits. And so, I want to strongly oppose this and  
4 recommend that you do as well. The Copper River can't  
5 feed the entire State, I've said that many times before  
6 and the expansion of it, they have the ability to hunt  
7 or fish under State regulations in the upper reaches.

8  
9 O'Brien Creek gets 8 to 10,000 people  
10 under State permits. It used to be around 3000, but it's  
11 grown significantly. And the impacts of that were still  
12 not meeting the amounts necessary for subsistence in the  
13 upper reaches from Gakona north to Slana, where many of  
14 the communities that you serve, participate in the  
15 fishery. I know Tetlin, Tanacross, and Northway have  
16 fish wheel and Slana and are now fishing there, and this  
17 could have an impact on them. And so, I wanna -- my fish  
18 wheel personally is at Chistochina. The biggest run we  
19 had was 45 this summer, and then it quickly dropped to  
20 three, five. And our State biologist says that we're not  
21 putting in the effort. I'm -- I was taught that when  
22 they're not coming to stop and let them go by so that  
23 we look at sustainability. And then I also was taught  
24 if we catch too many to stop and let them go by so, that  
25 we're looking at sustainability and we're not seeing the  
26 fish coming, especially at the headwaters. And so, I  
27 just strongly urge you to oppose this. Had anybody  
28 currently living or has that long-term history, they're  
29 trying to tag on to somebody else's history, their  
30 personal history is not there. So, thank you.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for your  
33 testimony, we have a question here for you, thank you.

34  
35 MS. BURK: Thank you, thank you for your  
36 testimony. This is Eva, for the record. Do you have any,  
37 like, summary when you mentioned not meeting Alaska  
38 Native subsistence needs? Do you have like a time frame  
39 on that for how many years, how much you're not meeting  
40 it by? Cause [sic] this sounds real similar to the Yukon

41  
42 MS. LINNELL: So, out of, I think it's  
43 eight out of ten years now. Jim has a chart and he'll  
44 be happy to share it. Tonsina to Gakona, Lauren Ennis  
45 since 2018, it's not been met. Gakona to Slana 2015 to  
46 now, the amounts necessary for subsistence have not been  
47 met and that Gakona to Slana that's my area of  
48 Chistochina, that's Sue and Batzulnetas and Katie John's  
49 camp, not meeting it. And so that's just based on ADF&Gs  
50 harvest numbers in 2023, less -- about 2,000.



1

2                   It was about 2000 salmon were harvested  
3 and it was at 70% over management objective for  
4 escapement. That subtraction that they're doing, rather  
5 than actually looking at what's happening is the  
6 problem. They -- the area -- the fisheries manager says  
7 he's got his finger on the pulse of what's happening.  
8 But when you have a huge influx of people targeting them  
9 now from boats with their dip nets when they're held up  
10 during high water, we're not seeing the pulses of fish  
11 when the fish -- when the river drops. And so,  
12 liberalizing it so that they can use this fish while  
13 they're held up at high water because they found out  
14 that, hey, I don't have to spend a week or a month trying  
15 to get my harvest, I can dipnet it from a boat now in  
16 the O'Brien Creek area and get my catch in a day and not  
17 only that, but now instead of 30 fish, I can get 100  
18 fish or 200 fish under a Federal permit. That's what  
19 they're trying to get at. And because from the Chitina  
20 Bridge down to O'Brien and Healy Creek it is only a  
21 personal use fishery under the State, and they're  
22 limited to 30 plus 5 or 10 per household member. It's  
23 escaping me right now, but that's what it's about.

24

25                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
26 for your testimony. Any more questions in the room,  
27 around the table or online?

28

29                   (No response)

30

31                   Thank you so much.

32

33                   MS. LINNELL: Thank you.

34

35                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: One more, go ahead  
36 Eva.

37

38                   MS. BURK: Sorry, just when you're trying  
39 to get up.....

40

41                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: (Indiscernible) no  
42 name.

43

44                   MS. BURK: This is Eva, for the record,  
45 sorry. Can we -- is it possible to get a copy of your  
46 data?

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48                   MS. LINNELL: Absolutely.

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50                   MS. BURK: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much for your testimony. Okay, Advisory group comments. Other regional Councils.

(No comment)

Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

(No comment)

Subsistence resource commissions.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I have a report.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay, this is -- this system is a little bit different. It keeps turning off, we have to keep pushing buttons. All right on this fish -- this proposal 25-03A, the Tolsona C&T for salmon the Chitna subdistrict. The Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission unanimously supported this from information from the analysis that we felt it demonstrated Tolsona residents have historic use of salmon in chit [sic] the subdistrict. And I will have to say, Karen you weren't there to give more information, so I know that Starr Knighten is on the -- our Resource Commission and this was unanimous and she's on the AC locally and I wish she were here to tell us cause I can't remember what the AC did because she was on the AC and they had taken it up just the day before or the two days before. So, yeah, this is what happened at our meeting. So, we actually had three residents from Tolsona there and had -- and it was brought to our attention that it was 10 to 1 for the people of Tolsona wanting to have this. So, that's the information I have from the Subsistence Resource Commission, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anything else from Subsistence Resource Commission's? Thank you so much, Sue. Summary of written public comments.

MS. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair, this is Hannah Voorhees and I believe Brent gave that to you at the end of his presentation.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah, thank you. And we had public testimony already? Well, at this time we can go to public testimony if there's any.

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(No comment)

Okay, hearing none. We'll move to regional Council recommendations. Thank you, Andy.

(Indiscernible)

MR. BASSICH: For the record, member Bassich, I'd like to make a motion that the Eastern Interior RAC support FP25-03 as presented to us, 03A, excuse me. So, to repeat that Eastern RAC is -- motion is to support FP25-03A as presented to us.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Second.

MR. BASSICH: Okay, I'm gonna speak to the motion. I'm not gonna support this and there's a number of reasons why. But to go down our handy dandy as our conservation concern. I believe that there is gonna to be and there is a slow conservation concern forming on the Copper River. We've heard the comments at multiple meetings over the years that the Copper River cannot feed the State. I wanna remind this Council and the Federal Subsistence Board that we have spent a great deal of time working on proposals for the Copper River, which is kind of barely under our jurisdiction, just the upper reaches of it for a number of years now, it's almost been disproportional to the Yukon River, actually, as far as working on proposals. So, to me that's an alarm, that there are problems on the Copper River, long-term problems with production and the ability to provide for subsistence uses.

I'm happy to work on those issues. And I think we're doing a good job to try and protect the interests of people farther up the drainage. It's very similar to what's happening on the Yukon River. People in the lower section seem to get what they want, and then people in the upper river get shut down because there isn't enough. And it's not managed in a very feasible way at times. So, I'm a little bit sensitive to that. But I do wanna recognize that I think there is going to be a -- I think there is presently a conservation concern, but I think it's gonna to continue to grow. I also want to point out that generally, traditionally, if you look at the state of Alaska's subsistence data, it shows that certainly for game to a lesser extent for fish, most people that are subsistence users gather most of their resources within about 25

1 miles of their home. Copper River is a little bit  
2 different story because so many people from around the  
3 State go there to dipnet or do the practices that we've  
4 heard in this testimony. But I do want to recognize that  
5 when resources are to the point where maybe an 804 needs  
6 to be done. From my perspective, I will always want to  
7 protect the resources for the people that have it in  
8 their backyard and have relied on it for many, many  
9 centuries for their primary source of foods.

10  
11 I guess I addressed number two, which  
12 is the recommendations to support by substantial  
13 evidence of biological or traditional ecological  
14 knowledge. Basically, just reiterating that ANS have not  
15 been met for many years in the upper balance bounds.  
16 Will the recommendation be beneficial or detrimental to  
17 subsistence needs? I think as resources decline, we need  
18 to take care of the people locally first and then branch  
19 out depending on the volume of the resource available  
20 for harvest. I think that's gonna be more and more of  
21 an issue in the State as we move forward with greater  
22 populations entering the State. And so, I'm thankful the  
23 Federal program has 804 process. Will the recommendation  
24 unnecessarily restrict other uses? Currently, as it was  
25 stated in the written document, they still have the  
26 opportunity when the resources are there to fish under  
27 State regulations and obtain what they need through  
28 those processes. So, in summary with the accumulation  
29 of all these different factors, I'm gonna vote not to  
30 support this proposal. Mr. Chair, thank you.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
33 Andy. And any other comments? Go ahead, Sue.

34  
35 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, thank you. I'm  
36 gonna to be -- I have to say this is really hard for me,  
37 it's very, very difficult because this community is so  
38 close to Glennallen and people from Glennallen can move  
39 in and move out and continue to qualify. And that's a  
40 far bigger community than 11 people. And also, when you  
41 said that, is this a conservation concern? It's my  
42 understanding and I wanted to ask staff when it comes  
43 to doing a C&T, that isn't what we're supposed to be  
44 doing. Is that correct?

45  
46 MS. VOORHEES: This is Hannah Voorhees.  
47 Just to respond to that. The Board's policy is that  
48 customary and traditional use determinations are  
49 intended to recognize use in a broad manner, and they  
50 are not the proper tool to implement conservation

1 measures. If harvest needs to be restricted, we would  
2 look for a section 804 proposal or for harvest -- other  
3 harvest restriction measures to be put in place. But you  
4 know, the Council -- it's your prerogative how you'd  
5 like to handle these proposals. And obviously there are  
6 a lot of unprecedented changes in your region.

7  
8 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, and I'm just gonna  
9 have to add that for me, we sat through the meeting and  
10 they're all volunteers at the SRC. And you know,  
11 everybody voted to pass it and we're gonna be looking  
12 at further proposals about this community. And I guess  
13 for me, I understand where Karen's coming from, actually  
14 the last three years I haven't got fish from in Slana  
15 on the -- off the fish wheel, and it's probably more  
16 because I got lazy and didn't start calling everybody  
17 cause we would use -- people share fish wheels and we  
18 would get -- we'd have to find out who has a fish -- who  
19 we can get onto their fish wheel. And one of the access  
20 points for the fish wheels for us was a property where  
21 the man, Angus De Witt has died and the family is not  
22 allowing people to put wheels in there anymore. So, it  
23 makes it really hard to find a place, to find somebody,  
24 hey, I've been getting fish down there for years and now  
25 I can't get any. And that's a little different than, you  
26 know, that was more lack of trying on my part and lack  
27 of places to go, but I am gonna buy commercially  
28 harvested salmon this year because I'm out of salmon.  
29 But for this proposal, I just feel like I have to  
30 represent the Subsistence Resource Commission and their  
31 vote. So, I'm gonna be voting for this.

32  
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

34  
35 MS. BURK: Thank you, I am not in favor  
36 of supporting this, And I'm going by the eight criteria  
37 for determining customary and traditional use. And the  
38 thing that really stood out to me was there is a written  
39 public comment in opposition of this by somebody who is  
40 a permanent resident in Tolsona, as we heard in public  
41 testimony today as well. And it sounds to me like when  
42 you're looking at these eight criteria, that there needs  
43 to be the means of handling, preparing, preserving and  
44 storing fish or wildlife which has been traditionally  
45 used by past generations. And I think to me, that's  
46 where I was looking to see that the people that put this  
47 proposal in had had ancestors that lived in Tolsona, but  
48 that didn't appear to be the story went through the  
49 public testimony that we heard today. And the same --  
50 number six, a pattern of use, which includes the handing

1 down of knowledge of fishing and hunting skills, values  
2 and lore from generation to generation. Those are the  
3 things that I don't find enough evidence of, and the  
4 information that was presented to us here today to  
5 support this proposal. And I do agree that there are --  
6 there -- we do need to address the conservation concern,  
7 you know, through harvest limits or season restrictions.  
8 But just for the record, I wanna point out, you know,  
9 when we start hearing from local people about what  
10 they're not seeing in the upper river compared to what  
11 they've historically been seeing, that to me carries  
12 more weight than western scientific data of taking one  
13 count in the lower part of the river and assuming that's  
14 sufficient to manage all tributaries within the system.  
15 And so, in saying that I really appreciate Ahtna Inter-  
16 Tribal Resources Commission in the work to bring this  
17 information to us so we can better understand the current  
18 situation on the Copper River. And, you know, in this  
19 entire shutdown, people that I know are like, go to the  
20 Copper River and fish. Charlie and I went to Kenai River  
21 one time, we will never do it again, that is not my idea  
22 of fishing for subsistence. And it's also -- I think we  
23 have to really, really recognize that everything is  
24 gonna change these -- this is getting harder, there are  
25 less and less resources. I don't think it's about  
26 competition as much as it is about lack of resources.  
27 And I'm really concerned that what we're seeing on the  
28 Yukon is mirroring what we're hearing about on the Copper  
29 River. And that is most definitely a statewide issue and  
30 that we'd be best served by our regions working together  
31 to address these concerns that we're seeing statewide.

32  
33                   And just, you know, one more thing to  
34 point out for the record the one place, the one river  
35 that I know of where people can fish for and retain king  
36 salmon right now is the Kuskokwim. And for 11 years the  
37 tribes along the Kuskokwim River have been managing that  
38 fishery. And I think we need to look at that data and  
39 that case study more and give that more weight and merit  
40 than some of these standard western science methods,  
41 which to me are very much coming up short. I'm -- it's  
42 really hard to hear about this happening on the Copper  
43 River and as well as on the Yukon and you know so, for  
44 the -- I'm gonna stop my comments on that stuff, but get  
45 back to the issue at hand, which is determining customary  
46 and traditional use. And I just don't see enough evidence  
47 here to support that. And so, I will not be supporting  
48 this motion.

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1                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Anybody  
2 else? Go ahead, Donald.

3  
4                   MR. WOODRUFF: I also won't be supporting  
5 this because since 2018, I haven't met my subsistence  
6 needs and I know how that feels for a long time, thank  
7 you.

8  
9                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I too feel the same.  
10 I live on the Yukon River and the lower river gets fish  
11 and opportunity and they have many other resources,  
12 marine mammals and things like that and the people in  
13 the upper river don't. We only have two species of salmon  
14 I'm talking Yukon right now so, they're the ones that  
15 are getting left out and I see the same thing happening  
16 here on this river, Copper River. People in the upper  
17 rivers subsistence needs have not been -- being met, so  
18 there's no way that I can support adding another fishery  
19 down below them to insult them anymore. So, I don't, I  
20 won't support this either, thank you.

21  
22                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

23  
24                   MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. I think  
25 Sue brings up a great point in regards to -- how to  
26 determine or the criteria to determine C&Ts for an area  
27 and I thank you for bringing that up. That's something  
28 that I was kind of wrestling back and forth with. But  
29 in my mind, I tend to always think in the future. And  
30 I'm thinking about five years from now, I'm thinking ten  
31 years from now, and I'm thinking 20 years from now. And  
32 what's the state of Alaska and its resources gonna look  
33 like, and what are the issues that we're gonna have to  
34 deal with, and how is OSM gonna have to change, because  
35 OSM these -- this was created many, many years ago and  
36 I think it's done really well. And like I said in  
37 previous comments, thank God they put the 804 process  
38 in there. But I think 804 is gonna be more and more  
39 common. And I think the purpose of that is to identify  
40 the core group of users that need that resource, have a  
41 long tradition of using that resource, and I think you're  
42 gonna start seeing more and more people, more and more  
43 communities trying to get C&Ts as the resources begin  
44 to dwindle in the state of Alaska, as a way to try and  
45 get their foot in the door. And that's somewhat of how  
46 I view this proposal right here. And I think there needs  
47 to be a message, a hard stop to -- so, that that doesn't  
48 become what consumes us at these meetings for the next  
49 five years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. Any  
2 more comments, anybody online?

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 Can you reinstate, Andrew? Before we  
7 vote?

8  
9 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, for the record,  
10 member Bassich. The motion on the floor is for the  
11 Eastern Interior RAC to support proposal FP25-03A as  
12 presented to us.

13  
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, we're  
15 gonna do a roll call vote. Please, Donald.

16  
17 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. Okay,  
18 I'll start at the bottom of the list. Dorothy Shockley,  
19 how do you vote?

20  
21 (No response)

22  
23 I'll come back to her. I, Donald  
24 Woodruff will vote no. Charlie Jagow is not here. Charlie  
25 Wright.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: No.

28  
29 MR. WOODRUFF: Andrew Bassich.

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31 MR. BASSICH: No.

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33 MR. WOODRUFF: Eva Burk.

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35 MS. BURK: No.

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37 MR. WOODRUFF: Linda Evans.

38  
39 MS. EVANS: No.

40  
41 MR. WOODRUFF: Amanda Pope, are you out  
42 there?

43  
44 (No response)

45  
46 All right, Sue.

47  
48 MS. ENTSMINGER: You have to know how  
49 hard this is on me. You just have to. And I hope nobody's  
50 angry with me, but I'm going to support.



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MS. MCDAVID: And I do believe Dorothy is online. Dorothy you're muted if you press star six on your phone, that might unmute you.

MR. WOODRUFF: Dorothy Shockley, are you out there? We're taking a vote.

(No response)

MS. MCDAVID: We can't hear you, Dorothy, you could also try texting me if that works.

(No response)

All right, Dorothy, this is a last call. We still haven't heard ya [sic]. If you could try pressing star six on your phone. If not, we'll move on without your vote.

(No response)

Okay, Mr. Chair, the motion fails 1 to 5.

MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to make a quick comment. And Sue, this is more for you, but I -- one of the things as a Council member that I really love about our Council is that we have a really good representation of a lot of different views on the RAC here. And I know I've been the only vote at times opposed or to support something, and I think that's an important part of the process. I don't like rubber stamping, and I think it's really important to bring out these nuances, because so many of these things are so human related that we deal with, and I'm often torn between those things. But I just wanted to make that comment because none of us should ever feel apologetic for our vote. I guess that's what I'm trying to say. And I really value that diversity that we have on this RAC, thank you.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you. And it is hard for me because I wrestled hard and hard and hard with that because I hear what Karen's saying and I think that will go to the South Central and maybe things will change, but it just seems like there's nine of us on the SRC, there was a couple missing. But when you spend as a volunteer all that time talking about something, you think, well, I just at least can represent the people

1 at that time. So, thank you and thanks, Andy. I  
2 appreciate it, yeah.

3

4 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I did  
5 just want to let the record reflect that we did hear  
6 from Dorothy via text, and she was also a no vote. So,  
7 didn't change the outcome, but wanted to get that on the  
8 record, thanks.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right thank you  
11 so much, and thank you, Sue. We can't always agree and  
12 it's just fine. Thank you for your words too, Andy, very  
13 good. Moving forward we have FP25-03B Tolsona C&T  
14 Freshwater in Copper River. Hannah.

15

16 MR. VICKERS: Hannah, this is Brent  
17 Vickers. How about I just go ahead and read this one out  
18 for you and then you are able to answer questions which  
19 are generally shorter and easier to follow, is that okay?

20

21 MS. VOORHEES: That sounds great, Brent.  
22 Thank you.

23

24 MR. VICKERS: You just sounded crystal  
25 clear but of course I'll go ahead with it anyways, thank  
26 you, Hannah. Good afternoon, this is Brent Vickers,  
27 anthropologist for the Office of Subsistence Management.  
28 Next, I'll be presenting FP 25-03B, which begins on page  
29 249 of your meeting book. This proposal submitted by  
30 Tolsona Community Corporation, requests that the Board  
31 recognize the customary and traditional use of  
32 freshwater fish in the Copper River drainage upstream  
33 from Healy Creek by residents of Tolsona. The  
34 proponent's justification for FP25-03B repeats that  
35 given for the proposal we just went through FP25-03A.  
36 The proponent further states that lake fish and river  
37 fish are important resource for the community of  
38 Tolsona. On page 253, you will find a map of communities  
39 and areas that currently have customary and traditional  
40 use determination for freshwater fish in Copper River  
41 drainage upstream from Healey Creek. This includes  
42 residents of Cantwell, Chisana, Chistochina, Chitina,  
43 Copper Center, Dot Lake, Gakona, Gakona Junction,  
44 Glennallen, Gulkana, Healy Lake, Kenny Lake, Lower  
45 Tonsina, McCarthy, Mentasta Lake, Nabesna, Northway,  
46 Slana, Tanacross, Tazlina, Tetlin, Tok, Tonsina, and  
47 those individuals that live along the Tok Cut-off from  
48 Tok to Mentasta Pass and along Nabesna Road. The area  
49 affected by this proposal is the Federal public waters  
50 of the Copper River drainage upstream from Healey Creek,

1 with in and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of  
2 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The  
3 Federal public waters of Gulkana National Wild and  
4 Scenic River are located within the Copper River  
5 drainage upstream from Healey Creek. However, there is  
6 a separate customary and traditional use determination  
7 for this area.

8  
9 Additionally, there are BLM general  
10 domain lands located within the proposal area. On  
11 general domain lands Federal subsistence regulations  
12 apply only to non-navigable waters. The Board adopted  
13 the current customary and traditional use determination  
14 for freshwater fish in the upper Copper River drainage  
15 upstream from Healey Creek in 2001. In 2002, the Board  
16 rejected proposals to add Lake Louise and Paxson to the  
17 determination. The rejection was in deference to the  
18 Southcentral Council, which stated that there was  
19 insufficient evidence or proximity. In 2003, the Board  
20 considered another request to add Paxson, as well as  
21 those living along the Richardson Highway between  
22 milepost 169 and 200. The Board instead created a new  
23 customary and traditional use determination specific to  
24 the Gulkana National Wild and Scenic River and added  
25 Paxson Sourdough area to that determination.

26  
27 Permit requirements. A subsistence  
28 permit -- fishing permit is required under Federal  
29 regulations for the Prince William Sound area for other  
30 fish other than eulachon or hooligan. Community  
31 characteristics and the eight factors. As already  
32 presented on Tolsona community characteristics and I  
33 will not repeat that information here, I will also refer  
34 you to the earlier presentation for an overview of the  
35 eight factors and information on Tolsona's broad pattern  
36 of substance use. During the 2013 study year survey  
37 Tolsona a household harvested six different species of  
38 freshwater fish, which contributed relatively small  
39 amounts of food in terms of weight but were still an  
40 important asset in terms of the percentage of households  
41 using these species.

42  
43 75% of surveyed households use burbot,  
44 63 used rainbow trout and 28 used charr, and 25% used  
45 whitefish, including humpback, round and unknown  
46 whitefish. Burbot were harvested with subsistence ice  
47 fishing gear, whereas rainbow trout and grayling were  
48 caught with rod and reel. Burbot was the most shared  
49 freshwater fish, with 50% of households receiving burbot  
50 and 25 giving burbot away. As described previously, fish

1 search and harvest locations for Tolsona only separate  
2 from those of Mendeltna and Nelchina are not available.  
3 For the earlier 1982-83 study year, ADF&G Division of  
4 Subsistence surveyed East Glenn Highway area as a single  
5 entity. That year about half of the households surveyed  
6 reported freshwater fish harvests, especially lake  
7 trout, rainbow trout, grayling, and burbot, with most  
8 of the fishing occurring locally. In 2013, residents of  
9 East Glenn Highway communities fished for burbot in  
10 three lakes north of Tolsona. They fished for rainbow  
11 trout and small lakes close to -- Christ -- Nendeltna  
12 and Tolsona; sorry, now my tongue is just gonna to get  
13 twisted on that, no matter what I do; as well as in  
14 Anchorage area. You can find maps of these areas on page  
15 255. Arctic grayling, lake trout and whitefish were  
16 fished from creeks and lakes in the East Glenn Highway  
17 area. All these areas in the Copper River drainage  
18 upstream from Healy Creek, with the exception of Lake  
19 Louise and of course, Anchorage area. As part of their  
20 proposal Tolsona Community Corporation submitted written  
21 testimony from people with history of residency in  
22 Tolsona, although it is unclear whether these  
23 individuals listed are current or former residents. With  
24 respect to fishing, the testimony focused on salmon  
25 fishing in the Copper River and in the vicinity of  
26 O'Brien Creek, with no specific account of freshwater  
27 fish.

28  
29 Currently, residents of Tolsona can fish  
30 for freshwater fish in the Copper River drainage  
31 upstream for Healey Creek under State sport fishing and  
32 subsistence regulations. However, information on Tolsona  
33 fishing under these opportunities is not available.  
34 Alternatives considered. One alternative considered was  
35 to modify the customary and traditional use  
36 determination area to clarify that Gulkana Wild and  
37 Scenic River is excluded because a separate C&T for that  
38 area exists. The modified area would read Copper River  
39 drainage upstream from Healey Creek, excluding the  
40 Gulkana Wild and Scenic River, the Gulkana River is a  
41 separate C&T area, and continuing to include it in the  
42 Copper River drainage area was a regulatory oversight  
43 dating in 2003. However, this oversight can also be  
44 corrected administratively so this alternative was not  
45 considered further. Effects of the proposal, if this  
46 proposal is adopted, residents of Tolsona would become  
47 federally qualified to harvest freshwater fish from the  
48 Copper River drainage upstream from Healey Creek under  
49 Federal subsistence regulations. A permit is required  
50 to harvest freshwater fish in the Prince William Sound

1 area under Federal regulations. If rejected, residents  
2 of Tolsona will -- could continue to fish this area  
3 under State subsistence and sport fishing regulations.  
4 The OSM preliminary conclusion is neutral on the  
5 proposal FP25-03B. OSM is seeking additional information  
6 through the regulatory process to determine whether  
7 residents of Tolsona meet the eight factors for use of  
8 freshwater in the proposal area.

9  
10 While there is evidence of freshwater  
11 fish use by residents of Tolsona, the location of harvest  
12 and time depth of this use is unknown. There are several  
13 points of evidence that lend support to this proposal,  
14 but which are alone insufficient. Tolsona is located  
15 within the Copper River drainage upstream from Healey  
16 Creek, the area in which proponents have requested  
17 customary and traditional use determination for  
18 freshwater fish. Tolsona is not surrounded by Federal  
19 public waters. The Board has previously recognized  
20 Tolsona customary and traditional use of wildlife  
21 species in Units 11 and 13. There is a single survey  
22 year in which ADF&G Division of Subsistence documented  
23 Tolsona's subsistence use as an individual community.  
24 This survey showed that households harvested and used  
25 freshwater fish. While it was reasonable to assume  
26 Tolsona residents harvested these fish close to home,  
27 the subsistence survey did not provide this information.  
28 No information is available on Tolsona residents fishing  
29 under State, sport or subsistence opportunities. All  
30 testimony by Tolsona residents on their subsistence  
31 harvest was provided in the proposal, as we just  
32 discussed earlier with the earlier proposal. This  
33 testimony to focus is on the use of salmon rather than  
34 freshwater fish. While Tolsona may have pattern of  
35 customary and traditional use of freshwater fish in the  
36 area under consideration. Data on area's fish and the  
37 time death of this fishing are currently lacking, thank  
38 you.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
41 Questions?

42  
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, moving on  
44 then. We'll be looking for -- thank you so much. Do we  
45 have any report on Board consultation, Tribal or ANCSA  
46 Corporations?

47  
48 MS. MCDAVID: Orville, let us know that  
49 we do not. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. Agency  
2 comments, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

3  
4 (No comment)

5  
6 Federal agencies.

7  
8 (No comment)

9  
10 Tribal entities. Native, Tribal  
11 village, other. Karen Linnell, your turn.

12  
13 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For  
14 the record, my name is Karen Linnell. Ahtna Inter-Tribal  
15 Resources Commission represents eight Federally  
16 recognized tribes and two ANCSA corporations who are the  
17 landowners in the Ahtna traditional territory. With this  
18 proposal again, the customary and traditional use that  
19 was -- cause [sic] it was all lumped into one and it was  
20 separated by OSM into two parts. The folks that they had  
21 used for their documentation of use have long been gone.  
22 There -- these individuals don't have that -- meet the  
23 eight criteria or passing it on from generation to  
24 generation, or even neighbor to neighbor. And there's a  
25 lot of burbot, trout and grayling in the Tolsona and  
26 Crosswind Lakes areas where they usually go. The  
27 gentleman from Tolsona that objected to this was -- also  
28 lives in Tolsona and he says, we fishing right out of  
29 our back yard, we can snowmachine, we can fly or take a  
30 four wheeler and partake in those fisheries. And I feel  
31 that this is just another way to reach into Federal,  
32 into and get federally qualified to get this Federal  
33 qualification, then the next step will be go back to  
34 look at the salmon. And they have no direct link outside  
35 of that use as Mr. Bassich and others have said that the  
36 resources are getting slim, the opportunities are  
37 getting slimmer. The management with -- under the State,  
38 as it's been happening lately, we've seen decline and  
39 closures for different species. We talked with Mr.  
40 Wilson, he serves on the Copper Basin AC, and he was  
41 trying to look at, you know, liberalizing the taking of  
42 trout on the Gulkana system. Looking at that as a  
43 potential impact to the salmon -- fry [sic] in Crosswind  
44 lakes or Summit Lake or other areas and it got denied  
45 because it's the northernmost wild run of trout and so  
46 -- but we also just heard proposals on liberalizing the  
47 take of burbot. And so, that's happening under the State  
48 on this side of the river, not within Wrangell-St. Elias  
49 National Park. So, there's opportunities in -- to fish  
50 and participate and this is just again, for me a way to

00055

1 get their toe in the door. Then they can, you know,  
2 shove it wide open later in regards to this and again,  
3 the people in their list, in their proposal have long  
4 been gone. There's no direct link to the use outside of  
5 their State hunts or State fishing, thank you.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
8 Karen. Any questions for Karen?

9

10 (No response)

11

12 Thank you so much for your testimony.  
13 Okay, moving on. Advisory group comments. Are there  
14 other regional Councils, any comments?

15

16 (No comment)

17

18 Fish and game advisory committees.

19

20 (No comment)

21

22 Subsistence resource commissions.

23

24 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, Charlie.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

27

28 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I was expecting  
29 to get cut off and redo, okay. The Subsistence Resource  
30 Commission of the Wrangell Park decided not to take this  
31 proposal up and so that made it pretty simple, there was  
32 no vote, we just decided it -- sorry. They just decided  
33 it was too much out of there.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
36 Sue. Summary of written public comments.

37

38 MR. VICKERS: Yes, this is Brent Vickers  
39 OSM, there was one written comment that I am not gonna  
40 repeat. It was the same written comment for the last  
41 proposal from -- in opposition of the proposal, thank  
42 you.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, thank you.  
45 Public testimony in the room or online?

46

47 (Pause)

48

49 Okay, right go ahead.

50

1 MS. ENTSMNGER: I wanna make, boy, that  
2 thing is getting hard. Anyway, I wanna to make a motion  
3 to take no action and defer to the home region.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right, thank  
6 you. So, what do we do now?

7  
8 MS. MCDAVID: If there's no second, then  
9 the motion will fail.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Do we have a second?  
12 Going once, twice, three times, none, it fails.

13  
14 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, I'd like to make  
15 a motion to the Eastern Interior RAC support proposal  
16 FP 25-03B as presented to us.

17  
18 MR. WOODRUFF: Second.

19  
20 MR. BASSICH: Okay, speaking to the  
21 motion, this is member Bassich. The reason why I think  
22 it's important to take this up is stated in the previous  
23 proposal as well. I think we identified some concerns  
24 for allowing or adding C&Ts to an area. And I think they  
25 apply mostly to this. I will say I'm a little bit more  
26 conflicted with this proposal than I was with the other,  
27 because of the fact that one is dealing with a longer  
28 salmon migration route that has a lot more pressure on  
29 it, whereas freshwater fish are more dispersed and  
30 probably don't have conservation concerns at this time,  
31 and likely not to have conservation concerns in the  
32 future. So, that's where I kinda [sic] have some conflict  
33 right now. I really think it's important for people to  
34 be able to use local resources, and freshwater fish are  
35 showing that they're a little bit more resilient than  
36 the high pressure and high demand on salmon. However,  
37 that being said, like the other proposal -- I'm just  
38 gonna reference a lot of my comments in the other  
39 proposal. But I also want to state that under the  
40 determination for customary and traditional use many of  
41 the eight were not clearly documented. And that's where  
42 I'm having a problem. They can't show a long history,  
43 they can't show passing on through generations, harvest  
44 reports are spotty. And so, I'm just gonna identify that  
45 -- not -- in my view, for me personally, not enough of  
46 the eight criteria were met for me to be in support of  
47 this. So, I'm gonna vote no. Mr. Chair, thank you.

48  
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other comments?  
50 Go ahead, Eva.



1

2 MS. BURK: This is Eva, I will also be  
3 voting no. I cannot support this proposal. Not -- and  
4 not really thinking about the conservation concern as  
5 much, but more of not being able to meet the eight  
6 criteria and the part that really been sticking out to  
7 me and really emphasizes what we're hearing in public  
8 testimony is when I think about customary and  
9 traditional use in my area, it's really easy to document.  
10 There's pictures of my children, me, my parents, my  
11 grandparents, my great grandparents and my great great  
12 grandparents. Is really easy to document real, actual,  
13 customary and traditional use. And even though many of  
14 us may have moved on to urban places, we're still very  
15 connected to our rural places that we came from. I know  
16 a lot of people that travel and maintain those  
17 connections over time. So, I just wanted to put that on  
18 the record that I feel like C&T should be an easy thing.  
19 And that is really concerning to me that we're seeing,  
20 like, both of these C&Ts. It does, like I said, lend  
21 itself for one to believe that people are trying to take  
22 advantage of this. To get that C&T determination as  
23 resources are dwindling so, with that, I will not be  
24 supporting, thank you.

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
27 is Brooke, for the record. We do have a comment from  
28 Dorothy, she's having some issues with the phone so, I'm  
29 gonna read what she sent me. She also said that she will  
30 not be voting in support of this. She agrees to comments  
31 that have been mentioned. She also says that she did not  
32 appreciate the use of old data and people who no -- who  
33 are no longer alive or live in the area. Thank you.

34

35 MS. ENTSMIGER: You might be happy to  
36 know I'll vote against it myself based on there really  
37 isn't enough data to even make a vote on it.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie. I  
40 feel the same way that do not meet the eight criteria.  
41 And the fact that they're trying to use trickery to get  
42 determination is very bad in my mind. Using old data,  
43 it's just terrible. Thank you, that's all I have to say.

44

45 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, I call the  
46 question.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, please.

49

50 MR. BASSICH: Let's have a (distortion)

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1 iron plate in you so (distortion) your aura is  
2 projecting.

3

4 (Simultaneous speech)

5

6 Okay, you don't have to tell us where.  
7 For the record member Bassich repeating the motion. The  
8 motion was for the Eastern Interior RAC to support FP25-  
9 03B as presented to us, Mr. Chair.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, I think  
12 we're gonna ask for unanimous vote on this one. I am at  
13 this time asking for a unanimous vote.

14

15 Anybody object?

16

17 (No response)

18

19 Anybody have any more comments or?

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: So, I just to help you all  
22 out here since the motion was in support, if you want  
23 to oppose it then you should say you object, thank you.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right, I Charlie  
26 Wright, object.

27

28 MR. WOODRUFF: Donald Woodruff, I object.

29

30 MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich, object.

31

32 MS. EVANS: Linda Evans, object.

33

34 MS. ENTSMINGER: Sue Entsminger, object,  
35 I can't even say my own name.

36

37 MS. BURK: Eva Burk, object.

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: And Dorothy also objected.

40

Motion fails.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I think I'm getting  
43 hungry. I can't get my words out right again. How about  
44 Amanda? Are you online yet, Amanda?

45

46 (No response)

47

48 Okay, we'll keep trying.

49

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: So, it sounds like we're  
2 getting ready to break for lunch. I did just want to  
3 remind people we're gonna to go a little bit out of  
4 order after lunch. We'll have a couple of proposals or,  
5 sorry, presentations related to Yukon River salmon and  
6 then yesterday -- following that, yesterday, the Council  
7 did add to their agenda that they wanted to take up a  
8 couple of Board of Fish agenda change requests and  
9 proposals. So, that's what's to come, thank you.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We'll see you all  
12 back here about five after one, thank you.

13  
14 (Off record)

15  
16 (On record)

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Hello in the room.  
19 We're about ready to get started here pretty soon. A  
20 couple minutes, thank you.

21  
22 Like I said before lunch we had a couple  
23 changes to the agenda. So, it'll be Yukon Water Monitor  
24 and USGS first and Yukon Salmon Management second, Yukon  
25 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission third, Gale Vick  
26 fourth and YRDFA fifth. Thank you.

27  
28 (Pause)

29  
30 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
31 is Brooke, for the record. I am trying to get this up  
32 on the screen in the room, but there are handouts on the  
33 table that say USGS sampling at Eagle, Alaska at the  
34 top. And I'm also sharing this document -- this slide  
35 on the screen for folks online. So, I believe we're okay  
36 to go ahead and move forward, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

37  
38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. I don't have  
39 a name here, but we have USGS. Okay, Jeff.

40  
41 MR. CONAWAY: Will do. Hi, my name is  
42 Jeff Conaway. I'm a hydrologist with the USGS Alaska  
43 Science Center in Anchorage. And thank you for allowing  
44 me to present some of our work. The USGS is -- monitors  
45 115 streams and rivers around Alaska. Five of those we  
46 measure continuous water quality on -- and those are  
47 streams in southeast Alaska where we're concerned about  
48 mining on the BC side. And we've been developing baseline  
49 water quality information along those rivers, as well  
50 as sampling fish for metals and doing the continuous

1 surveillance of the water quality in those areas. On the  
2 Yukon, we have stream gauges at Eagle, Stevens Village,  
3 Galena and Pilot Station and we haven't been collecting  
4 continuous water quality at the Yukon but in response  
5 to the spill on June 24th at the Eagle Mine, we went to  
6 Eagle and Alaska and sampled for cyanide and metals. And  
7 we also returned on September 24th for a second sampling.  
8 And we're awaiting the results of those -- that second  
9 sample. But the first one came back with a non-detect  
10 for cyanide in the water and then just a -- basically a  
11 small trace in the total available cyanide that's below  
12 the reportable limits for EPA standards, not something  
13 we would report in any of our reports because the level  
14 was basically so low, we're not sure the machine was  
15 detecting it properly. But we're waiting on these second  
16 results, and there's a lot of interest in this work.  
17 I've got four emails in my inbox this week from the  
18 congressional staff that are excited to hear these  
19 results from this second sampling. And we don't have any  
20 historical information on cyanide on this river. We have  
21 sampled 35 times for metals in the early 2000, and we  
22 also sampled for metals this time too. So, that will be  
23 the only comparison that we can make to the historical  
24 data that we have. But at this time, we don't have any  
25 additional sampling planned for next year, but unless  
26 otherwise directed then we will continue sampling either  
27 for cyanide or for continuous water quality monitoring,  
28 similar to what we do on the transboundary rivers. And  
29 if -- that's all I have to report, if there's any  
30 questions for the on the work we do or how to get our  
31 data, please let me know.

32  
33 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. This is Member  
34 Bassich. I actually live in Eagle, down river from Eagle.  
35 I'm just curious are you coordinating with -- I'm sure  
36 you're probably coordinating with the Canadians, but I'm  
37 wondering if you have any data in the Dawson region and  
38 if next year there is any elevated reports in Canada,  
39 will that be a catalyst for you to then hopefully come  
40 in and do more sampling. So, I'm just trying to wonder  
41 -- I'm kind of wondering what your relationship is and  
42 what the level of communications is between Canadian and  
43 your organization. Thank you.

44  
45 MR. CONAWAY: Yeah, that's a great  
46 question. The primary coordination with the Canadians  
47 in the US is through the State Department and EPA. EPA  
48 has been involved in and tracking what the recovery  
49 response has been there at the mine and also some of  
50 those water quality data. And I can provide a contact

1 to the EPA as a follow up. But in answer to your second  
2 question, yeah, if they're seeing continued cyanide  
3 levels or elevated cyanide levels in the spring or  
4 through the winter, we would certainly continue our  
5 sampling to monitor on the U.S. side of the border.

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
8 Jeff. Any other questions for Jeff? Seeing that you gave  
9 us some good news and I don't see a lot of questions  
10 coming for you, and we appreciate you very much and look  
11 forward to hearing about that next set of samples. Thank  
12 you so much.

13  
14 MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Thank you for having  
15 me.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Next is Yukon Salmon  
18 Management.

19  
20 MR. HERRON: Yeah, thank you. So, I'd  
21 like to begin by introducing myself in Yugtun and Yup'ik.  
22 So, (In Native). I said my two Yup'ik names and hi. Hi,  
23 my name is Keith Herron. I'm originally from Bethel,  
24 Alaska and I grew up in a few communities around the  
25 State including Wrangell, Seward, Kenai and now I  
26 currently live in Fairbanks, and I work for the U.S.  
27 Fish and Wildlife Service as the Assistant Fishery  
28 Manager and the tribal liaison for fisheries on the Yukon  
29 River, and I'm also a graduate student at the University  
30 of Alaska Fairbanks working on my master's degree. The  
31 Ichthyophonous Project is my master's project, and I'm  
32 supported by Tamanta Program that's focusing on  
33 uplifting indigenous knowledge within fisheries science  
34 and management. And so, with that I'd just like to  
35 recognize all the great leaders I have sitting in front  
36 of me here. And this -- the original stewards of the  
37 Yukon River, the people, the tribes and the cultures and  
38 the ambassadors, which I heard yesterday, that you all  
39 are. And I'm greatly honored to learn from you. My first  
40 actual job, or one of my jobs I started in 2016 at the  
41 Andraefsky River Weir. But in 2020, I was an intern for  
42 the Office of Subsistence Management, and I did a 20-  
43 year review of the prior -- Priority Information Needs  
44 from every single region -- RAC in Alaska to try uplift  
45 those needs that you all have been pointing out, and we  
46 see those needs reoccurring. So, we're still talking  
47 about those today. I just want to acknowledge that great  
48 knowledge that you all bring. It's really valued, and I  
49 learned from it. And just growing up in Alaska, I've  
50 heard the same stories we commonly hear about the fish

1 getting smaller, the less wind, less openings and more  
2 closures. And it's just really heartbreaking to having  
3 to work in a system now that those what people were  
4 warning against is now the reality. So, we should have  
5 been listening to the people along the river the whole  
6 time. And that's what we really need within management  
7 now is those voices and you bring that to the table. So,  
8 thank you. And I know it's really hard to keep coming  
9 to a table and saying the same thing over and over. But  
10 I do believe the systems are willing to listen and change  
11 in a positive way that is more inclusive of peoples and  
12 cultures and their knowledge. And we were just really  
13 need to uplift that knowledge within these Western  
14 systems. And I don't -- I really think it needs to be  
15 highlighted that when indigenous knowledge is shared,  
16 it's not -- there's no need to validate it by Western  
17 science. It needs to be uplifted as its own knowledge  
18 system and valid system of knowledge. So, there's no --  
19 there should be no validation of that required when it  
20 is shared. So, I just kind of wanted to highlight those  
21 things before I got into a summary. Introduce myself,  
22 I'd also like to introduce my family, because this is  
23 kind of how I am showing you coming to you with respect,  
24 showing all the relationships I do bring to the table  
25 and who I am as a person, and how all those relationships  
26 I try intertwine those values of myself and my cultures  
27 within the work that I do do.

28  
29 My father is Buddy Herron of Bethel,  
30 Alaska, and his parents are Bob and Margaret Herron of  
31 Bethel, Alaska. And my mom is Dana Rooney of Wrangell,  
32 Alaska and her parents are Dennis and Janet Strum of  
33 Wrangell, Alaska. Both my parents grew up in Bethel on  
34 the Kuskokwim River. And, yeah, I've just learned a lot  
35 being out on the land from my grandparents, from my  
36 parents. And those are the type of things and the values  
37 I try to bring into the work I do and the way I conduct  
38 myself within the work. But -- so, I'd also like to  
39 highlight some indigenous names for chinook salmon. I  
40 really believe we should start using the indigenous  
41 names for salmon. When we talk about them, it shows the  
42 respect and that legacy of the -- those names are there  
43 for a reason. There's lots of knowledge embedded within  
44 those names where those fish are headed, where they're  
45 going to spawn. And I just truly believe we should  
46 uplift, uplift those names more. So, I'll just say the  
47 chinook salmon indigenous names for the major cultural  
48 groups in the Yukon. In Yup'ik it's taryaqvak, in Lower  
49 Tanana Dene) it's gath, Koyukon Athabascan it's ghaal,  
50 and in Gwich'in it's luk choo. And they're really

1 meaningful names and they should be highlighted more.  
2 And same with chum salmon and coho salmon. There's lots  
3 of knowledge embedded within those indigenous names, and  
4 we should be highlighting those more when we are  
5 uplifting indigenous knowledge within it -- within these  
6 Western management systems. But with that, that's kind  
7 of just my way of showing you who I am and where I come  
8 from, out of respect for the salmon and for the people  
9 of that who have these resources. And they're not just  
10 resources, they're relatives, in my way of thinking. So,  
11 they deserve that respect. On how we speak about them  
12 when we speak about them. They mean much more than food.  
13 They're a part of our beings and part of our DNA. And  
14 we just really need to be respectful. And I know you all  
15 are very respectful when you talk about salmon and  
16 wildlife, but I just wanted to put that on record for  
17 others, because I know many of the people in this room  
18 have been saying we need those values within the system  
19 for a long time, but for the 2024 fishing season.....

20  
21 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry to interrupt you.  
22 Right. Quyana for your beautiful introduction. And I  
23 just want to -- online, we have an open mic, and I don't  
24 want it to keep distracting us. Dorothy, if you can hear  
25 us, if you could please mute your phone. We're getting  
26 a lot of feedback from your line in the room. And I  
27 don't want to mute you again from our end in case it  
28 causes issues like it did earlier. We'd appreciate it.  
29 Thank you. Sorry Kieth.

30  
31 MR. HERRON: No worries. But for the 2024  
32 fishing season, we started out with the outlook and  
33 management strategy going to several Boards and panels  
34 like the Yukon River panel, the Yukon River Inter-Tribal  
35 Fish Commission, the Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's  
36 Association, and held tribal consultations to look at  
37 the outlook and propose management strategy and get  
38 feedback on that strategy for the expected runs. There  
39 was also a colored outlook flyer sent to all the Yukon  
40 River households in May, that outlined the season and  
41 the proposed management strategy. And for chinook salmon  
42 at the Pilot Station Sonar in the lower river. The  
43 preliminary drainage wide chinook salmon run was  
44 estimated at 64,000, and of those 64,000 it was expected  
45 that 28,000 plus or minus 7,500 were expected to make  
46 it to the US Canada border at Eagle. And the Eagle  
47 passage for chinook salmon was 24,000 so, we are in that  
48 range of expected to make it to the border. And although  
49 that 24,000 is better than the record low escapement in  
50 2022 and 2023, it is considerably lower than the

1 rebuilding target that was set at the Yukon River panel  
2 of 71,000.

3  
4 And then for summer chum salmon that did  
5 come within the pre-season forecast at Pilot Station  
6 Sonar. Summer chum was estimated at 750,000 which is  
7 within the drainage wide escapement goal. Although that  
8 drainage wide escapement goal was met at Pilot, we did  
9 not meet the East Fork Andreafsky River Weir goal for  
10 chum salmon -- for summer chum salmon and the Anvik  
11 River Sonar goal for summer chum salmon. And that's a  
12 little concerning, given those are some major producers  
13 of summer chum salmon in the drainage and they did not  
14 meet their respective escapement goals. So, where are  
15 those summer chum salmon going if they're not going into  
16 the Anvik or drainages like that?

17  
18 For fall season, the estimate in-river  
19 for fall chum was approximately 200,000 which is below  
20 the 300,000 fish needed to meet escapement needs or  
21 provide any subsistence opportunity. None of the Alaska  
22 escapement goals are expected to be met for fall chum  
23 salmon. And most of those projects are done, or just  
24 wrapping up. The Eagle fall chum estimate was about  
25 16,000. The fishing branch chum -- fall chum estimate  
26 was about 5,000. The Sheenjek River sonar count for fall  
27 chum was about 14,000, and the T'ee Drinjik was about  
28 58,000 which are all below escapement goals for that  
29 species. And the coho salmon was also very below average.  
30 at Pilot Station it was estimated about 77,000.

31  
32 And so, those are the numbers that --  
33 of salmon, and those numbers affect management actions.  
34 And so pre-season, the Office of Subsistence Management  
35 received a special action request FSA2401, asking the  
36 Federal Subsistence Board to close Federal public waters  
37 of the Yukon River drainage to the harvest of chinook,  
38 chum, and coho salmon except by federally qualified  
39 users, and this request was submitted by the fish -- the  
40 Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and that  
41 request was passed by the Board. So, when there was any  
42 salmon fishing opportunities announced in the Yukon  
43 River, those opportunities were limited to federally  
44 qualified users. And in-season, before any special  
45 actions were announced or changing management in season,  
46 the RAC Chairs and the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish  
47 Commission Chair was [sic] notified before, about a week  
48 or two or a couple of days before to give their input  
49 on those upcoming actions. And unfortunately, due to the  
50 salmon runs in-season, there was no directed salmon



1 fishing for chinook salmon. And -- but there was some  
2 selective gear fishing opportunities to target summer  
3 chum salmon with say, dip nets or man fish wheels in  
4 areas where summer chum were present and there was  
5 opportunity to harvest non-salmon throughout the salmon  
6 seasons. But these gears were limited at times to protect  
7 the chinook salmon or fall chum salmon and coho salmon,  
8 putting it on a schedule in fall season and then a full  
9 two-week closure in the chinook salmon run. So, we're  
10 looking for feedback for next season on how to handle  
11 the four-inch gear or the other non-salmon gears given  
12 our concerns for salmon species are always welcome. And  
13 once fall chum were more abundant in the river than  
14 summer chum, the fall chum was closed in each district,  
15 but there was selective gear opportunity to harvest coho  
16 in areas where coho are present. And then once we knew  
17 the run was not going to meet escapement goals, that was  
18 -- the retention was closed for coho salmon.

19  
20 One feedback we've heard is why did the  
21 coho salmon were kind of treated a little bit different  
22 than the chum salmon or the chinook on -- like, why were  
23 they open a -- like why were they open at the beginning  
24 season and all the rest were closed at the beginning of  
25 the season? So, that's one potential thing we need to  
26 maybe look at in our management on the coho salmon. But  
27 all these management restrictions and closures will be  
28 lifted or are lifted once the majority of the fall chum  
29 have passed each area, and there's some tributaries that  
30 will be closed until December to protect those ones that  
31 are actively spawning in that area. And so, that's kind  
32 of the management side of the numbers that we saw this  
33 season.

34  
35 And for tribal consultation that's  
36 really a big mission. My position was actually created  
37 to try to increase tribal consultation. And I believe  
38 we need to keep pushing on the systems that we need more  
39 government-to-government consultations. And one good way  
40 to do that is working with the Fish Commission -- the  
41 Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, who represents  
42 tribes on trying to get those voices in the room to  
43 really direct management of the Yukon River. And I  
44 believe that the Kuskokwim is a good case study on where  
45 that has been beneficial to the people and the salmon.  
46 And so, we hosted several tribal consultations,  
47 preseasons to get feedback on the summer seasons -- the  
48 chinook salmon run. And then in fall season there was  
49 another public outreach meeting that focused on how we  
50 should manage the fall season. And there was lots of

1 good conversations at that teleconference regarding fall  
2 season management. And then we plan to offer tribal  
3 consultations upon request this fall season. And then  
4 again, there will be district wide consultations in the  
5 spring to discuss next year's fisheries. And then in-  
6 season, there was weekly teleconference conference calls  
7 that were held by YRDFA and management staff were on  
8 there to give updates and share the data in-season. And  
9 management staff also responded to daily emails and  
10 phone calls from community members and the Federal  
11 emergency special actions were announced along with the  
12 Alaska Department of Fish and Game Advisory  
13 announcements, and these were all sent to the city and  
14 tribal government offices, posted online on the Office  
15 of Subsistence Management and the Facebook page for  
16 Yukon Subsistence, and they were also distributed by  
17 email to anyone who signed up for that notice. And so,  
18 if you did not receive the notice on Federal fishery  
19 announcements, please contact myself or the other U.S.  
20 Fish and Wildlife staff in that contact information is  
21 in the packet that's on the table over there.

22  
23 And then finally, some updates on  
24 research. The 2024 Ichthyophonus Research Project. This  
25 was the final season for that project, and that project  
26 looked and monitored the amount of ichthyophonus disease  
27 present within Yukon River chinook salmon, and the  
28 project was a collaboration between the Alaska  
29 Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
30 Service, multiple fish disease experts, affected  
31 communities, and local Yukon River fishers. In 2024,  
32 there was three sites where test fisheries were operated  
33 at the Pilot Station Sonar operated by the Alaska  
34 Department of Fish and Game, the Rapids near Tanana and  
35 Rampart that was contracted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
36 Service and Fort Yukon which was also contracted by the  
37 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And at Rapids, there was  
38 176 samples taken. I mean, sorry, at Pilot Station there  
39 was 176 samples taken, at rapids there was 180 samples  
40 taken, in Fort Yukon there was 144 samples taken, and  
41 each fish that was sampled was a -- contributing to a  
42 variety of research projects that are all centered on  
43 addressing Yukon chinook salmon health and their life  
44 history, and ultimately there is lethal -- these fish  
45 were required to be lethally sampled, and they were  
46 distributed to local elders, tribal governments, and  
47 individuals for subsistence use.

48  
49

1                   And so overall, the goal of that project  
2 is to establish a new long term ichthyophonous disease  
3 monitoring platform at Pilot Station in the lower river.  
4 Once we understand how the disease progresses in the  
5 fish, then there's no need for it to be a drainage wide  
6 effort. Although I do think it shows a good case study  
7 and a platform on how there can be more community-based  
8 monitoring in the future, when we have runs that support  
9 that type of effort and get information directly from  
10 subsistence fishermen. Because historically long-term  
11 monitoring of the disease over the two decades was done  
12 by Stan Zuray subsistence fishermen, and it was not done  
13 by any agency. So, there's very valuable information  
14 that can come from people looking at their own  
15 subsistence harvests and how tribal governments can  
16 actually get more involved or lead the research on Yukon  
17 River salmon.

18  
19                   And so, we're -- I'm just in the phase  
20 on getting some preliminary results for that, I did just  
21 receive the information back from last season. The labs  
22 were a little backed up, so it took a little longer for  
23 me to get results. But I hope to go back to Tanana and  
24 Rampart and Fort Yukon to discuss the preliminary  
25 results and try co-interpret those results together as  
26 the initial results are coming through to try get other  
27 things that could be impacting these fish in that  
28 picture. Because my second chapter of my research really  
29 is looking at the process and how the work was done, and  
30 I believe that ichthyophonous is only part of the problem  
31 and it's not the silver bullet we're looking for, but  
32 it is part of the problem. And there's other things that  
33 the project needs, or we as a group need to think about  
34 like other impacts like the marine environment or long-  
35 term impacts of large mesh gill nets or anything under  
36 the sun that we normally talk about. I believe  
37 ichthyophonous is part of the problem, but it's not the  
38 only problem, and I never want to frame it that way. So,  
39 really trying to get those other pieces to the puzzle,  
40 uplifted in the in the outcome of my research. And one  
41 way to do that, I believe, is go back to the communities,  
42 talk to the fishermen, talk to the tribal councils, and  
43 then eventually this is kind of an iterative process.  
44 So, my master's is only on the first two years of the  
45 project, and there is actually three years of the agency  
46 project. So, how maybe in the future, coming back and  
47 presenting to the RACs to get your guys's feedback before  
48 the final agency results are actually published for the  
49 full three years. So, that's kind of cool. And I think  
50

1 that's a good way to get the -- this RACs feedback and  
2 thoughts in that -- captured in that work.

3  
4 A couple more updates on U.S. Fish and  
5 Wildlife Service assessment. We are looking into  
6 feasibility for a Koyokuk sonar. Because there is  
7 concerns about the Gisasa and Henshaw weirs not  
8 operating in the future. And that could be in partnership  
9 with many people. It's still at the early stages, but  
10 that could help replace those weirs in that system and  
11 help some finer scale management actions, say for the  
12 Koyukuk River separate from the Yukon, and help  
13 understand where some of these summer chum data gaps  
14 were having, along with the TCC Middle River sonar, that  
15 will be a big one to help with these summer chum  
16 questions. And then also with that kind of going down  
17 that avenue with a Koyukuk sonar. Our office is going  
18 to decommission the Andy River weir -- the Andrafsky  
19 River weir down by Saint Mary's. The last five years,  
20 it's been really hard to operate with high water and  
21 environmental conditions, making it a challenging. And  
22 we don't always get a full count. But ADF&G does have  
23 aerial surveys on that system so, that system will still  
24 be monitored in some way. So, that's something to think  
25 about. And yeah, that's kind of a -- that's my overview  
26 of Yukon River management and research. Questions?

27  
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
29 Anybody have a question? Go ahead, Donald.

30  
31 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. Thank  
32 you for your presentation. My question is what kind of  
33 research are you doing on the egg sacs since you're  
34 killing these fish?

35  
36 MR. HERRON: Yeah, I know we collected  
37 eggs for Dr. Katie Howard and ADF&G. They're looking at  
38 thiamine levels within the egg, which is very important  
39 nutrients for their development.

40  
41 MS. SHOCKLEY: I have a comment. This is  
42 Dorothy.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.

45  
46 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi. Keith, baasee for the  
47 reminder of using our indigenous names for the chum, for  
48 the salmon. I really appreciate that. And when  
49 appropriate, I would like to make a motion to that --

1 we start using the indigenous names of our salmon. Thank  
2 you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you.

5

6 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
7 Member Bassich here. Of course I have a million  
8 questions, but I'll maybe hold them for some of our  
9 discussion later. Thank you for your presentation. It's  
10 really good. It's good to hear that there are some things  
11 recognized. I see some things in the handout here that  
12 I haven't seen in the past. With recognizing and  
13 acknowledging some of the things that we've talked about  
14 in the past, such as discrepancies between the sonar  
15 counts at Pilot and Eagle for lack of better terms,  
16 missing fish. That's been on my mind for two decades now  
17 and obviously not resolved. But I think it's rather  
18 interesting to point out that this is the first year  
19 where we've had severe chinook restrictions, and we  
20 didn't see a large difference between Pilot and Eagle  
21 like we have in years past due to mortality. Which leads  
22 me to the question, do you have any preliminary results  
23 on the ichthyophonous impacts, either in one year one,  
24 year two, or year three that you can share with us? Was  
25 this year a relatively high year or moderate year for  
26 positive for ichthyophonous? And going back year one and  
27 year two, I would assume you have that information by  
28 now.

29

30 MR. HERRON: Yeah, without getting too  
31 much in the weeds, I don't have results for this season,  
32 but I can tell you I was in Fort Yukon, and I've been  
33 out on the river with Yukon River fishers talking about  
34 this problem for the last couple of years. But this year  
35 it seemed like it was lower than it has been, say in  
36 2022 and 2023. 2022 was definitely probably the worst  
37 out of the three. And so, yeah.

38

39 MR. BASSICH: You're right. Sue. Another  
40 topic that's really been on my mind a lot in regards to  
41 chum salmon. You know, with the seven-year agreement,  
42 we're not going to be fishing for chinook salmon in the  
43 foreseeable future. Which puts a lot of pressure on chum  
44 salmon both summer chum and fall chum. And I know  
45 everybody's going to be working hard to ensure that we  
46 protect those stocks and make sure that we manage them  
47 in a long-term sustainable way. That's a big concern of  
48 mine when there's more pressure put on a stock, which  
49 there will be. I'm curious, is -- I'm kind of getting  
50 some feelings, like maybe the department is starting to

1 look at addressing the issue of only having a single  
2 escapement goal on the Yukon River and maybe looking  
3 into trying to develop management strategies on discrete  
4 stocks on the Yukon River. I'm wondering if you have any  
5 insights or if any other managers in the room would have  
6 any insights. I think there's a lot of concern on the  
7 Yukon River that it's a vast river with a lot of  
8 tributaries and having a single escapement goal,  
9 drainage wide is not meeting the needs for stocks that  
10 are declining in the upper river.

11  
12 So, that's a real high priority for many  
13 people up in our region. Our region is very -- represents  
14 the upper reaches of the Yukon River. And the stocks  
15 have been failing for many, many years. And we would  
16 love to see more work or more strategies put into trying  
17 to ascertain the health of the stocks in the Upper Yukon  
18 both summer and fall chum, as that's the area that we  
19 represent for our people here. So, I guess my question  
20 would be, do you have any information right now on the  
21 summer stocks -- summer chum stocks in the upper regions?  
22 I see that you have Andreafsky and -- Andreafsky and  
23 Anvik Rivers. But do you have anything for summer stocks  
24 for escapements farther upriver.

25  
26 MR. HERRON: I'd like to see if Deena or  
27 Christy have anything to say out of respect for the  
28 relationship between State and Federal agencies, and  
29 it's just really important that we all work together. I  
30 really believe that's the message I've been hearing.  
31 But, Deena?

32  
33 MS. JALLEN: Thanks, Keith. Thanks for  
34 the excellent presentation. I can try to phone a friend  
35 and see if Fred can get me the information on the Chena  
36 and Salcha really quickly. I know that we have had a lot  
37 of issues with those projects with high water, and also  
38 the timing of those projects doesn't necessarily -- they  
39 don't really stay in the water long enough to count all  
40 the chum. So, that is a concern. We have certainly seen  
41 low numbers of chum in the Chena and Salcha, I just  
42 don't have those numbers quite handy. But for summer  
43 chum, it is you know, they don't -- have we don't have  
44 goals for summer chum on the system, but for summer  
45 chum, there is definitely a lot more attention and  
46 thought being put on to where these fish are going,  
47 certainly after 2000 and 2001 when we had low runs of  
48 summer chum, it did seem like we had a shift away from  
49 productivity in the Anvik. And so, the question kind of  
50 is, is where is that productivity for summer chum

1 shifted? And those years we had escapements that were  
2 around or below 500,000. And then after that we got runs  
3 of, you know, 3 and 4 million. But, you know, maybe  
4 things have changed a bit different. So, getting a sonar  
5 up on the Koyukuk would, I think be really helpful to  
6 see if there are more fish going to the Gisasa and the  
7 Henshaw. And those systems haven't been assessed in a  
8 while. And also, it'd be great to hear more from  
9 fishermen like you know, I assume that with the summer  
10 chum, we got about 800,000 once you took into account  
11 late fish, those fish went somewhere. Harvest was not  
12 large. I would not expect harvest of summer chum to come  
13 anywhere near close to meeting ANS of around 80 or  
14 90,000. I would expect that subsistence harvest was  
15 much, much lower due to inefficiency of selective gear.  
16 So, that means that over 700 summer chum salmon escaped  
17 somewhere. We just don't necessarily have a great handle  
18 as to where they did go, but.

19  
20 MR. BASSICH: Thank you for that.  
21 Something else I wanted to briefly mention. You know,  
22 we have a lot of concerns with fall chum. The returns  
23 this year were the most dismal returns in history. Pretty  
24 much. A great deal of concern again for our region up  
25 here because of the dependence -- long term dependence  
26 on fall chum. And I guess, I don't know, this is really  
27 difficult for me because I based my whole life on living  
28 on the river and relying on that one resource. And so,  
29 at times it's a bit emotional, and I want to keep the  
30 emotion out. And I have a lot of respect for everybody  
31 that's involved in this process. But this is killing us.  
32 It's taking away our life. And I do want to applaud you  
33 this summer, though. I think the actions that you took  
34 to close the river down and put the windows in place  
35 with no gear in the river to protect fall chum was the  
36 right move. I think the restriction of four-inch mesh  
37 is the step that we need to take. Especially until we  
38 can get fall chum on a different trajectory. Right now,  
39 it's a downward trajectory. So, I applaud that. My only  
40 recommendation, if you're looking for recommendations  
41 to management, is that I believe, given the status of  
42 fall chum and the abundance of or the lack of abundance  
43 of them, it would be very prudent to start closing the  
44 summer chum fisheries when fall chum become present  
45 genetically in that mixed stock because fishing is  
46 happening. People are trying hard to catch fish and  
47 they're going to be caught incidentally. And with fall  
48 chum being at such catastrophically low numbers I think  
49 it's really important. It highlights the summer --  
50 highlights every single fish counts in the fall, chum.

1 So, that's just a recommendation for me personally. I  
2 don't know if our RAC wants to write a letter in regards  
3 to that, but I think that we talk a lot about managing  
4 conservatively, and I think that's the next step, given  
5 the status of fall chum right now. And I do recognize,  
6 and I think you will be seeing some proposals on four-  
7 inch mesh gear that hopefully will make four-inch mesh  
8 gear more allowable or more acceptable with not being  
9 placed in areas where there will not be interceptions.  
10 So, that's things we're working on that we'll obviously  
11 be bringing to you in the future. But recognizing that,  
12 I think all the people on the river have to recognize  
13 that there's going to have to be some sacrifices. Status  
14 quo will not be in the future what it is right now if  
15 we want to do meaningful conservation it's going to be  
16 hard on the people. But I think I have said this since  
17 I ever got involved in the fisheries. The very first  
18 thing I ever learned about fishermen is they're  
19 incredibly resourceful. They are incredibly capable of  
20 being restricted, having whether it's through time or  
21 gear, but they are incredibly efficient at maximizing  
22 whatever opportunity they have. And so, I have faith in  
23 that. It's hard to be restricted. It's hard to change  
24 your ways. But at this point in time, we have to think  
25 about extirpation of species and what that means to  
26 cultures in the future. And that, in my mind, outweighs  
27 any inconvenience or change in the way we've done things  
28 in the past.

29  
30 So, I just wanted to -- sorry to go on  
31 a little bit of a rant there, Mr. Co-Chair, but I think  
32 it's really appropriate given the status of these  
33 stocks. I've been involved in this in a long time, and  
34 I will say I feel encouraged in some ways. I'm seeing  
35 some openness for some change. And I agree with you very  
36 much. We all have to work together on this, and I really  
37 want to see our community-based monitoring programs  
38 develop because you have a tremendous resource out in  
39 the villages with people, and they're smart people and  
40 they're capable people, and they want to be engaged, and  
41 we have to keep them engaged in the fisheries. So, I  
42 think it's going to be really important for ADF&G and  
43 U.S. Fish and Wildlife, BLM, whomever is out there doing  
44 field work to partner with communities where they can  
45 to develop these programs. That's all. Thank you, Mr.  
46 Co-Chair, for being patient with me.

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48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That's all, my turn.

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50 MR. BASSICHT: That's all for now.



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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody else have a comment? Go ahead, Donald. Thank you so much, Andy.

MR. WOODRUFF: Good afternoon. This is Don Woodruff. There's been a lot of hope put on the chum salmon that they were going to be remarkably resourceful and come back strong. And this is the lowest year in Eagle for chum salmon ever. And I didn't wet a net at all this year. And so, I had no incidental catch, no catch whatsoever. And I only know of two people that used the whitefish net. And this is pretty, pretty pathetic situation that we're in because the fish are not replacing themselves. It's a steady decline. And the way I see it is you guys are going to be out of a job pretty quick. So, that's my comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Donald. Any more comments?

MS. POPE: Hi. Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Amanda Pope. I just had a question, I wanted to see if you had any feedback from the folks in Fort Yukon about counting the numbers in the Porcupine?

MR. HERRON: Well, fishing with some of the fishermen there. They've said they've seen more and more fish headed up that direction, like up the Porcupine way. But for actual counts on the Porcupine, do you know, Deena?

MS. JALLEN: No.

MR. HERRON: I don't have that number. I looked up -- this packet is outdated, but I looked up some of the numbers. I didn't get the Porcupine one.

MS. GLEASON: Hi, everyone. This is Christy Gleason Yukon River Fall Season Manager with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. And so, I manage the fall chum and the coho with Keith and his team. So, I'm looking at the Yukon Daily update today, which everyone can sign up for by email. And the Porcupine River count for fall chum salmon was about 8,000 -- little over 8,000 and they ended for the season. So, we'll work with them on getting some postseason data, that is lower than what they have seen in recent years. Their median count is about 25,000. And then the Fishing Branch they had 5,000, and again, we have the Fishing Branch River Weir we have a Canadian treaty objective of 22,000 to 49,000.

1 Yeah so, and I did want to comment really quickly. I  
2 know you guys and Eagle are at the end of the road and  
3 we did see the lowest fall chum salmon count at Eagle  
4 this year. And I did a quick tally, it's 8% of our total  
5 fall chum run, normally it's 25%.

6  
7 And so, what we've seen the last number  
8 of years, especially since the Kluane incident, I've  
9 talked to Andy Bassich about this. In 2016 there was  
10 that glacier shift, and it moved the water source for  
11 Kluane Lake and Kluane River to Gulf of Alaska. And that  
12 affected some fall chum spawning grounds. And so, those  
13 fish started to come back as four-year-olds in 2020,  
14 which was the start of our decline. And so, since 2020,  
15 what we've noticed, even with the multi-species salmon  
16 decline, is the Canadian component of the fall chum  
17 salmon is coming back weaker. It's not making up 25% of  
18 our run. We've seen it anywhere from 10 to 18%. And this  
19 year it's 8% if you divide 16,000 into 200,000. And I  
20 don't think that trend is going to go away. I think it's  
21 going to be something where the Yukon River panel is  
22 going to have some discussions on that, because if we're  
23 not meeting our treaty objectives for Canadian chum  
24 salmon on the main stem or at Fishing Branch, that means  
25 that the U.S. waters have to be closed for fall season.  
26 We have worked with fishermen at YRDFA for preseason  
27 this year to think ahead about what some subsistence  
28 options might be, where in future years we may have to  
29 close the main stem to gillnet fishing. But we could  
30 open up U.S. tributaries if we're meeting escapement  
31 goals and we use genetics data -- we have genetics data  
32 for the last 20 years for fall chum salmon. And so, we  
33 do manage by stocks. It's really neat with fall chum  
34 salmon, we can look at the historical timing of stocks  
35 when they enter the Yukon River. We can look at their  
36 strength compared to the last 20 years. And last year,  
37 for example, I think I heard Eva mention that we did  
38 meet the T'ee Drinjik River goal and we opened up that  
39 river to subsistence fishing 24/7. This year, we didn't  
40 meet the goal, so we couldn't open up that river. But  
41 just some things to -- for your RAC to think about going  
42 into the future is we welcome any management strategy  
43 ideas, any modifications. We want to hear from you guys,  
44 because fishing is going to look different going into  
45 the future.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. I have  
48 something to say. I commend the management strategy of  
49 only opening the four-inch mesh on the weekend. That's  
50 huge. And we're in a seven-year agreement for chinook,

1 and I don't understand why it's not the same. We have  
2 to work hard for outcome in seven years so, we need to  
3 take action. We need to make big steps. Can't this wait?  
4 Have four-inch mesh in seven days a week during the king  
5 salmon season because of the problem that we have with  
6 them, the agreement that we're in. I would like to see  
7 the king season go to the weekends also with the four-  
8 inch mesh and be closed five days a week because we need  
9 to get the 70,000. I'd like to see it closed all the  
10 time, but people need to eat so, I'd say weekends open  
11 is some opportunity for whitefish. But myself, when I  
12 ride the river, and the people are -- these nets are not  
13 up a slew or anything like that. They're -- on the Yukon  
14 you have no other choice but to put it in some kind of  
15 eddy or just wash it to shore. So, I haven't -- I put  
16 in a four-inch mesh this year for two days and caught  
17 some whitefish for my mom, and she's happy. But what I  
18 want to say about four-inch mesh is I have run one in  
19 the past for a whole summer, and I've done my own  
20 research on how good the fish stay in there and they  
21 fall out. And so, you got big female king salmon falling  
22 out dead, and this rotting in the bottom of an eddy and  
23 doing no good for the seven-year agreement. This is  
24 happening because I know for a fact I put my net, my  
25 four-inch mesh in and I check it two hours there'll be  
26 eight fish in there. I check it for an eight hours.  
27 There's 1 or 2 fish in there. And that tells me that  
28 when those fish die in there and another fish hits, the  
29 other ones fall out. And that's the truth. I've done it  
30 over and over and over again, and I've even let it go  
31 all, all night. And there would be one fish in there,  
32 if I'm lucky and sometimes none. So, I think there's a  
33 big issue with that four-inch mesh on our ability to  
34 achieve our goals on this seven-year agreement for the  
35 chinook salmon. So, I just wanted to put that out there  
36 that maybe with a little bit more research needs to go  
37 into how those four-inch mesh are used or adjust the  
38 timing windows for the fishing with them. So, do the  
39 best we can for that seven-year agreement. Thank you.  
40 That's all I had to say.

41  
42 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Charlie,  
43 I think it's really always interesting to hear different  
44 fishermen's perspectives. One of the things I've always  
45 recognized is that it's a big river. Gear types and  
46 conditions are very vastly different between the upper  
47 river and the lower river, fishing techniques,  
48 topography of the water, water flows, phenotypic changes  
49 in the fish, there's a lot of variables there. It's  
50 always really interesting to hear different people's

1 observations. And I'll just take a quick, brief moment  
2 to share mine. I've been fishing with four-inch gear for  
3 a number of years, doing the same thing, testing what  
4 works and what I'm finding in my region works quite well  
5 is to fish the -- what I call back sloughs) or dead-end  
6 sloughs. And those areas, the only salmon I've ever seen  
7 up in those areas are swimming dead fish. They're  
8 stressed out, and they leave the main trail, and they'll  
9 end up back there and just die, every now and then you  
10 can catch something like that. But 99% of the time it's  
11 sheefish and pike and whitefish and whatever. So, that  
12 may be an option to allow for subsistence harvest in the  
13 future if we can develop some language for regulations  
14 on that. And I'm sure we'll be working on that. One  
15 thing I wanted to bring up, I really like that you  
16 brought up the Kluane Lake system area and its impacts  
17 to fall chum production on the upper Yukon, and I think  
18 it's really going to be important to the -- let me  
19 backtrack a little bit. The sad thing about that is that  
20 that happened as the chum salmon were declining. And so,  
21 we have this kind of double-edged sword hitting us right  
22 now where the salmon were declining. We weren't really  
23 sure why they were declining. And then you get a physical  
24 event like that that you know impacts major spawning  
25 areas. It's hard to tease out, which is the cause. So,  
26 I think we're going to have to be a little bit patient  
27 for a few years to see if chum salmon come back in the  
28 Upper Yukon if they stabilize a little bit. But I think  
29 you're absolutely right. We're going to have to readjust  
30 escapement goals to reflect what the productivity  
31 potential is in the Upper Yukon in the future, if we're  
32 going to be able to allow for any kind of a subsistence  
33 harvest in the future, that's going to be really tricky  
34 to do. And I think there's not going to be any real hard  
35 science that's going to show us, one way or another,  
36 what to do. We're going to have to kind of feel our way  
37 through that, I think. But that's work that I think  
38 needs to be done. We need to develop some good  
39 understanding, some good projects to try and figure what  
40 that potential is.

41  
42 And then the other thing that hasn't  
43 been mentioned here that I've been concerned about for  
44 a long time is climate change changing the substrate and  
45 spawning streams in the Upper Yukon in Canada and all  
46 the streams. But chum salmon need a very, very specific  
47 habitat to successfully spawn in and they need  
48 upwelling. And when climate change is happening, frozen  
49 grounds are thawing, substrates are changing these  
50 streams and it may very well be also that some of the

1 streams that were productive streams have changed to the  
2 point to where chum salmon are no longer viable spawners  
3 there. So, a lot of science needs to be done. A lot of  
4 studying needs to be done, but at the same time, we need  
5 to take actions on the things that we can control right  
6 now. And I think that's the message that I'm trying to  
7 get out. I'm pretty sure this RAC is trying to get that  
8 out to managers. We need meaningful actions where we can  
9 take them for conservation. That's all. Thank you, Mr.  
10 Chair.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for  
13 listening. Great report. I think we have a question from  
14 Dorothy Shockley online. Dorothy, are you there?

15  
16 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. Can you hear me?

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes. And before you  
19 start at last, I'd love to ask you to please mute  
20 yourself when you're done. Thank you.

21  
22 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes, yes, I will. Thank  
23 you. Well, I appreciate the reports and -- but, you  
24 know, I mean, you know, this is all, you know, part of,  
25 like Keith said, our DNA, the salmon, the gaah. So, I  
26 agree, you know, there are things happening in regards  
27 to climate change but the ultimate decline, I believe  
28 is 60 plus years of mismanagement by the State,  
29 primarily. Somebody said -- and I think it's time that  
30 they take that responsibility. I mean, they're, you  
31 know, constantly telling us, you know, we have to do  
32 some -- make some meaningful actions or, you know, we  
33 need to be doing this and that. But, you know, they have  
34 not taken that responsibility. And I think it's time  
35 that they do. And, you know, I agree, you know, if the  
36 salmon continue to decline, they should be out of a job.  
37 So, thank you so much. Appreciate it. And I'm putting  
38 me on mute.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Dorothy.  
41 Anybody else got anything to say?

42  
43 MR. HERRON: I just like to say quyana  
44 for listening. And us at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
45 Service -- sorry if I didn't mention it, but we have  
46 been acknowledging that mismanagement using, like, the  
47 large mesh gill nets or the large commercial harvest.  
48 We have been saying that more not to be defensive or  
49 anything. I'm not trying to be that way. I'm just trying  
50 to highlight if I miss that. We have been trying our

1 best to acknowledge that in spaces. But I appreciate  
2 that. And that's really part of the story that we need  
3 to talk about for -- so we can make decisions in the  
4 future that's informed by our historical mistakes.

5  
6 MS. BURK: Yes, this is Eva, for the  
7 record. Thank you for your presentation. It's always  
8 good to hear from you. And I'm really encouraged by a  
9 lot of the things that you say. And about, you know,  
10 working together. I do think that's really important.  
11 And I also like you know, with the ichthyophonous, like,  
12 acknowledging like, this is just part of it and trying  
13 to look for those other things. And we'd like to offer  
14 -- I'd like to offer my own personal support in some of  
15 that, because myself too am looking back at what happened  
16 to the Yukon. As far back as there's a record of fishing  
17 on the Yukon, which I found to be about 1920, was the  
18 first like, Federal somewhere around there. So, there's  
19 a lot of homework. And -- but Andy's right. Like, we can  
20 all go back in history but what's been done now it's  
21 like, it's kind of hard to get out of. But what are the  
22 steps that we can take to kind of adjust to where we're  
23 at now. And I -- while I understand that people need to  
24 fish, I honestly sometimes think with the state of fall  
25 chum and the state of chinook, and the fact that the  
26 escapement goal for summer chum is there's so much  
27 uncertainty in what's happening. The summer chum  
28 decreased this year from last year, like by a good 10%.  
29 By a good 10%. I'm for a moratorium, all the way. And I  
30 and I really apologize for folks who are listening  
31 online. For folks who, you know, I have the luxury of  
32 living in Fairbanks half the year. It's hard -- it's  
33 easy for me to go to the grocery store. And I know that  
34 it's not for my other people along the river. And so,  
35 it's hard to say that out loud, but I really 100% believe  
36 that it is what we need to do for at least 2 or 3 years.  
37 Because we need to see these numbers improve and we need  
38 to get a better handle on it. And we keep taking these  
39 little bits and we don't really know the impact of them.  
40 And some things that might help us get us there. And  
41 this is like, not in our wheelhouse here at the RAC,  
42 but, you know, you're with the State, you're with U.S.  
43 Fish and Wildlife Service, and there's a lot of working  
44 together. But we really need to work together more, as  
45 in the Fish Commission working with you all. I know on  
46 the Kuskokwim part of their strategy is to actually look  
47 at the health of the runs collectively, the tribe, the  
48 Fish commissioners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. They  
49 look at that data together and then they make harvest  
50 decisions together, and I think we need to get there.

1 We have a lot of steps to do. We have a lot of steps  
2 along the Yukon River to get people lined up and down  
3 the river as to why -- and like Charlie said about the  
4 four inch, I think there's other ways like, I know that  
5 in some of these tributaries, you can go back up in  
6 there and you can get some really nice white fish with  
7 rod and reel and we need to be doing that because we  
8 need to be taking out those sheefish and pike and  
9 predators where we can. And then, you know, it's really  
10 -- in July, you can get a nice fat whitefish out of some  
11 of the tributaries in the Yukon, you know, end of July,  
12 beginning of August. So, there are other opportunities.  
13 And I think what we see along the river, too, is while  
14 you guys are working, I know to, like, find those places  
15 where you can feed people. People are going to be working  
16 on feeding themselves, too. It's their family that they  
17 have to worry about. So, I appreciate the effort, but  
18 also acknowledge, like there is some effort locally too  
19 to do that. And I really -- that's why I worry about the  
20 four-inch and trying to open up, like when you said you  
21 opened up coho, I was like, shocked. I'm like, what even  
22 made you think coho was healthy enough to open a fishery?  
23 Like, I was shocked when you said that I did not catch  
24 that in the management action this summer because  
25 honestly, I just didn't fish and so I wasn't really  
26 paying attention. I chose not to fish. And in our region,  
27 like Charlie said, there are people that are fishing the  
28 four-inch, it's appears like they are targeting kings.  
29 And what happens is like they're barely hooked on there.  
30 And we know from the studies that these fish are stressed  
31 out, they're hungry, they're smaller than they're  
32 supposed to be. They've been -- they gotta have had a  
33 long heck of a way to travel to get to the mouth of  
34 Yukon, much less get up the Yukon. So, they're not as  
35 strong and so they hit that net, they're barely hooked  
36 on and they are falling out. And in fact, like when you  
37 go to check it, you'll drop one. And if you're not  
38 prepared to try to catch it because there is going to  
39 be incidental of king, if you're putting a four inch on  
40 the main stem of the Yukon, that's just the way it is.

41  
42 So, I think I think you guys do need to  
43 go out there and run your own test fisheries with the  
44 four-inch. I think it can be a non-lethal fishery if  
45 you're checking it often. But what you're going to find  
46 out is you need to change -- like Charlie said, change  
47 your intervals of checking it because it will -- you'll  
48 see it, you know. I'm trying to phrase this carefully,  
49 but the other thing is that I think we need to look at  
50 is like, we really do need to look at our different

1 escapement goals. We can't manage the Yukon anymore with  
2 one escapement goal. It's not effective. It's not  
3 effective on the Copper River, and it's not effective  
4 on the Yukon River. It's been well established today in  
5 my mind. And so, also looking at those escapement goals,  
6 the drainage wide escapement goal, how are you changing  
7 that escapement goal to reflect the health of the fish  
8 today? If they're smaller and their eggs are not as  
9 healthy, you need more fish to escape. So, if you don't  
10 have an escapement goal that does that, then it feels  
11 like we're, you know, we're just offering these little  
12 opportunities. And I, I heard somebody testify, I  
13 believe they were from the lower Yukon. They were, it  
14 was Francis, pretty sure. And he said they're not really  
15 trying to work on saving the salmon, they're just trying  
16 to appease us with this small fishing opportunity. And  
17 what he meant in my -- and what I thought in the  
18 conversations that we had afterwards is like, the things  
19 that we need help with are the conservation corridors,  
20 like the things out in the ocean where there's other  
21 take of our salmon. Especially the chum salmon. There's  
22 an incredible amount of take and intercept fishery of  
23 our chum salmon. And the way that those things are being  
24 managed, it -- like we need Fish and Wildlife Service,  
25 we need Fish And Game to help us in those because salmon  
26 are managed by the feds in the States with the help of  
27 tribes, right? Co-management. And we don't have that in  
28 Alaska. And so, what happens is, we go in one room and  
29 they say, oh, that's their problem. You go in the other  
30 room and they say that's their problem. And that --  
31 Keith, you said that we need to work together. And I'm  
32 like, we really need to find those ways. And I think I  
33 have some really strong ideas about how Fish And Wildlife  
34 could pay attention more to what the tribes are  
35 advocating for, and then find the data and the rationale  
36 to say we support that. So, that -- I feel like I'm  
37 going on and on and on. So, I feel like Charlie and  
38 Brooke might be kicking me off the mic. So, I just wanted  
39 to thank you because I feel like there's a lot of  
40 positive in there, but also like point out, like how I,  
41 I'm really, really concerned about the fall ans chinook  
42 chum.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, we have one  
45 online first Donald and then you. Dorothy.

46  
47  
48 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Like I said,  
49 this is just, you know, tough. But, you know, the one  
50 comment I wanted to make is, you know, when we talk



1 about, you know, things like the people on the Yukon and  
2 the Kuskokwim are asking again to be -- to make  
3 meaningful actions. And we've been doing so. But, you  
4 know, Alaska is the birth and the death of our salmon.  
5 This is where they spawn. This is where they die. But  
6 there's a whole life cycle that is not taking  
7 responsibility for our salmon. And that has to be part  
8 of this whole cycle of caring, of so-called management.  
9 And we need to hit those people as well, and they need  
10 to hit those people as well. So, thank you.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Dorothy.  
13 Go ahead, Donald.

14  
15 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. I'd  
16 like to thank Eva for her heartfelt testimony. And I  
17 echo what she had to say. And I want to repeat what  
18 Charlie said at a YR DFA conference. He said every egg  
19 counts. Every egg counts. So, if we're putting four-inch  
20 mesh nets in the main stem and killing chinook salmon,  
21 that's a big problem, and we need to stop it. Thank you.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Linda.

24  
25 MS. EVANS: I think I like the idea about  
26 the moratorium on the Yukon. But the people, the  
27 commercial fishermen, you know, that are out there in  
28 the ocean fishing, they have to be part of solving this  
29 problem too, because they're catching a lot of bycatch.  
30 And what's happening to that Bycatch? You know, are they  
31 giving it to us or are they just throwing it overboard  
32 or you know, how can we make use of that bycatch? Thank  
33 you.

34  
35 MS. BURK: Thank you. Actually, Linda, I  
36 sit on the Alaska By -- this is Eva -- I sit on the  
37 Alaska Bycatch Advisory Council for the state of Alaska,  
38 and we had a bycatch Utilization Committee to do just  
39 that, to look into how could we actually use any of the  
40 bycatch? And it's not just salmon that's bycatch, it's  
41 also halibut and crab. So, when it came to the salmon,  
42 though it was very complicated, and it took additional  
43 processing time. And so, a lot of processors were  
44 complaining about the additional expense and time that  
45 they needed to process and send out that salmon. And so,  
46 it became an issue for that. And then also some of the  
47 donations, I think we heard from Chief Brian today that  
48 sometimes when you take donations, you're not getting  
49 the good stuff because the bycatch isn't required,  
50 because it's not a product that can be sold. So, it's

1 not kept at, you know, cold and frozen when it's supposed  
2 to be. So, some quality issues. And then as far as some  
3 of the other bycatch like the chum, there was a big hit  
4 a chum, and I believe 500,000 chum were discarded. That's  
5 what I was told in the meeting. So, that -- there's  
6 regulatory discards and then some of the bycatches  
7 saved. It used to be used as like a home pack for some  
8 of these people. But it's kind of a -- it was a lot more  
9 complicated issue in that utilization committee has good  
10 reports and information. If you need any of us to pull  
11 it up. Thanks.

12  
13 MS. EVANS: Yes. I'd like to have some  
14 of that information.

15  
16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: I'm going to  
17 fill in for Charlie. This is Eva, Vice Chair. Is there  
18 any more questions or comments for Keith and Christy?

19  
20 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just have one short  
21 one. I am thankful we have you here. It seems all those  
22 hats you're wearing; all this information is extremely  
23 important. Thank you.

24  
25 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Any other?  
26 Okay. Smile Keith, it's okay. We're going to get through  
27 this.

28  
29 MR. HERRON: Thank you, quyana. And I  
30 really appreciate all your guys' thoughts and all the  
31 knowledge you bring. And I agree, you need -- we need  
32 to push on those barriers and jurisdictions and salmon  
33 know no borders. So, to protect them, we need to think  
34 about every life -- part of the life. So, I agree and  
35 hear you all.

36  
37 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Thank you so  
38 much. Good work. Since I'm next, I'm going to call a  
39 quick break. I could use about ten minutes before we get  
40 started, if that's okay with folks.

41  
42 UNIDENTIFIED: Yep.

43  
44 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Thanks. So,  
45 come back to order at 2:35, please.

46  
47 (Pause)

48  
49 MS. MCDAVID: And folks who might be  
50 having a hard time following along. Up next we're going

1 to do the report from Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish  
2 Commission. Then we'll have the BBAYK and Fairbanks  
3 Advisory Committee followed by YRDFA and then TCC Tribal  
4 Resources Stewardship.

5  
6 (Off record)

7  
8 (On record)

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, all right,  
11 people, we're gonna get started again. And the Yukon  
12 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission is going to be next. Go  
13 ahead, Eva.

14  
15 MS. BURK: Oh, that's me. Yeah, I'm Eva  
16 Dawn Burk. I work as a science and policy consultant for  
17 the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. I started  
18 in January and have had to hit the ground running,  
19 really. Some organizational updates. We've been working  
20 on starting our own 501-C3 and that paperwork is -- I  
21 think is almost finished. We have job descriptions out  
22 for an executive director and admin right now. So, we're  
23 reviewing applicants and going to be doing interviews  
24 soon. Really looking forward to that. It's really  
25 challenging because we are, you know, trying to build  
26 our organization but we're also, you know, responding  
27 and adapting to the salmon crisis. We're constantly on  
28 call to get to meetings and, you know, listen to what's  
29 going on and provide testimony and input on things that  
30 affect the salmon in the Yukon. The -- another exciting  
31 thing that we're working on right now is a Gravel-to-  
32 Gravel Memorandum of Understanding with various agencies  
33 and the Department of Interior, National Park Service,  
34 BLM Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
35 Service. I actually leave tonight to go to that meeting  
36 tomorrow and Friday, where we're going to work on the  
37 details of our MOU and get it formally signed. There are  
38 tribal organizations from Kawerak, Association of  
39 Village Council Presidents, Tanana Chiefs Conference,  
40 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Yukon  
41 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Nome Eskimo  
42 Community in the Village of Eagle, and the opportunity  
43 for other tribes to sign on to this MOU will be  
44 presented. It would be great to have all of the -- each  
45 one of the Yukon River tribes signed on to this MOU, as  
46 well as tribes and those other regions in the Norton  
47 Sound and Kuskokwim regions.

48  
49 As part of this Gravel-to-Gravel, we're  
50 really excited to start planning out a community-based

1 monitoring. I think we've heard in this space and in  
2 many other spaces, the need for community-based  
3 monitoring, and that we're also trying to at the same  
4 time develop a database so we would be able to take that  
5 input, use it and share it with other users. And then  
6 some of the things that we're working on are our advocacy  
7 and we've been really working on a conservation  
8 corridor. We do a lot of that work in partnership with  
9 the same tribal organizations I just mentioned in the  
10 Gravel-to-Gravel. The AYK is in a crisis and so, working  
11 together really makes a lot of sense, and it's been  
12 really effective. I've got these are some of our Fish  
13 commissioners up on the slide. We were at the North  
14 Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in April. We  
15 worked really hard, and we actually changed alternatives  
16 that were in a preliminary draft environmental impact  
17 statement. We didn't get exactly what we asked for, but  
18 we definitely did get some changes and additions that I  
19 think were very important. Okay. Next slide please. So,  
20 if that's a little hard to see up there for other folks.  
21 We have somebody online. Would you mind muting please?  
22 We're getting some feedback.

23

24 (Pause)

25

26 So, I'll just I'll just go ahead while  
27 Brooke is trying to figure it out, you got to push it  
28 forward, I think.

29

30 Yeah, we got it. So, we've really been  
31 thinking about our salmon strategy as like two part, one  
32 being reactive and another being proactive. We get  
33 together, we work with our partners and allies. And, you  
34 know, we respond when regulatory changes arise such as  
35 the seven-year agreement. We actually looked at the  
36 seven-year agreement and we looked at the pros and cons  
37 of it. So, there are good things and there are things  
38 that are, you know, glaring omissions in our mind, like  
39 it is not okay to 100% shut down the Yukon River and no  
40 other places that intersect or have bycatch of Yukon  
41 River fish are being restricted. That is not a strategy  
42 for rebuilding, and it's something that we are working  
43 on. And through that we attend a lot of different  
44 meetings. And I'm really grateful because some of the  
45 stuff like at YRDFA Yukon River Drainage Fisheries  
46 Association, some of the proceedings and meetings and  
47 presentations that Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and  
48 Wildlife Service and the breakout groups we had there  
49 were really informative to how people were trying to  
50 plan and be creative about how to find fishing

1 opportunities for this year. So, I did appreciate being  
2 there and then also, you know, we're looking at in these  
3 different meetings that we go to, there's a lot of  
4 information presented about salmon. And so, we're kind  
5 of able to assess and in that way, what is the current  
6 health of salmon? Like the size and the egg health. And  
7 there's things in the regulatory like, we're looking for  
8 those places where we can push levers and take action,  
9 what is under our control, what -- not to say under  
10 control, what are things that we can influence? What are  
11 actions that we can take? And so, we see one of the  
12 things that worked in the Cook Inlet, and this was a  
13 direct actually [sic] idea from sitting through a North  
14 Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting and looking  
15 at the Cook Inlet Federal fishery that was just starting  
16 to take place. And one of the things that was presented  
17 to us in the public comments was that Board of Fish had  
18 been working on a conservation corridor in the Cook Inlet  
19 since 2014, and that seemed to have stabilized the  
20 populations in that area, although I haven't been as up  
21 to date, and I think there's still some issues. But that  
22 concept of identifying a conservation corridor was like,  
23 let's -- because we've seen where we're at with salmon  
24 when we had these historic lows, there were actions taken  
25 in the area and June Fishery as well as in the Bering  
26 Sea/Aleutian Island Pollock Fishery, which is managed  
27 by North Pacific. There was chum and chinook savings  
28 areas in the Pollock Fishery, and there was a June area  
29 and management plan. And those two things together in  
30 our minds make up the conservation corridor. And so,  
31 that's what we've been working on and trying to push in  
32 these different arenas. And then at the same time, we're  
33 trying to think about building our own response  
34 community-based monitoring on the ground in our  
35 communities, you know, we're the people that are closest  
36 to the resource and can really start to, you know, when  
37 we're -- when these questions of like, where are the  
38 summer chum going? We should be the first people on the  
39 ground. Are our tribes in that area to point managers  
40 to where that's happening and do some research and  
41 documentation around it. So, those are some of the things  
42 that we're working on and thinking about a real gravel-  
43 to-gravel approach. And right now with the MOU we have  
44 a gravel approach but until we have these actions and  
45 buy in from both North Pacific and Board of Fish for  
46 this conservation corridor, we need that to have the  
47 gravel-to-gravel approach. And I think there's other  
48 things that we're learning about different intercept  
49 fisheries too, in this process that will like inform and  
50 refine this corridor that we're trying to identify. And

1 then of course, like growing our own -- building our own  
2 indigenous science having like a succession plan for our  
3 indigenous knowledge, getting our young people back out  
4 there and then also collecting data in that process to  
5 inform, you know, some of the declines that we're seeing  
6 and management potential management actions.

7  
8 And then I'm probably going to focus -  
9 - I wanted to talk about the conservation corridor. I  
10 kind of have a lot of slides. So, I need to move through  
11 them quickly. I just want to highlight some things out  
12 of these slides. This is something I've prepared for a  
13 more in-depth training, and I'm happy to share these  
14 slides with anyone in the room. Next slide. Brooke,  
15 please. So, this this is an area -- these are some of  
16 the ocean currents that you might see out in the Bering  
17 Sea, coming up from the Gulf of Alaska. And if you look  
18 at that green one, that's actually the Alaska Coastal  
19 Current. I learned about this when I used to be an  
20 engineer, and I thought maybe the fish are in that  
21 current, and the data kind of shows that that might be  
22 true. They actually fish along some of those contours.  
23 So, like I said, these actions that we're asking for,  
24 that make up the conservation corridor, these are --  
25 we're basically asking for things that have happened in  
26 the past. Things -- regulatory actions that were taken  
27 in the past when we were in times of low salmon  
28 abundance. And so, it's not really clear on the map. I  
29 have it in a few slides down, but the chinook and chum  
30 salmon savings areas would be just about north of Unimak  
31 Pass. And then -- there's a laser?

32  
33 So, anyways, it's about in here, Unimak  
34 pass. There's that island right there. So, as you can  
35 see that's the Area M south of Unimak. And then north,  
36 you're going to have the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery. Oh,  
37 Brooke is multitasking. Reading the news, facilitating  
38 my.....

39  
40 MS. MCDAVID: This is my computer, not  
41 personal stuff. I don't know why it does that.

42  
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Latest poll info.

44  
45 MS. MCDAVID: I'll tell you what, I blame  
46 Microsoft Edge or whatever that is.

47  
48 MS. BURK: This is why Charlie hunts. But  
49 so, those -- one of the savings areas was established  
50 by emergency rule in 1994. So, what is interesting to

1 me about that date is that was well before the complete  
2 crash on the Yukon River. So, somebody was having some  
3 foresight at that time. What -- that's not the case  
4 right now. We're -- actually the tribes are bringing  
5 that action to play and say, hey, what about the chum?  
6 Before they used to manage chum and chinook together in  
7 the Bering Sea, the bycatch of it in the Bering Sea.  
8 They did that together and then through a series of  
9 regulations, which I'll show next they essentially done  
10 away with that. But now I've come to the conclusion that  
11 what they had in place worked. And that's probably where  
12 we need to start at. And then similarly, we've been at  
13 the February 2023 Board of Fish meeting, a lot of folks  
14 from the AYK region traveled down to Anchorage and  
15 advocated for reduced fishing time in the south Unimak  
16 and Shumagin Islands. And from my understanding, this  
17 basic math is like we asked for, I think a 40% or  
18 actually, sorry we asked for a 60% reduction in fishing  
19 time, and I think we walked away with about a 12%  
20 reduction in fishing time, but it had some caps. And  
21 then it was really interesting when I was at the North  
22 Pacific Council and I brought up this conservation  
23 corridor and I was telling folks in the room, hey, we're  
24 trying to do things in Area M, so why wouldn't you do  
25 things North to Area M and the commissioner did come up  
26 to me and say this, you're right, we do need to work on  
27 this. So, I found that promising. And I have heard NOAA  
28 state that they are interested in using their data and  
29 people to identify that conservation corridor, migration  
30 corridor, and that this is something that they've  
31 actually done on the East Coast. So, I think we can get  
32 there.

33  
34 Did it? Okay. So, I'm not going to go  
35 through this entire slide in detail. Like I said, I'm  
36 happy to share this. I had to go through over 500 pages  
37 of technical documents to pull out the relevant  
38 information. So, just some quick highlights is that in  
39 1995, they established the chinook savings area. They  
40 put a cap on that area. And then if they reach that cap,  
41 that area is shut down until April 15th. And that's  
42 because during that A-Season in that early time is when  
43 they get most of the chinook and the -- and then they  
44 realized, hey, let's not forget about chum. And then  
45 that was established by emergency rule right before. And  
46 that closed an area to all trawling August 1st through  
47 31st and established a cap of 42,000. And so, what's  
48 interesting now is we've got this motion back on the  
49 table but the cap that the North Pacific is analyzing  
50 right now for a similar area, maybe a little bit smaller,

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1 is actually 50,000. And so, that's these questions we  
2 have to ask ourselves. Why would they pick 50,000 and  
3 we're in a worse situation than we were before, right?  
4 So, just things we need to ask. And then in 2000, they  
5 actually be in response to the low salmon numbers they  
6 even reduced the cap in that saving area further down  
7 to 29,000 chinook. And so, they were managing things a  
8 little bit differently, but they were -- what I liked  
9 about this is they were actually like tapping down with  
10 the chinook and I -- we don't see a time area closure  
11 on the table for chinook at this time. And I do think  
12 it's something that we need to look into. So, things  
13 really changed in 2007. This is when they came up with  
14 their rolling hot spot. And that's what essentially  
15 opened these savings areas. And at that time, they had  
16 the most incredible amounts of bycatch, which I'm just  
17 going to go to the next slide.

18  
19 So, you can see at that time that they  
20 put the rolling hotspot in, they had incredible amounts  
21 of bycatch from 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009. And so,  
22 that's why going back in history is really important to  
23 analyze what actions were taken, were they effective at  
24 that time? And what we're seeing is this rolling hotspot  
25 that they developed has not been effective for chum. And  
26 in the last bit of that graph, you can see there's been  
27 a large amount of chum bycatch. A lot of that is Asian  
28 hatchery, to be honest. But if you think about the  
29 situation that we're in, this is the same thing they  
30 told us in Area M, you're seeing a lot of Asian hatchery.  
31 Well, that should be expected because our stocks are  
32 depressed and they're not taking up that space in the  
33 ocean that they normally would be. So, of course that  
34 was what we would see. So, it's still important to have  
35 a cap, even though you have more Asian hatchery because  
36 you just can't be sure. But there is ways to look at  
37 this information in more depth. Before I move on to  
38 like, the map of where this is all happening. I just  
39 kind of wanted to show some abundance graphs of the fall  
40 and summer chum, which I really need to update and have  
41 somebody do this for me. But I am using stuff by Fish  
42 and Game so, I know it's good data. And then before I  
43 move on though, I just want to highlight there are things  
44 that we're working for at North Pacific right now, and  
45 I'm going to share some dates here in a second. But if  
46 you look at that average line right there, the bycatch  
47 -- average bycatch from 91 to 2022 was 190,000 chum  
48 salmon. And I think in one of these, I think that's 2023  
49 right there where they actually had about 111,698 chum.  
50 So, it is possible for industry to have a chum bycatch



1 that's under 200,000. That's our point. That's what  
2 we're saying. We're saying your by-catch cap needs to  
3 be lower than your average. And then if you look on the  
4 numbers, what they're proposing, we have bycatch caps  
5 all the way up to 550,000 which is essentially status  
6 quo. You would need to be under 300,000 to even be  
7 effective. So, if you come to these meetings and you  
8 read all these technical documents, you can get into  
9 that more. But so, I'm trying to give you the highlights.  
10 It's a lot of information. Next slide please.

11  
12 And then this is just like looking at -  
13 - so, one of the things that has been changed now is  
14 this abundance index, which is saying there is a chum  
15 cap, and right now we have it in place for chinook,  
16 right? There's a chinook cap of X amount in times of low  
17 abundance. And I don't -- I know we're talking about  
18 chum, but I do. I just wanted to highlight that three-  
19 river index like that says the chinook cap right now is  
20 based on three rivers, Unalakleet, Yukon, and Kuskokwim  
21 and it's saying that the low abundance for those three  
22 rivers would be a run sizes combined of less than 250,000  
23 chinook. And I just want you to wrap your heads around  
24 that, like the chinook runs on the Yukon or Kuskokwim  
25 alone is 250,000. So, how is a low abundance for an area  
26 that's like almost half of Alaska only 250,000 chinook.  
27 So, just wanted to flag that. When we look at this fall  
28 chum run sizes, it's -- the reason I don't have my own  
29 graph is because you can't just go on to Fish and Games  
30 website and get the 1974 data. You have to build from  
31 1995 on, and I'll show you why that's problematic in a  
32 second. But you can see that in the in the times of the  
33 low periods the late 90s, early 2000, that's when the  
34 savings areas were in place. And it to me it's effective  
35 because look at the chum runs after those restrictions,  
36 there tends to be a rebound. And so, we're now -- our  
37 abundance is even worse than it was in those years. But  
38 I don't feel like we're addressing it as good as we were  
39 back then. Next slide. And it's even more pronounced for  
40 summer chum. So, again those restrictions were in place  
41 and we saw a rebound. Dan Schindler had a nice  
42 presentation showing that in fact, from 2004 to 2006,  
43 was when a lot of rivers in Alaska were seeing a rebound  
44 in their salmon. So, that -- just wanted to point that  
45 out. And then again, we're in a worse situation now than  
46 we were in the late 90s, early 2000. And these  
47 restrictions are not in place. The tribes are fighting  
48 for these restrictions. Next slide please.

49  
50

1                   And so, I just wanted to show -- I just  
2 got a couple more slides here. I just wanted to show the  
3 area, like that's north of Unimak where we're seeing the  
4 highest amount of chum bycatch, and I don't have the  
5 genetics in there but about 25% of that bycatch is going  
6 to be Western Alaska chum system, like every single year  
7 you see it consistently in this area, 25% coastal western  
8 Alaska. So, that's why we want to see in the  
9 alternatives, the tribes were able to lower the cap in  
10 April. They were only looking at caps that were above  
11 200,000. And with NMFS, National Marine Fisheries  
12 Service letter and our advocacy efforts, we were able  
13 to at least include an -- a lower cap of 100,000. And  
14 we wanted them. We said this situation is evolving, it's  
15 not looking good, and we need you to be prepared to step  
16 down. You need to analyze this and so, that was  
17 understood. But why they can continue to do this is that  
18 to the extent practicable. And so, if stepping down  
19 bycatch incurs a lot of costs, it doesn't -- it's not  
20 that practical and out there, but I think we can argue  
21 more about that. So, those are the things that we want  
22 to see is we want to see a time area closure and we want  
23 to see an overall cap. And if it's up to the tribes, it  
24 would be lower than 200,000. We wouldn't even look at  
25 anything because that would not be lower than the  
26 average. I think, next slide.

27  
28                   And then I wanted to just flag this for  
29 folks in the room and thinking about -- because one of  
30 the alternatives on the table is doing an abundance-  
31 based cap. And that's what we have in place for chinook.  
32 But I'm not fully convinced that that's the right answer.  
33 Does it make sense to have a Western Alaska abundance  
34 based on only three rivers? Two of those rivers are  
35 managed by Fish and Game and one is managed -- co-managed  
36 by tribes. Those are different management systems. The  
37 number right now is so incredibly low, the only thing  
38 holding it up is the Kuskokwim run. So, that's what we  
39 need to ask ourselves. Should we go down this three-  
40 river abundance index with chum and not even fully  
41 analyzing if it worked with Chinook? I think there's a  
42 lot of questions around that. And then if you look at -  
43 - I wanted to point out this thing about shifting  
44 baseline syndrome and what people's ideas of abundance  
45 are and highlight the fact, look at what the Yukon River  
46 alone used to produce and to think that we now have a  
47 cap of 250,000 for Kuskokwim, Yukon and Unalakleet, an  
48 area that's half the size of Alaska, that's very  
49 concerning to me. And this is the type of stuff that  
50 when we're asking for support from the agencies, you

1 know, I am an engineer, I have a technical mind, but  
2 sometimes I need a little help with the fisheries data.  
3 I need a little -- it would be nice to be backed by  
4 fisheries biologists in some of our analyses of this,  
5 because everybody has their job, they stay in their lane,  
6 and we need to get outside of our lanes to address this  
7 issue. Next slide please.

8  
9           This one is hard to see. I just threw  
10 this in there for some context about where we're at in  
11 this. I probably could have made a much cleaner one, but  
12 we are right now in the preliminary draft EIS. So, we  
13 took the initial review of that in April, and we changed  
14 the date on this graphic it says October 2024 is when  
15 we're going to take the second initial review and  
16 identify a preferred alternative, that is actually now  
17 February of 2025. We are not pleased with the  
18 alternatives that exist to date. So, I think our goal  
19 at the Fish Commission is probably to change the  
20 alternatives again and then push so, the draft EIS would  
21 not be published in the next meeting, right. It would  
22 have to go out another meeting. So, we're trying to  
23 change that schedule, which there's -- which is  
24 problematic because one, we want to get these actions  
25 in place. And every single action in this body takes a  
26 couple of years. But two, we don't want them to pick an  
27 alternative that is not actually reducing the amount of  
28 coastal Western Alaska chum bycatch. And so, just so you  
29 know, at this last North Pacific meeting in October,  
30 there's a whole Chum Salmon engagement plan. And part  
31 of that plan is to interact with the RACs. And it's  
32 interesting because they didn't know that we had already  
33 asked for a chum cap. So, there's like a huge disconnect.  
34 We were all -- seven of our RACs, of all the RACs at the  
35 All RAC meeting in March, wrote a letter asking for a  
36 chum cap reduction. So, and we also asked for chinook  
37 cap reduction too, between 0 and 10,000, which to me I  
38 read as the three-river index isn't working, please do  
39 something about it. But I don't think the Council read  
40 it that way. So, I think what we want to see is, in  
41 February we would change the alternatives, go back for  
42 analysis, and then in April of 2025 is when we would  
43 pick the preliminary preferred alternative, that makes  
44 sense to us as tribes. And that's what we need to  
45 advocate for from a tribal perspective. And it was  
46 concerning to me that the Council wanted to come to the  
47 RAC and show you the alternative that they chose, without  
48 you having this background information from the tribes  
49 in the Yukon River. So, that's why we wanted to present  
50 today.

1

2

3 And then I just have dates and I'm done.  
4 So, a lot of stuff I tried to cover. So, thank you for  
5 bearing with me. And then these are all important dates  
6 that pertain to either Gravel-to-Gravel and relationship  
7 building, working together or dates that pertain to  
8 building the conservation corridor and all the places  
9 where we have to go to start working on that. So, at the  
10 Board of Fish, the ACR13 is working to shorten the net  
11 length in Area M. That is part of the conservation  
12 corridor to us. Comments for that are due on the 15th.  
13 The work session will take place on the 29th and 30th.  
14 Next week we have the AFN Subsistence Workshop Tribal  
15 Unity meeting. There's going to be a ceremonial Gravel-  
16 to-Gravel signing, and that's the work that we're doing  
17 these next two days. We're going to share that with  
18 everybody next Wednesday and then in December online at  
19 the North Pacific website, the chum bycatch preliminary  
20 draft EIS will be released. And that's when we'll get  
21 this second initial review. And then we have comments  
22 due on that EIS. It's supposed to be 200 pages now and  
23 not 500, but there's probably 300 pages of appendix,  
24 which I do want to point you to, because that's where  
25 the tribal voice is included. So yeah, we have comments  
26 for that are going to be due in January, probably like  
27 the last two weeks of January. And then we have our big  
28 meeting in Anchorage in February. And then thinking  
29 about ahead, say the ACR for WIRAC doesn't go through,  
30 or we want to put in more proposals to look at fishing  
31 time and Area M again, that all needs to happen next  
32 April. And I'm really glad that Gale Vick is here,  
33 because I think she can add some more context to some  
34 of those things for us. So, with that I'm happy to take  
35 any questions. I think there's a contact slide for me.  
36 Okay.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you so much for your  
presentation, Eva. I have maybe two questions just from  
a RAC Coordinator perspective. You know, the Council has  
written multiple comment letters to the North Pacific  
Fishery Management Council. And then to hear you say  
that they didn't know about that letter. When we always  
submit those, you know, via the comment portal and  
everything. Do you know how those get to Council member?  
I mean, our -- how do people typically -- where do those  
letters go once we submit them online? And is there a  
better method of reaching the Council with RAC letters?  
Thank you.

1 MS. BURK: Do you -- you submit them  
2 online as a comment or?

3  
4 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, like so for the chum  
5 bycatch we would -- or any like whatever bycatch agenda  
6 items would be on there submitting the letters as  
7 comments on there.

8  
9 MS. BURK: If you do that, they will get  
10 them in the meeting. But the letters that we just wrote  
11 didn't end up attached, that I could see. So, I actually  
12 attached them. But I could tell you they did not read  
13 through all of them, because they didn't seem to  
14 understand. And then when I brought it up on the record  
15 about these are the asks, yeah.

16  
17 MS. MCDAVID: And just one more thing for  
18 the Council's knowledge. Eva had alerted me that North  
19 Pacific Fishery Management Council had a chum bycatch  
20 outreach preliminary plan on their agenda at their  
21 recent meeting, which we were unaware of -- and OSM was  
22 unaware of. And in that plan, they said they wanted to  
23 do outreach with the RACs. After, like in the next winter  
24 meeting cycle for the RACs, because North Pacific will  
25 be meeting in early February and the Council's start  
26 meeting in later February. We had -- we -- Eva let us  
27 know about it just three days before comments were due.  
28 We put together a letter to let them know, we are  
29 definitely open to outreach, and we would like to figure  
30 out ways to have more clear lines of communication and  
31 that we would like to be notified in the future when  
32 there are agenda items that directly affect the RACs,  
33 like we shouldn't be hearing -- the comment was we would  
34 like to not be hearing about it from our Council members,  
35 but instead from NOAA or North Pacific. Thank you.

36  
37 MS. BURK: That's great. And I just like  
38 -- thank you so much. All of the dates in October to  
39 December are supposed to say 2024. This is what I get  
40 for putting dates together at lunchtime. So, I will edit  
41 that before I send it out. So, anybody who took a picture  
42 or wrote that down, I apologize, sincerely. Nobody's  
43 perfect. Are there any other questions? What's the  
44 format for questions like, just Council member  
45 questions?

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47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions for  
48 Eva? Council members?

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50 MR. WOODRUFF: I have one comment.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

MR. WOODRUFF: I've been able to listen to and participate in several of Subsistence Board meetings. And I appreciate that they mentioned Gravel-to-gravel. But some years ago, we initiated a discussion about this -- Yukon River Fisheries needs to be managed as an ecosystem-based fisheries because the Federal Subsistence Board said we don't have jurisdiction in the ocean and we were appalled that it's not a complete ecosystem managed. And still, I think that it's somewhat glossed over. It's not -- I don't think that it's taken as seriously as it should be. And I don't know how to emphasize that more, but I'm putting it on the record. Thank you.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you for that, Don. You know, I think there's a lot of people working on gravel-to-gravel. We're making progress incrementally. It's -- I just want to share my thoughts. Gravel-to-gravel has never been attempted anywhere in the world, to my knowledge, from my looking around, trying to find some kind of a template to work out. Nobody's done it, but we're trying to do it here because we really care about this resource, and we realize the conditions in which this resource endures throughout its life. It's the only way to make it work. And so, it is going to be somewhat slow. It is going to be kind of feeling our way through it as we go. But I think that's why we've been making the unified statement that we have to work together, because that will be the core for success. That will be the foundation to get agencies working together, to get tribes working together, to get users on the river working together. That's what it's going to take. And that takes a little bit of time but I think people are getting there. That's my feeling. I feel positive about it. And it's time to stop throwing rocks at each other. It's time to stop putting shields up between agencies and users. And I think we're getting there. There's good dialogue, there's a lot of really good people. There's a lot of people with a lot of very detailed expertise in their areas that are coming together to work on this, and that's what it's going to take. And it's got to happen because the fisheries are collapsing throughout the entire State, with the exception of sockeye. There are no fisheries that are doing well in the State. That's a truth we have to accept. Thank you.

1 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We  
2 do have two folks online who want to comment, but before  
3 we turn it over to them, I would like to respond to  
4 Don's comment because you all have raised this need for  
5 ecosystem-based management of salmon over and over  
6 again. You've written countless letters about this, and  
7 I just wanted to let you know and we'll talk more about  
8 this later that those letters -- now that we have moved  
9 into the Office of the secretary, those letters are being  
10 reviewed, they're being discussed. And in the future,  
11 you should expect to have some sort of response, either  
12 in writing or via oral reports or communications. So,  
13 yeah, just you bet. And, Mr. Chair.....

14  
15 MR. BASSICH: I would just like I know  
16 this has been brought up before, many years ago, but I  
17 think it's really important for some of the top people  
18 in these agencies to attend a meeting. The only way  
19 we're going to make any of this work is people have to  
20 start building relationships, and they have to start  
21 understanding directly from the people how important  
22 this is. And that's hard to do when you're remote, when  
23 you're on Zoom, or when you're 4,000 or 5,000 miles  
24 away. And so, I'd just like to formally -- maybe we need  
25 to write a letter, but we need to formally ask some of  
26 these top agency people to either attend the meeting or  
27 maybe not this particular meeting but come to Alaska.  
28 Spend some time with the people on the ground and learn  
29 and understand that and build that relationship.

30  
31 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, just real quick.  
32 I did want you to know that the new supervisor of the  
33 OSM program that's in Washington, D.C. Mr. Eric Werwa,  
34 he was hoping to attend this meeting in person. He has  
35 been online for the majority of the meeting, listening  
36 in. So, it's very positive to see their interest.

37  
38 MR. WERWA: Yeah. This is Eric. I had  
39 hoped I could be there for this meeting. But  
40 unfortunately, that didn't work out. But your comment  
41 is noted, and I agree. And we will be trying to make  
42 efforts to do that.

43  
44 MR BASSICH: I'll put you up when you  
45 want to come here. Come visit us out in Eagle. I'll put  
46 you up and show you all around.

47  
48 MR. WERWA: Thanks.

1 MS. BURK: I also wanted to -- this is  
2 Eva, again. I also wanted to really thank the U.S. Fish  
3 and Wildlife Service for sending a representative to  
4 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. That seat  
5 was not being represented. And through our advocacy and  
6 insurrection, Charlie and I were able to make an impact  
7 and get some folks to see that yes, your job is advocacy.  
8 Like, that's what I have in one of my other videos is  
9 like, if we don't speak up, who will? Like if we have  
10 the knowledge and we're not using it and or you know  
11 what -- give it to somebody who will speak up like this  
12 lady, you know, like we need that type of collaboration,  
13 informal and formal. And one of the things that we wrote  
14 in the Gravel-to-Gravel MOU was to work across  
15 jurisdictional boundaries to restore the health of, and  
16 relationships between salmom, people and place, and that  
17 is the -- that was what we built the rest of the MOU  
18 around is, like that is our priority because that's the  
19 only way it's going to happen. And so, I think there's  
20 a number of ideas. I know that some of the North Pacific  
21 Council members are likely going to be at Tanana Chiefs  
22 Conference annual convention, bi-annual convention that  
23 happens in November now, as well as March. So, that's  
24 where we're trying to build relationships and, and get  
25 these folks to see things from our perspective and to  
26 see beyond their data. Because that's a very limited  
27 view. So, yeah, I look forward to some of that work. And  
28 also just really wanted to get on the record that I  
29 think Boyd is the person that needs to continue to  
30 represent the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because of  
31 his work in gravel-to-gravel the relationships he has,  
32 and he asks questions and I think he uses his microphone,  
33 and I appreciate that. So, I just wanted to add that.  
34 Thank you.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Online we have  
37 a couple people in, George Yaska will first. You got the  
38 floor, George.

39  
40 MR. YASKA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I  
41 wanted to respond to a part of the comment, and I sure  
42 appreciate Eva's participation on the advisory committee  
43 of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and  
44 specifically to collaboration or co-stewardship with the  
45 National Marine Fisheries Service. They turned down --  
46 the National Marine Fisheries Service turned down a  
47 request from the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Council  
48 to do just that. A salmon ecosystem working group and -  
49 - but I wonder that whether it would be more likely for  
50 them to accept a Western Arctic salmon ecosystem working



1 group co-stewardship model and that is from the  
2 Kuskokwim the Yukon and from the Norton Sound areas. So,  
3 there's a lot of parties, but I think that they could  
4 do that. I think they were a part of the reason they did  
5 not want to work with the Kuskokwim, because it was just  
6 a small part of the Western Arctic, the Western chum --  
7 Western Alaska salmon question. So, if it were a more  
8 complete group, I think that they would be more amenable  
9 to that.

10  
11 And then secondly, on indigenous  
12 knowledge and in the environmental impact statement.  
13 Indigenous knowledge as a question in the NEPA framework  
14 that some organizations, some agencies, some departments  
15 are incorporating indigenous knowledge within the NEPA  
16 framework, within each question, rather than as an  
17 appendix at the end. And so, that's something that as a  
18 cooperator, I believe the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal  
19 Commission might be advocating for particularly, but I'm  
20 not sure, I'm not privy to those comments. And then  
21 secondly, the lastly rather. Indigenous knowledge was --  
22 -- is mandated by the President. Federal agencies and he  
23 means departments the Department of Defense, the  
24 Department of Energy, the Department of Commerce, the  
25 Department of the interior must include indigenous  
26 knowledge in their decision-making process. So, we at  
27 the Department of Interior has taken it and developed  
28 extensive step down guidance. And the beginning of the  
29 statement says, where's appropriate. For our agencies,  
30 that's practically all the time. The Department of  
31 Commerce's guidance, particularly for NOAA says where  
32 applicable or if applicable. So, that may or may not fit  
33 the President's Executive Order. It's hard to say. So,  
34 it might be useful to insist that it is practicable in  
35 this particular case and the chum salmon bycatch EIS.  
36 And then that each element of indigenous knowledge must  
37 be worked into each question within the NEPA framework.  
38 I just wanted to put that out there, Eva for your  
39 consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
42 George, for your testimony -- comment. We got one  
43 question for you or comment. Thank you.

44  
45 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I really  
46 appreciate hearing -- this is member Bassich. One thing  
47 that I've, you know, the question of indigenous  
48 knowledge has been talked about for 25 or 30 years, and  
49 I'm really happy to see it being incorporated into  
50 decision making. But one of the failings or what --

1 maybe one of the things we need to work on -- is defining  
2 what weight it carries in the discussion or the analysis.  
3 That's where it seems to be falling short. And so, I  
4 don't know, I think a lot of people have thought about  
5 how we consider the weight carried by that, but I just  
6 wanted to bring that up because I think that's -- it's  
7 in the process. But I don't think it's being utilized  
8 to the extent or maybe given the weight that it needs  
9 to be effective, I guess is the best way I can put it.  
10 So, I just wanted you to be aware of that. That's  
11 something that I've witnessed for 25 or 30 years. It is  
12 changing, but it's still a need to be worked on item.  
13 Thank you.

14  
15 MR. YASKA: Mr. Chair. Through the Chair,  
16 Mr. Bassich. I'm Co-Chairing our performance measures  
17 subcommittee. And so, one of the elements -- well, there  
18 are a number of questions that agencies must answer when  
19 related to the use and inclusion of indigenous  
20 knowledge. But the very last one in the event that you  
21 have not included the offered indigenous knowledge and  
22 this is the big question, and there is an extensive --  
23 don't remember the precise language. And every agency  
24 will consider differently, but they have to explain  
25 themselves and have an extensive narrative, because that  
26 language goes all the way up to the Secretary, and the  
27 Secretary has to report every year to the White House  
28 on the use and inclusion of indigenous knowledge. So,  
29 it's a -- I'm glad that you say that, Andy, that --  
30 because we've taken it very seriously in the event that  
31 they do not include indigenous knowledge in their final  
32 decision, why not? And they have to explain themselves  
33 very well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34  
35 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Thank you. It's  
36 Mrs. Chair now. Thank you very much, George. I appreciate  
37 your insight on this and look forward to discussing more  
38 of this with you. We also have Holly was wanting to  
39 comment.

40  
41 MS. CARROLL: Thanks very much, Mrs.  
42 Chair. Can you hear me, okay? This is Holly Carroll with  
43 Fish and Wildlife Service, the federal in-season  
44 manager.

45  
46 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Yes,  
47 absolutely.

48  
49 MS. CARROLL: So, I don't want to derail  
50 you guys too much, but I a couple things. I just really

1 wanted to comment on your presentation at -- from the  
2 Fish Commission. First of all, I can't express enough  
3 the amount of intelligence and information gathering and  
4 studying and collaborating that Eva has had to do to be  
5 able to make that data easy to understand, like you did  
6 in your presentation there. Even myself, you know, I  
7 have been essentially pushing for us at the Fish and  
8 Wildlife Service to have more capacity on the Council.  
9 So, yes, we have seats there, but do we have the  
10 qualifications to kind of wade through those four-hour  
11 technical presentations and stuff like that? And for me,  
12 I feel that I don't. But I've been trying to help in  
13 whatever ways that I can. And I've been pushing for us  
14 to have dedicated staff to help. And I will say that  
15 internally, I'm seeing that a pretty good team of folks  
16 are being put together to assist Boyd right now. And so,  
17 thanks for that feedback, Eva. And also, you know, kind  
18 of just to say that we hear you and like you say, that  
19 advocacy on your part to use our microphone, even though  
20 we have a non-voting seat is definitely being heard at  
21 multiple levels from the lower levels, like myself and  
22 then up in leadership, for sure. I'm seeing it. Sara  
23 Boario is definitely hearing you. She brought me to the  
24 Council one meeting back, and I was able to make some  
25 impromptu comments and ask some questions. So, keep up  
26 that great advocacy and we will try to also continue to  
27 do our best with our limited capacity and to try to grow  
28 our capacity. But I wanted to move backwards a little  
29 bit to some of the discussion, and I wish I could have  
30 been there in person. I will show up on Thursday for  
31 part of the meeting if I can in person, but some really  
32 great comments were made by you, Eva. Also, Charlie we're  
33 also getting comments from other RAC Chairs, Jack  
34 Reakoff wrote in saying he supports your guys' comments  
35 about further restrictions being necessary for our four-  
36 inch white fish gill nets, possibly throughout the  
37 season for chinook and fall chum, and I 100% hear these  
38 comments. Our Federal team is really concerned about you  
39 know, balancing, providing some opportunity to get some  
40 fish -- have some traditional use of fish in the summer.  
41 Keep some food going into homes while we have these  
42 severe closures. But we're trying to balance that with  
43 the fact that, you know, any bycatch of these fall chum  
44 and chinook is just its -- we can't have it. The runs  
45 are just far too small, you know 14,000 fall chum escaped  
46 into Canada. That's really unacceptable. We certainly  
47 wouldn't want to have large amounts of interception in  
48 four-inch occurring on top of that. If we could get  
49 those escapement numbers higher. And so, that is kind  
50 of why in the fall season, we did enact those -- fishing

1 on the schedule the weekend only four-inch fishing. And  
2 I will be honest we are hearing a lot of that feedback,  
3 either from a full moratorium, just no gets -- no nets  
4 in the water. Let's make it easier to keep four-inch on  
5 a schedule throughout the whole season. We're hearing a  
6 lot of that. We got that in the public hearing that I  
7 had to hold in July because I was taking temporary  
8 special actions. That feedback was loud and clear. One  
9 of the things that will become a problem, though, as we  
10 as managers are trying to balance kind of the needs of  
11 everyone on the river, is that we are not hearing  
12 feedback about these measures from the lower river. Or  
13 we are hearing that they want to continue to have more  
14 liberal whitefish opportunity, that that's kind of the  
15 only thing keeping them going, and they don't want the  
16 four-inch restricted. We do occasionally hear that from  
17 upriver people too. But so one of the things I wanted  
18 to suggest to any of you members that I know you all  
19 wear five hats so, those of you that are AC members, so  
20 the State Advisory Council if you can take these topics  
21 up in your ACs, especially if you're in the lower middle  
22 River, some of the areas we're not hearing from on this  
23 topic that would be good, because it's really important  
24 for the State managers to hear from all parts of the  
25 river support or otherwise. And then the other thing  
26 would be, it'd be really great if the Fish Commission  
27 who has so many tribes represented, could take this up  
28 at a meeting and have a formal recommendation on it. A  
29 resolution or something voted on, you know, that would  
30 give me a lot of weight when I go into negotiate the  
31 management strategy with my own team, with the State  
32 team, I mean, this really is hard if we're going to take  
33 food away from people in order to protect these salmon.  
34 Kind of the more support, public support we have for  
35 that, the better. And so, as we go into this winter  
36 meeting season, you know, anyone who's on an AC, the  
37 Fish Commission, YRDLA pre-season planning. I'm sure  
38 it'll come up at the panel. This is the exact kind of  
39 topic we need to take up again. And make sure that all  
40 of us managers are hearing as much diverse feedback from  
41 all parts of the river as we can, so that we're making  
42 really informed management strategies when we go into  
43 the spring. So, that's just my feedback on that topic  
44 and my request for some help on that. And yeah, I guess  
45 I would stand by for questions but recognize that I've  
46 already taken up a lot of your time. Thank you.

47  
48 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Thank you,  
49 Holly, I appreciate that and I hear you loud and clear.  
50 We'll definitely get these issues addressed around the

1 four-inch and see what people at our AC meetings are  
2 saying. And get this -- we're planning to have a Fish  
3 Commission meeting in January so, we'll get this on the  
4 table there. And thanks again for the work and supporting  
5 Boyd. And I'm kind of figuring out the North Pacific so,  
6 I'm happy to help you guys where I can maybe we'll invite  
7 you guys to our training. So, look forward to working  
8 on that. Thank you. I'm going to hand it back to the Mr.  
9 Chair.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Holly.

12

13 MS. SHOCKELY: Hi Mr. Chair, I have a  
14 comment.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

17

18 MS. SHOCKELY: Hi. I just wanted to make  
19 a comment in regards to the indigenous knowledge and the  
20 effectiveness I suppose. And I was going to mention this  
21 earlier, but you know, in our way, of course, you know,  
22 everything has spirit and respect to the salmon spirit.  
23 It is important that we acknowledge the indigenous  
24 knowledge. And, you know, I was told some time ago that  
25 when we pray or talk to the salmon, you know, they don't  
26 understand English. So, we need to use our language. And  
27 so, that to me is very important. And regardless of, you  
28 know, what it may or may not show on paper or, you know,  
29 the effectiveness. I think it's really important that  
30 we use it and apply it like, you know, was mentioned  
31 especially the, you know, the indigenous names for the  
32 salmon. I think that's really important. So, thank you.

33

34 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. Yeah. This is  
35 member Bassich. One thing Holly I wanted to bring up.  
36 And I know you're aware of this, but I want to get this  
37 on the record. I think it's really important to  
38 understand that many of the organizations that have been  
39 involved for a long time on dealing with the salmon  
40 issues are consensus based organizations. The Yukon  
41 River panel is consensus based. I believe the Inter-  
42 Tribal Fish Commission is consensus based. And one of  
43 the problems that you have with that is that if there  
44 are -- there is not consensus, there's not much action  
45 or moving forward that generally takes place. And that's  
46 led to -- in my opinion, these are my opinions -- that  
47 has led to the failing on the part of the Yukon River  
48 panel to address changing size of fish fecundity issues.  
49 All the things that we've been talking about for 20  
50 years and I do -- I say this very respectfully, because

1 each region on the river is very different culturally  
2 and also in the way they practice their subsistence  
3 activities. And so, we're not going to share the same  
4 views, the same values. Well, we all have, I think, the  
5 same values, but we're not going to share the same  
6 methods of use or what we're used to doing. We do things  
7 differently in different parts of the river depending  
8 on species, timing of the year. It's very complicated.  
9 But the main point I wanted to bring out is that one of  
10 the difficult things for you as a manager moving forward  
11 is making sure that the decisions made are for the  
12 protection of fish for the long-term future. We're not  
13 ask -- we're not asking for anything other than to create  
14 a new management system that is sustainable long term.  
15 And if we can accomplish that, everybody else, everybody  
16 in the system will adapt to that system. So, I just ask  
17 you to please always keep that in mind, because you will  
18 never hear consensus on probably any issue when it's  
19 such a diverse group of people over such a large  
20 geographic range with completely different methods and  
21 means of how they utilize that resource. I think that's  
22 really important for people to keep in mind when they're  
23 working on really tough issues like this. And that's why  
24 I feel like it needs to be said. It's something -- it's  
25 one of those kind of dark things in the back of the room  
26 that nobody really wants to admit. But that is the  
27 reality of why, in my opinion, we are in the situation  
28 we're in right now and that has to change and that is a  
29 difficult position for you. But I think all people need  
30 to understand that aspect of this problem-solving,  
31 problem solving that we have to do right now. That's  
32 all. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Donald.

35

36 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Charlie, this  
37 is Don Woodruff. I want to respond to Andy's question  
38 about Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Sue invited me  
39 to go and represent the RAC at the Federal Subsistence  
40 Board meeting some years ago, and my opening comment  
41 was, what value do you put on Traditional Ecological  
42 Knowledge? And I heard dead silence for a while, and I  
43 went uh oh, you know, in my mind. And George Pappas came  
44 over to the table and he said they put 50% on TEK and  
45 50% on science. So, on our closing comments I sort of  
46 stepped out of my role as a representative of the RAC  
47 and gave my personal opinion and said that I think it's  
48 undervalued. I think it should be more than traditional  
49 science, and I did get beat up a little bit for stepping  
50

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1 out of my role and giving my personal opinion, but that's  
2 the way it goes.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions  
5 or comments?

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It  
8 was noted during the break that previously the three  
9 Yukon RACs have met together to deal with salmon issues,  
10 and that's something we would have to ask permission to  
11 be able to do again in the future. But I just wanted to  
12 make sure that was on the record because it was discussed  
13 here. Thanks.

14

15 MS. BURK: Thank you for that  
16 information, Brooke. And I actually think that would be  
17 something that we should propose to the North Pacific  
18 on this chum salmon engagement. In an ideal world, the  
19 -- we'll have more time after February. In the ideal  
20 world, like, we're not going to be locked into an  
21 alternative in February. And then that would give us  
22 time to work together to address that, hopefully. And  
23 maybe there's a way to schedule that sooner than later.  
24 Just thinking about that timing. Thanks.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, thank you very  
27 much. We're going to move forward. And next on the agenda  
28 here is Gale.

29

30 MS. VICK: All right. Thank you, Mr.  
31 Chair, for this opportunity and everybody here at the  
32 RAC. I really appreciate it. And before I begin, I want  
33 to say thank you especially to Eva for that outstanding  
34 presentation. We will be talking about it more. That  
35 nice compilation. Did a great job. Thank you. For the  
36 record, my name is Gale Vick, and I -- give you a short  
37 background just for context. I came to Alaska when I was  
38 22 in 1968. So, that tells you I'm 77 now. I've been  
39 here in Alaska for 55 years, and there's a few of us  
40 here who have worked together for a very long time of a  
41 certain age. And when we're talking about traditional  
42 knowledge, etc., I learned a lot from village elders  
43 over the years that have long gone and many names that  
44 you would recognize. And I was very fortunate to have  
45 that experience. But now, as you learn from us of a  
46 certain age, keep in mind not only are we trying to pass  
47 along knowledge that we've gained, but also the things  
48 that we've screwed up. So, you can learn from the  
49 mistakes that we made over the years and there's plenty  
50 of them, and I am more than willing to admit to my share.

1 So, I think there's another component to traditional  
2 knowledge and that is listening to folks who've been in  
3 this system for a very, very long time and learning from  
4 them. So, I'm very happy to see, as I'm getting older,  
5 that there are a lot of young people who are taking up  
6 the banner and doing a great job at it. So, this is  
7 really good. I'm going to give two reports today. One  
8 is on the Bristol Bay AYK Group Coalition, and another  
9 one is for the Fairbanks AC, as I chaired the fisheries  
10 subcommittee for that AC. So, I'm going to do the AYK  
11 first. And I want to preface this by saying that the  
12 Bristol Bay AYK Coalition was originally organized as a  
13 result of the February 2023 Area M meeting at the Board  
14 of Fish, where we had over 100 people there and we were  
15 all concerned about the intercept fisheries in Area M,  
16 we're still concerned about them. And so, the outgrowth  
17 of this coalition has really expanded. We have people  
18 from all the way from the Arctic down to Bristol Bay,  
19 down to Nelson Lagoon and Chignik in that area, and it's  
20 growing all the time. It is a confidential list, but if  
21 anybody wants to be invited, we have weekly meetings on  
22 Thursday morning at 9 a.m., and I'll go over some of the  
23 items that we talk about. But it's a very lively group  
24 and it is not an agency. That's the only caveat that we  
25 have that we're not agency. But occasionally we bring  
26 agency people in to clarify things and to give us some  
27 guidance and stuff. So, if you are interested you can  
28 contact me or Karen Gillis. The Bering Sea Fishermen's  
29 Association is the sponsor for this weekly meeting, and  
30 I want to thank her for all the work that she's done in  
31 helping get this organized. So, with that, I'll get  
32 started with my report. I also want to say that listening  
33 to Don and Andy about the ecosystems, I've been involved  
34 in fisheries since, oh, forever, but I've had my own  
35 business since 1991, and I had 30 plus years with the  
36 North Pacific Council, where I was on the North Pacific  
37 Research Board. I was chair of the AP. I've done a lot  
38 of things in fisheries over the years, not just salmon,  
39 but crab, halibut, all species of fish all over the  
40 State. So, I have a little bit of perspective on some  
41 of these things in terms of the ecosystem's  
42 considerations. And 35 years, 40 years ago at Council,  
43 we had professors that -- and scientists who wanted to  
44 have an ecosystems consideration for all of our  
45 fisheries management. It's taken that long because, you  
46 know, those folks, especially one person at U.W. who was  
47 a champion, but he was knocking his head against the  
48 stone wall for years to try to get consideration at  
49 Council. And we have to remember that both the Council  
50 and the Board of Fish, what's the primary motivator?



1 Commercial fishing. It's money. So, all of these things  
2 are seen in the context of how it affects the individual  
3 sectors in the commercial fishery. If you go to Council,  
4 as Eva knows now, they're battling it out among the  
5 sectors. It's not like, you know, you've got one group  
6 of commercial guys that are all together on this deal.  
7 They're battling it out and they're battling it out with  
8 big lawyers and lots of money. So, when we come in as  
9 we have been in the last, I don't know, 15-20 years to  
10 get consideration for subsistence, which doesn't carry  
11 a lot of weight in the non-money world. But to get  
12 consideration it took a huge coalition of people. And  
13 that's why we've got this coalition right now, because  
14 it takes all of us to come together and say, look, first  
15 of all, you've got such a problem with salmon right now.  
16 If you don't pay attention to it, you're not going to  
17 have anything to fight over. None of us will. So, we've  
18 got to pay attention to what's happening with our  
19 species. Because as many of you have mentioned before,  
20 it's not just salmon. And we're seeing these ups and  
21 downs -- I was involved with crab for many years. The  
22 king crab crashed in 1985 and the Gulf of Alaska. It  
23 never came back. I was part of organizing a research  
24 group that's still going on, and we learned a lot about  
25 crab ecology, but we never got those king crab back in  
26 the -- in the Gulf of Alaska. So, we're seeing declines  
27 in size in our fish, and we're seeing declines in  
28 abundance. And although there's fluctuations, we all  
29 know there's going to be fluctuations. Those  
30 trajectories are very disturbing because they keep going  
31 down, down, down, especially for salmon. So, with that,  
32 the coalition was formed, and we meet, like I said, we  
33 meet weekly on Thursday mornings. And we're -- we've got  
34 a lot of really great people in there. We've got  
35 scientists and attorneys and fish commissions and  
36 residents and organizations that advocate within the  
37 AYK. We've got AC members and tribal and community  
38 leaders, retired biologists on and on. And that list is  
39 growing. And it's very powerful because we learn from  
40 each other. We're just beginning this process, but we're  
41 learning a lot as we go along. And then all of the groups  
42 that we've been -- you guys have been talking about --  
43 that are involved in fisheries advocacy and paying  
44 attention, because our State has a fractured management  
45 system, we all exist because of that. We don't have a  
46 unified system. We have a Federal and State system and  
47 then inside of the Federal and State system, we have  
48 sectors inside there. And just because you happen to be  
49 in a Federal agency, doesn't mean you're going to talk  
50 to another Federal agency and the same for the State.

1 And then we have the legislature, and then we have the  
2 Board of Fish, and we have Council, and we have all  
3 these different reasons that we exist, but the most  
4 important thing we can do right now is talk to each  
5 other. Andy's absolutely right. We've got to develop  
6 relationships. We have to learn from each other, and we  
7 have to learn from history. So, that's part of what  
8 we're trying to do with the AYK group.

9  
10 So, some of the things that we do talk  
11 about are reducing impacts such as bycatch intercept,  
12 hatchery competition, gear types, management practices,  
13 habitat protection. We talk about monitoring enumeration  
14 and ASL, the need for increasing our ASL data and getting  
15 data that has match sets and long-term sets. And we talk  
16 about ensuring adequate escapement goals and levels of  
17 stocks of concern, promoting salmon conservation  
18 corridors. That's a beginning conversation. Thanks to  
19 Eva, you know, and many others we're going to be having  
20 more of a detailed conversation on that, as well as the  
21 gravel-to-gravel management practices. We're pretty  
22 excited about that opportunity. We encourage the use of  
23 community-based monitoring, big time. I've been a  
24 champion of that for years, and we have great  
25 opportunities to -- but we need a really massive program  
26 to help support community-based monitoring, get people  
27 paid, get them trained, and get the data that sets that  
28 we need and that communities want. And then we talk  
29 about, of course, increasing the awareness and  
30 understanding of salmon declines. That's a constant  
31 securing subsistence and personal use priorities and  
32 opportunities. That's really what this is all about.  
33 Sharing information about food security and then  
34 creating common priorities and issue talking points and  
35 then helping to organize testimonies and commentaries  
36 where they're needed. So, those are the kinds of  
37 discussions we have at the AYK Group.

38  
39 Just -- I'm going to shift over to the  
40 Fairbanks AC report, but we had Tyler Dann from the Area  
41 M or from the gene lab -- ADF&G Gene Lab give a report  
42 at our Monday night meeting for the Fishery  
43 Subcommittee. And I do have links to some of the reports  
44 that he had. And those are important for us to be paying  
45 attention to right now. We have been pushing -- not to  
46 get off topic, but we've been pushing very hard both at  
47 the AC level and the AYK level to have a -- have chinook  
48 considered sampling in that -- Area M. Because under the  
49 WASSIP which is the Western Alaska, I can't remember the  
50 whole thing, but it's under an agreement we had years

1 ago to get chum information. We did not secure chinook  
2 information, we got chum and sockeye. So, we did get  
3 some money this last year, Bering Sea did. And now that  
4 money is with the Department of Fish and Game. And we  
5 got an explanation from Matt Keyes, who is the area  
6 manager down at -- one of the biologists down at Area M  
7 in Kodiak and explained that they will be doing chinook  
8 sampling next year, but did not get it done this year,  
9 which was disappointing.

10  
11 So, we have all these things in the fire  
12 right now, but we've got to get those genetics out of  
13 Area M intercept as much as we do out of the Bering Sea,  
14 and we have to have increased genetics. Because we have  
15 to know where these fish are coming from and where  
16 they're going. And that's really an important part of  
17 gravel-to-gravel. It's a critical part of it. Okay so,  
18 going on to the -- oh, before I go to go on to the AC,  
19 Are there any questions from anybody on the AYK group  
20 right now? Okay.

21  
22 Just as a reminder, we all know how  
23 important the ACs are and what they do, and they have a  
24 certain role, and that is to advise the Board of Fish  
25 and the department basically on proposals -- to present  
26 proposals and to make commentary on them. And our  
27 Fairbanks AC meets every Wednesday. The main -- the big  
28 group does every Wednesday of the month, and the  
29 Fisheries Subcommittee normally meets the Monday before  
30 that meeting. The only change will be in November because  
31 Monday the 11th is Veterans Day so we'll have a meeting  
32 on Tuesday the 12th in November. We just had our October  
33 meeting. We are going to have another special meeting  
34 work session in-person only on October 23rd in  
35 Fairbanks, likely at the ADF&G offices. I think that's  
36 where they're going to be. And that is to go over the  
37 Prince William Sound Board of Fish proposals, which also  
38 include Copper River. So, there are several proposals  
39 in there that we are really concerned about commentary  
40 on it. And we have one ourselves as well on hatcheries,  
41 that gets into another function that we have at the AC.

42  
43 So, the Fairbanks AC has been known to  
44 be the hatchery rabble rousers for the last several  
45 years. And we've gotten a lot of pushback on that, as  
46 you can imagine. And this is about the private non-  
47 profit hatcheries that exist in the Gulf of Alaska. We  
48 don't have any that are on the western side, but they're  
49 in the Gulf. I was a commercial fisherman for 21 years  
50 in Prince William Sound so, I'm pretty familiar with

1 that hatchery system. And so, the hatcheries do -- the  
2 issue that we're finding out right now, because we work  
3 with scientists from all over the Pacific Northwest and  
4 in Canada is that there is increasing evidence that  
5 hatchery fish are creating competition at sea for our  
6 wild salmon. There's just so many fish in the ocean --  
7 capability for the ocean carrying capacity to allow for  
8 fish. So, we in the Bering Sea, we have the biggest  
9 problem from Asian hatchery stock and in the Gulf of  
10 Alaska it is from the domestic stock. The department has  
11 been very unhappy with us, and we are trying to get a  
12 dialogue. That's what we really need. We really need to  
13 have a dialogue on these impacts. We need to get the  
14 department to realize that they have to recognize the  
15 non-agency peer reviewed science. And there's so much  
16 of it, there's so much more peer reviewed science that's  
17 non-agency than there is at its agency. So, we feel like  
18 that the onus is on the hatcheries right now to prove  
19 to the rest of the world that they are not having a  
20 negative impact on wild salmon stocks. It's not the other  
21 way around. We've already gotten to that point where  
22 we've shown and illustrated a lot of science to that  
23 effect. So, one of the things that the Fairbanks AC --  
24 one of the proposals that we have currently, and we have  
25 it at every board meeting is the hatchery egg reduction.  
26 And we're asking the -- in Prince William Sound for 25%  
27 reduction of the egg production. That is on the books  
28 right now. In some cases, that's not even an issue,  
29 because a lot of the hatcheries aren't at full capacity  
30 because they don't have the water resources, they're  
31 limited out. So, we're going to have that discussion in  
32 Cordova, it's probably not going to be a happy one. But  
33 we really need as a state to have a really good look at  
34 our hatchery impacts. And that goes back to the last  
35 thing I want to mention, and that is what we're looking  
36 at, what all of us are looking at is cumulative impacts.  
37 We've talked -- you guys have talked about that quite a  
38 bit. It's not just one thing that is killing our salmon,  
39 it's many things. It's death by a thousand cuts. And we  
40 need to understand that's why this ecosystem and  
41 (indiscernible) are -- the salmon corridors and  
42 conservation corridors and gravel-to-gravel is so  
43 critical because that way we're going to be getting to  
44 understand what does the salmon have to go through? What  
45 is the chinook have to go through in its life cycle?  
46 What does the sockeye have to go through? You know,  
47 they're all different and it depends on where they come  
48 from. So, we need to understand all of that in order for  
49 us to start managing according to the resource, not the  
50 managing according to the sector. So, I think that's

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1 it's not all I had, but it pretty much covers it. So, I  
2 want to thank you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
5 for your testimony. Any questions for Gale? Go ahead,  
6 Andy.

7

8 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. Thank you  
9 very much, Gale, for all you're doing, for all your  
10 services over the many, many, many years. I guess - I'll  
11 wait for the jet to pass.

12

13 (Pause)

14

15 Okay. For the record, this is Member  
16 Bassich. So, they come in twos.

17

18 MS. VICK: It's the fighter jets.

19

20 MS. MCDAVID: It's a flyover in support  
21 of ecosystem management.

22

23 MS. VICK: There you go.

24

25 MR. BASSICH: I just put in a request to  
26 speak with thunder.

27

28 You brought up the topic of hatcheries  
29 and what we need to do in the State. Can you elaborate  
30 on -- a little bit more on what we need to do on an  
31 international level? As far as hatchery production  
32 around Pacific Rim impacts. It's my feeling that a lot  
33 of times when you bring up this topic, there's deflection  
34 saying it's not our problem. It's all those guys in  
35 Russia or Asia or -- producing all the hatchery pinks  
36 or whatever. So, maybe you could speak a little bit  
37 about that, since we're at a Federal forum here and we  
38 need to address our Federal Government on that.

39

40 MS. VICK: Very good point. Thank you,  
41 Andy. So, the scary news about the Bering Sea is that  
42 Russia is getting ready to double or quadruple or triple,  
43 rather, their output of pink and chum salmon for hatcher  
44 production in the Bering -- and that will affect us in  
45 the Bering Sea. And the other bad news is that we can't  
46 do much about it. But if we're going to have starting  
47 conversation, I recently had an interview and I was  
48 talking about how before all of this stuff with Ukraine  
49 happened, how we were working with Russian scientists  
50 and the University of Alaska Fairbanks for example, is

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1 doing a lot of coordination with them. But they -- there  
2 was a group of like five countries that were going out  
3 on vessels and sometimes on Russian vessels into the  
4 Gulf and the North Pacific all over to get vital data  
5 in the summertime about where our fish are feeding and  
6 where they're at. And that changed, of course, when we  
7 had all the sanctions against Russia. So, to answer your  
8 question at some point in time, we'll get through this  
9 very hopefully sooner than later. And if we can  
10 reestablish relationships to have those discussions on  
11 a State level. That has to be at a State level with  
12 Russia. But it's not just Russia, it's North or South  
13 Korea and Japan. Japan does the chum, and the chum are  
14 mostly affected in the lower part of the North Pacific.  
15 But that -- we cannot begin to have that dialogue in the  
16 State Department with the Asian groups until we also  
17 have the same dialogue on the stateside within the Gulf  
18 of Alaska. And I think this is just a dialogue that we  
19 have to have throughout the entire state and really be  
20 honest about it. There are many things we don't --  
21 There's so much that -- I mean, I've been studying this  
22 a long time, and what I know is a thimbleful. So, there's  
23 so much that we can put out on the table to have a  
24 dialogue on, but we don't have a venue to do that. We  
25 don't have a way to have this conversation. Does that  
26 answer your question?

27  
28 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, and I guess one of  
29 the points that I'd like to make clear and get on the  
30 record is that Alaska is a extremely large producer of  
31 pink salmon, and.....

32  
33 MS. VICK: We are the largest right now.

34  
35 MR. BASSICH: Exactly. And it is the  
36 studies that you referred to earlier for the, let's call  
37 it the grazing grounds out in the ocean. The food source  
38 out there that have been very tightly correlate with  
39 high pink production and high years of pink production  
40 and low growth on salmon. So, there is a direct  
41 correlation there. And on the international level, until  
42 we clean up our backyard, it's going to be pretty hard  
43 to go to the table and ask for other people to clean up  
44 their backyard and hatchery production.

45  
46 MR. VICK: That is correct.

47  
48 MR. BASSICH: So, that is something I  
49 want to bring and get on the record. Alaska must start  
50 taking initiatives to identify that and reduce that. And

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1 we need our State Department to begin discussions with  
2 foreign nations that are also impacting our fisheries  
3 up here. Thank you, Gale, really appreciate it.

4  
5 MS. VICK: Yes. Thank you for the  
6 question.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions  
9 for Gale?

10  
11 MS. BURK: I do.

12  
13 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Go ahead, Eva.

14  
15 MS. BURK: Thank you, Gale. I was just  
16 thinking about -- and thank you for all your work and  
17 everything. I do enjoy the meetings at Bristol Bay AYK,  
18 they're very informative and look forward to having our  
19 -- rallying our ACs to support when we can. So, when I  
20 think about, like, the different food sources for  
21 salmon, because some of this stuff does come out in the  
22 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council Ecosystem  
23 Status Report. And they're like, there's X amount of,  
24 you know, copepods or, you know, small fish that Chinook  
25 and chum like to eat on. Is any of that information  
26 there ever make it to the hatchery folks so they could  
27 be like, we pumped out a bunch of pinks when we were at  
28 extremely low productivity in the ocean for the food  
29 that the salmon need, right? Is that -- are those ever  
30 correlations ever made?

31  
32 MS. VICK: I doubt it. And the reason is,  
33 is that the hatcheries for the Alaskan side are part of  
34 the function of the Board of Fish. The Board of Fish is  
35 very limited in what they can do on conversations on  
36 hatcheries. They can limit egg production and that's  
37 about it. So, that goes back to where we don't really  
38 have a venue for oversight other than through the  
39 department. But so, what happens in the Bering Sea is  
40 the purview, with the exception of Cook Inlet and a few  
41 other places, of the North Pacific Council. So, that  
42 information may get to people, incidentally but it's not  
43 deliberate. Unless we bring it to a Board of Fish meeting  
44 which is where it should be, you know so, when we have  
45 -- and thank you for the reminder. So, when we go to  
46 Prince William Sound, we can look at those reports and  
47 put them in as commentary or in RC. So, yeah, that's a  
48 good suggestion. Thank you.

49  
50

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1 MS. BURK: And just one more follow up  
2 to because you -- I swear I saw the phrase meta-analysis,  
3 which would like, be a study of the cumulative impacts.  
4 In one of the salmon recommendations, I think it was in  
5 the -- this space the Yukon Priority Information Needs.  
6 Yeah, that's where we saw that. But is that something  
7 that we should be looking at?

8  
9 MS. VICK: I didn't hear the first part  
10 of that though, that you said a metadata?

11  
12 MS. BURK: Yeah, the meta-analysis of the  
13 cumulative impacts, Andy or somebody put that in the  
14 Yukon River Priority Information Needs, which we're  
15 going to cover.

16  
17 MS. VICK: Okay and that's exactly what  
18 we need.

19  
20 MS. BURK: And I didn't see that. Yeah.  
21 So, we have it. And but I'd be curious to like, see an  
22 example of someone who has done this and what things do  
23 they include and how do they, you know, do their  
24 analysis.

25  
26 MS. VICK: Yeah, there are people at UAF  
27 that probably could help with that. People within the  
28 department, ADF&G and U.S. fish and I mean, sorry, NOAA.  
29 I mean, I think there's a number of people that have --  
30 NOAA would probably have some information on that. I  
31 don't know if anybody here at the department has a  
32 suggestion. I'm thinking Sabrina Larson might -- is  
33 Christine -- do you have some ideas on that? No, okay.

34  
35 Well, but I -- but I'm sure there are  
36 people, you know, in all sec [sic] -- in all agencies  
37 that, you know, could help with that. I mean, I think  
38 that's a -- there again, you want a venue for that and  
39 to have that discussion because you need that metadata.  
40 I agree. Before I go -- finish, I forgot that the on  
41 Monday night, the AC -- the Fisheries Subcommittee went  
42 over all the ACR. There were 15 ACR, Agenda Change  
43 Requests proposals that are going before the Board of  
44 Fish on the work session, which is October 29th-30th and  
45 those comments are due on the 15th. So, we went through  
46 the list of ACRs and made recommendations. And one of  
47 the ACRs, of course, was from the Western RAC that you  
48 and Charlie had worked on, Eva, and we did support that.  
49 We know that the department did not support it, but I  
50 think we need a full court press on why that's important



1 to keep in the mix for the ACR. And I also, I noticed  
2 that you had a commentary on ACR 1, and I would be --  
3 as we -- because we're having our meeting tonight to  
4 finalize that. And I would be real interested in what  
5 people feel about ACR 1.

6  
7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
8 just had a comment because you brought up the meta-  
9 analysis Priority Information Need and I think the issue  
10 is like if you really want to see that research done,  
11 there has to be someone that actually applies, puts in  
12 a proposal to do that research, and identifying who might  
13 do that is something people could be putting their heads  
14 together. If you think that's a really important thing,  
15 because we can list all the PINs we want, but if people  
16 don't actually put in proposals, then they don't go  
17 forward. Thanks.

18  
19 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. I think I think to  
20 be able to do that analysis is going to take a  
21 collaboration amongst a number of different agencies.  
22 And that's getting to what we've been talking about a  
23 lot, this communication and this breaking down of  
24 barriers and collaboration. And so, for that, just for  
25 OSM purposes, for that to take place it's not one entity  
26 that's going to be able to do that. I think there's  
27 going to have to be contributing data from a number of  
28 different agencies for that to be done in a meaningful  
29 way. So, I just want to make sure that OSM is aware of  
30 that. It's not like we can just say, well, let's go ask  
31 this entity to do this. It's not going to happen that  
32 way. I don't think - you could have one person go back  
33 and look at data that's already been collected, but I  
34 think it would be much more efficient if you could build  
35 a partnership amongst agencies to contribute what they  
36 know in the different aspects of it, because it's pretty  
37 complicated and pretty encompassing to do a good job of  
38 it. If you want to get to the level that -- what you're  
39 talking about, right. So, I just wanted to throw that  
40 in because that's really -- I think it's a really  
41 important thing to do as a baseline, as a foundation.  
42 You know, you can't fix a problem until you know what  
43 the problem is. And you have to know what's creating the  
44 problem to fix the problem. And so, you have to get to  
45 the -- you have to get to the foundation in any  
46 biological studies or problem-solving, you have to get  
47 to the foundation before you can begin to solve the  
48 problem. Thank you.

49  
50

1 MS. VICK: That might be something to  
2 suggest to our Legislative Taskforce that's going on  
3 right now. Because really, ultimately, I think it's  
4 going to be legislation. And also with our delegation -  
5 - Federal delegation. I want to leave with saying that  
6 I have the highest regard for a lot of our agency  
7 managers, I really do. We've worked with a lot of them  
8 over the years. And they work hard and they're human  
9 like the rest of us. We're all in this together. We all  
10 are part of the problem originally. That's what I was  
11 trying to say earlier. And so, we're looking backwards  
12 at some of the things that we did wrong and we're trying  
13 to correct them. We all need to do it collectively,  
14 because the one thing that we have in common is we really  
15 believe in our salmon and our wild salmon. I want to  
16 emphasize, and we are all really concerned about what's  
17 going on. So, I want to applaud all of you for your role  
18 in that effort. Thank you.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you.

21  
22 MS. SHOCKLEY: Charlie -- Chair, I'd like  
23 to make a comment, please.

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.

26  
27 MS. SHOCLKEY: Hi, yes. Thank you, Gale.  
28 I really appreciate your work and certainly, we  
29 appreciate your respectful work over the many, many  
30 years. So, good to hear -- good to hear you. Thank you.

31  
32 MS. VICK: It's good to hear your voice,  
33 too, Dorothy. Thank you.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Again, thank you so  
36 much for being here. If there's no more questions, we'll  
37 let you leave the Chair. Thank you so much for being  
38 here.

39  
40 (Pause)

41  
42 Okay, YRDFA is next.

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: Before you ladies start.  
45 I'll just let people know, se are going to hear from  
46 YRDFA. And then if Diloolala is back in time, we'd like  
47 TCC Tribal Resource Stewardship to go after YRDFA. And  
48 then the Council will move into those Board of Fish ACRs  
49 and proposals that they added to the agenda yesterday.  
50 Thanks.

1

2 MS. MONCRIEFF: Okay. Hello, good  
3 afternoon, Mr. Chair and Council members. Thank you for  
4 the opportunity to present to your regional advisory  
5 council. I'm pleased to represent the Yukon River  
6 Drainage Fisheries Association. My name is Catherine  
7 Moncrieff and I am the staff anthropologist. I have here  
8 next to me Grace Kirkey, and she'll be introducing  
9 herself in a minute. But I want to let you know that we  
10 did submit a report for you guys, and it's in your  
11 supplemental materials, tab two. And it's also -- I think  
12 there's some still left on the back. And we provided two  
13 documents. One was a report on our activities, and the  
14 other was a community update on a project that recently  
15 ended. It was about anadromous streams in Manley, Nenana  
16 and Tanana. Excuse me.

17

18 And so, now we'd like to just provide a  
19 brief update on our activities and key accomplishments  
20 since we -- since you last met. And I also want to let  
21 you know that we've added some new staff members that  
22 we're very excited about. Of course, I just mentioned  
23 Grace, but we also have in the room Jadon Nashoanak and  
24 also Olivia Irwin, who are -- Jadon is our TEK interview  
25 technician and Olivia is our new policy coordinator. And  
26 then we also have another new staff member whose name  
27 is Matthew Lohrstorfer and he's our biological  
28 technician. So, pretty exciting times at YRDFA. The  
29 first project I want to tell you about is the  
30 teleconference, the Yukon River in-season  
31 teleconference. This - the teleconference is currently  
32 being funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for  
33 this past year. And we had a delay in funding and so,  
34 because of that, we were not able to send out the proper  
35 mailings to all 50 communities in Alaska and the 14  
36 First Nations in Canada. Our art and our communications  
37 coordinator, whose name is Mike McIntyre, he has been  
38 very diligent in getting the words out to the communities  
39 or during the summer he was. Another big difference with  
40 the teleconference this year was that we switched our  
41 teleconference carrier, who has been providing better  
42 services. We did get good attendance at the  
43 teleconferences this past summer. However, many of our  
44 participants were not providing community reports or  
45 observations that they were seeing on the river. We also  
46 scheduled special reports on a variety of topics,  
47 including reports from Area M, from the North Pacific  
48 Fishery Management Council, as well as the Fishery  
49 Disaster applications and Gravel-to-Gravel updates. And  
50

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1 then I'm going to let Grace give a report on a couple  
2 of our projects as well.

3  
4 MR. KIRKEY: Yeah. So, I introduced  
5 myself this morning. But I'm Grace Kirkey. I'm the  
6 community-based monitoring program coordinator with  
7 YRDFA and I just started back in June so, very new to  
8 the Yukon River. Alaska's been my home for quite some  
9 time. Not born and raised, but to save you a long story,  
10 we'll go with from here. And so, thrilled to be working  
11 on the Yukon River. And I think it's going to take a  
12 little bit of time, but hopefully I'm going to be here  
13 long enough to get to know each and every one of you  
14 pretty well. But I'll provide the community-based  
15 monitoring reports.

16  
17 So, starting with the Harvest Survey  
18 program. This project is currently being funded by the  
19 National Park Service and began in 2002. We have ten  
20 communities along the Yukon River with locally hired  
21 surveyors. Starting in June, running through the last  
22 week of August, surveyors interviewed local households  
23 about their experience fishing that week. Households are  
24 kept anonymous and the same survey questions are asked  
25 every week. Interviews are sent to us at the beginning  
26 of the week. The data is collected, then analyzed and  
27 put into a report that is sent out to partners and  
28 management agencies. The purpose of these reports is to  
29 show fish capture data, catch by effort, and create a  
30 space where individuals can leave comments for managers.  
31 This year we have created a digital app for surveyors  
32 to use.

33  
34 Next is the Yukon River Watershed  
35 Ecosystem action plan. There's a couple of acronyms in  
36 this one. So, I'm going to try to not completely  
37 overwhelm you with acronyms. Let's see. So, the 2020 --  
38 in 2023, established with the Gravel-to-Gravel  
39 initiative, the steering committee's purpose is to  
40 create a publicly accessible story map tool, a resource  
41 that prioritizes assessing threats to salmon habitat and  
42 identifying the highest priority restoration actions.  
43 This tool will be open to all, fostering a sense of  
44 community and sharing responsibility for the Yukon  
45 watershed with the overall commitment to assist YRDFA  
46 in creating a Yukon River Ecosystem Action Plan. During  
47 July and August 2024, YRDFA environmental specialist  
48 James Van Lanen and field technician Matthew Lohrstorfer  
49 conducted field data collection and YRDFA's Watershed  
50 Ecosystem Action Management Plan, WEP project. Data

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1 collection -- data collection this season consisted of  
2 water quality sampling and culvert assessments in the  
3 middle River, Yukon and Tanana River watersheds. Using  
4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service GIS database, Matthew and  
5 James collected a total of 64 culvert surveys and 50  
6 water quality samples. Fieldwork locations this season  
7 consisted of the areas surrounding Nulato and Road  
8 System, accessible areas around Minto, Manley Hot  
9 Springs, Eureka, and the Tofty-Tanana Road. The field  
10 crew identified multiple additional culverts of  
11 potential concern for Yukon Salmon fish Passage, which  
12 are not previously listed in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
13 Service database. Culvert survey data was entered into  
14 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish Barrier Hunter  
15 app, and the water quality data was entered into a new  
16 Survey123 app designed by YRDFA contractor Michael  
17 Baker.

18  
19 And then finally, I'll be informing you  
20 on the Yukon River Clearinghouse project. The purpose  
21 of this project is to identify data gaps along the Yukon  
22 River and act as a clearinghouse for all social and  
23 ecological changes along the Yukon, using both physical  
24 biological data and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.  
25 We have hired a TEK technician, Jadon, and he will be  
26 conducting TEK interviews to learn about and generate a  
27 historical timeline of observed changes that may affect  
28 salmon on the Yukon River. Additionally, we have a  
29 physical biological science technician, Matthew, who  
30 this season is conducting field culvert assessments,  
31 stream assessments and collecting water quality samples.  
32 With both the physical, biological science and  
33 traditional ecological data, YRDFA will be creating a  
34 platform that shares a holistic overview of the Yukon  
35 River's historic timeline. This platform will allow  
36 observers and agencies to submit their data to be added  
37 to the clearinghouse project. Thank you so much.

38  
39 MS. MONCRIEFF: And then I'll wrap up  
40 with just another project. We have another project  
41 called Engaging Fishers in Chinook Salmon Research on  
42 the Yukon River. This project is funded by the North  
43 Pacific Research Board, and it began in January of 2023.  
44 With this project, we're partnering with the communities  
45 of Alakanuk and Emmonak to conduct interviews about the  
46 health of chinook salmon as they enter the river. We  
47 gathered this information to help inform our companion  
48 project led by Dr. Katie Howard - Drs. Katie Howard and  
49 Vanessa von Biela, which is seeking to understand the  
50 drivers of chinook salmon decline. And they theorize

1 that one driver is that what they are eating in the  
2 Bering Sea which is strongly related to their health  
3 when they enter the river. So, they asked us to complete  
4 these interviews and Alakanuk and Emmonak to see if the  
5 fishers there had observed any changes that might help  
6 them understand what they're seeing out in the Bering  
7 Sea. So, right now I did finish the Emmonak interviews  
8 and summarized it and shared the material -- the  
9 information back with the communities and we have a  
10 timeline of their observations. And I'm working on  
11 finishing up the Alakanuk interviews, and I'll be  
12 sharing the results back with the community and trying  
13 to create a timeline from their perspective as well as  
14 what they saw.

15  
16 And then the other part of the project  
17 -- we're also working with the communities of Saint  
18 Mary's and Huslia to monitor water temperatures and  
19 develop a community action plan, if there is another  
20 heat event that causes salmon to die off in the future.  
21 And the -- one of the purposes of that is like what as  
22 much has been said in the meeting here today and  
23 yesterday that the people in the communities, you know,  
24 are the first to see it and s should be the first to,  
25 you know, collect information and tell us what's going  
26 on.

27  
28 And then finally, Serena wanted me to  
29 add that we're hearing concerns, of course, from, you  
30 know, your RAC meetings and the other RACs and other  
31 meetings and from fishers about Area M and bycatch and  
32 hatchery release that are affecting our returns on the  
33 Yukon River. And we at YRDFA are trying to be or  
34 strategically planning to be present in these spaces  
35 where decisions are being made. And we're currently part  
36 of coalitions and groups that are collectively working  
37 on the issues that we are facing with salmon on the  
38 Yukon River today. So, Serena is part of the tradition  
39 -- and she apologizes that she couldn't be here today,  
40 I think she's attending another meeting. She's part of  
41 the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Committee with the  
42 Yukon River panel, and she's planning to attend the joint  
43 -- Technical Committee Joint meeting in November. And  
44 prior to the panel meeting to discuss the Chinook  
45 rebuilding plan for the Yukon River.

46  
47 There's some dates coming up I wanted  
48 to mention. YRDFA was having their Board -- a Board  
49 meeting in Anchorage on October 21st, our fall Board  
50 meeting. And it's going to -- On October 21st, it'll be

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1 at the Hilton downtown. YRDFA is having their WEP,  
2 Watershed Ecosystem Action Plan steering committee  
3 meeting the next day on October 22nd. Let's see, there's  
4 the Joint Technical Committee that she'll be attending  
5 and the rebuilding plan on November 18th and 19th in  
6 Fairbanks. We are planning the Yukon River Science  
7 Symposium in Anchorage, and the tentative date is  
8 February 12th of '24 and then coming up in the spring -  
9 - oh, sorry, I skipped TCC special convention, I think  
10 she's planning to attend that. The YRDFA will be holding  
11 their 35th annual Board meeting in Fairbanks on April  
12 22nd and 23rd of '25. And then following that, we'll be  
13 having our preseason meeting in Fairbanks on the 24th  
14 and 25th, also of April. I think it's going to be here  
15 at Pike's.

16  
17 And then finally, actually two more  
18 quick things. We have some job openings. If you know  
19 anybody else who wants to work for YRDFA, we have an  
20 intern position. That's pretty awesome. It's the Andrew  
21 Firmin Internship, and they'll also be at to work on the  
22 Engaging Fishers Project. That's going to start in  
23 February and go through August. We have a fisheries  
24 biologist position open, and we have a training  
25 coordinator position open and a part-time executive  
26 assistant position open. So, and lastly -- and if you're  
27 interested in any of those, you're supposed to send a  
28 resume and a cover letter to [serena@yukonsalmon.org](mailto:serena@yukonsalmon.org). And  
29 then finally, I don't know if you guys saw these, I  
30 can't remember if I handed these -- I only have one  
31 copy, but there is electronic. But I wanted to bring it  
32 to your meeting. This is our final report on the survey  
33 program, the in-season survey program from the cycle  
34 that just ended in this year. So, I can leave this with  
35 you guys if you want it. And we have one more report, I  
36 don't know if you've seen it. This is the elders warning  
37 project that ended also in March of this year. I don't  
38 think I've been to your meeting since then, so I wanted  
39 to bring these copies I have. And that concludes our  
40 report. Thank you for your time.

41  
42 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Thank you for  
43 your report. Like -- I'm Eva, for the record. Sorry, my  
44 head is in three places today. I was wondering -- I had  
45 a couple questions. The first, I think is a little bit  
46 easier. So, you said the Fish Barrier app. And then  
47 there was another app?

48  
49 MR. KIRKEY: The WEP team is using the  
50 Fish Barrier Hunter app. And that's created by US Fish

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1 and Wildlife Service. And so that's how they're  
2 prioritizing their culvert assessment. And then there  
3 was a Survey 123 which was just a form. It's a fancy way  
4 of saying just a form that's digital made for their  
5 stream data collection. So, their habitat assessment and  
6 then water quality assessment.

7

8

ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Okay.

9

10 MS. KIRKEY: There is also -- so, that's  
11 for WEP and then for survey for the in-season survey,  
12 there's also an ISN app that we have created as well.  
13 So, a couple apps.

14

15

16

ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Okay. Thank  
you.

17

18

MS. KIRKEY: Lots of acronyms. Yeah.

19

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Okay, thank  
you. I was just wondering too, because I was -- I'm  
working on a timeline myself and kind of like looking  
at what's all the published data, but then really filling  
it in with observations from people. And also, I really  
appreciate the different people who put these reports  
together, like the elders warning report is very



1 helpful. So, thank you for that, because it kind of like  
2 when people talked about 1919 being the decline. It came  
3 out in that report. And then I was able to track down  
4 the original Federal report that talked about that  
5 decline. So, thank you. It's helpful.

6  
7 MS. MONCRIEFF: And if I could just  
8 respond to that, Eva or Madam Chair. I have a great  
9 library too and if you ever want any resources or any  
10 tips of where to turn for information. I would love to  
11 help with that.

12  
13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: That would be  
14 great. I'd have to visit you. We'll work on that.

15  
16 MS. MONCRIEFF: That would be great. And  
17 also, all of our reports are up on our website if  
18 anybody's ever looking for them.

19  
20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON BURK: Okay, thank  
21 you. Thank you for your presentation. This is Eva, I'm  
22 filling in for a second. And are we ready to move into  
23 TCC, do we have Diloola back? Diloola Ann is back, thank  
24 you. Tanana Chiefs Conference Tribal Resource  
25 Stewardship Division Director, Diloola Ann Erickson will  
26 be presenting. Thank you.

27  
28 MS. ERICKSON: Good afternoon. I almost  
29 said good morning. My head's also in three different  
30 places today. I'll introduce myself again just real  
31 quickly. My name is Diloola Ann, and I work with Tanana  
32 Chiefs Conference as a Tribal Resource Stewardship  
33 Division Director. I am a Kaltag Tribal member, I also  
34 have family ties to the community of Galena, and I was  
35 raised in the community of Hoonah in Southeast Alaska.  
36 Before I was at Tanana Chiefs, I am new to these spaces,  
37 but I'm not new to defending our ways of life. I worked  
38 for a long time with a number of different communities,  
39 protecting their subsistence resources from extractive  
40 industry development, that was far too close to their  
41 resources. I wanted to provide a tribal resource  
42 stewardship update we've undergone, kind of like a  
43 restructuring at TCC. Our TRS team is entirely new this  
44 year. On the advocacy side, we have a new outreach  
45 coordinator, Kimberly Nicholas. We have a new admin  
46 coordinator, Robin Hagelin, and a new natural resource  
47 policy analyst, Crystal Lapp. We also run a fisheries  
48 program that's comprised of fisheries biologist Brian  
49 McKenna, Brian Lepping and Nicole Farnham. And I'll  
50 provide kind of an update of what the TRS team has been

1 doing on the advocacy side. And then I also have a  
2 Fisheries update, our team ran three different studies  
3 this summer.

4  
5 So, I think the biggest thing that we've  
6 been working on since I've been here is our cooperating  
7 agency efforts with NOAA NFMS. Tanana Chiefs, along with  
8 the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the  
9 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, were  
10 cooperating agencies with NOAA NMFS, and we drafted four  
11 sections that we just submitted for review for their  
12 upcoming chum bycatch EIS. And those four sections  
13 covered the tribal importance of chum, environmental  
14 factors and traditional knowledge related to chum salmon  
15 ecosystem and community impacts of recent declines, and  
16 potential benefits of some of the proposed actions for  
17 Alaska native tribe's way of life. We also submitted a  
18 preferred preliminary alternatives letter that was  
19 jointly signed by four tribal orgs. including Tanana  
20 Chiefs, Kawerak, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish  
21 Commission and AVCP, and two supporting community orgs,  
22 Native Peoples Action and YRDFCA and I forwarded that  
23 letter to Brooke, and she can share that with the council  
24 to review. Other efforts that TCC has been engaged in  
25 around North Pacific, AVCP and TCC are plaintiffs  
26 currently on a lawsuit raised against NOAA NMFS. And the  
27 basis of that lawsuit is that they're using outdated  
28 environmental information that don't take into account  
29 ecosystem-wide changes that have happened in the last  
30 couple decades to set their groundfish catch limits. And  
31 that's what they used for 2023 to 2024, and we also  
32 submitted a supplemental argument in that lawsuit for  
33 the current catch limits that they just set this year  
34 too for '24 to '25. Oral arguments were heard on that  
35 September 26th so, a couple weeks ago down in Anchorage  
36 at the U.S. District Court and they're deliberating on  
37 those issues right now. There is public record of that  
38 litigation that was updated to North Pacific Council's  
39 website from their June meeting, and I could forward  
40 that to Brooke too, if there's interest from RAC members  
41 to see that. And that -- yeah, that's all that we've  
42 been doing with North Pacific specifically. I did also  
43 want to mention too, that it's not part of Tribal  
44 Resource Stewardship yet, but we have been in  
45 conversation with our relay [sic] program. They are  
46 pilot testing a trespass project over there. And I just  
47 wanted to mention that because Chief Chair Ridley  
48 mentioned earlier the request for the RAC to include  
49 trespass issues in your hunter ethics education. And so,  
50 I'll work with the relay [sic] program to have them

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1 come to the winter meeting and provide more information  
2 on that pilot project. And there is intent for the Realty  
3 Program in TRS to work more closely on that in the  
4 future. Like I said, we're all new, so we're still  
5 getting our feet under us.

6  
7 Some of the other work that we've been  
8 doing, we're pretty heavily engaged with the Alaska  
9 Migratory Bird Co-Management Council. Our regional rep  
10 is Randy Mayo, and he's the current Chair for the Native  
11 Caucus. And we just got back earlier last month from the  
12 statewide meeting down in Kodiak. And then I think this  
13 was mentioned a couple times already, but I did also  
14 want to extend an invite to the RAC members if there's  
15 interest in attending the Fall Special Convention for  
16 TCC, it'll be November 13th through the 15th. November  
17 13th will be focused specifically on hunting and fishing  
18 issues within the TCC region. And that's the end of my  
19 TRS program updates. I'll pause there before I jump into  
20 the fishery updates.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

23  
24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I was just wondering,  
25 will that be virtual or is that in-person?

26  
27 MS. ERICKSON: It'll be in person at the  
28 West mark, I think there might be a virtual component,  
29 but I'm not sure.

30  
31 MR. BASSICH: Just to be able to listen in would be really  
32 helpful for me. Thank you.

33  
34 MS. ERICKSON: Yeah, I'll look into that  
35 and have that sent over to Brooke.

36  
37 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

38  
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Were you looking for  
40 questions now before you move on or what are you looking  
41 for?

42  
43 MS. ERICKSON: Oh, I was just - yeah  
44 pausing if there were questions.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions? If no  
47 more at this time, please proceed.

48  
49 MS. ERICKSON: Okay, I'll jump into our  
50 Fisheries update. So, like I said, our team ran three

1 different studies. And I'll start with what I think is  
2 the biggest one. The hot topic is the Mid-river Sonar.  
3 They were feasibility testing. We're in a feasibility  
4 stage right now. And they tested two sites, one 13 miles  
5 upriver from the village of Tanana and one 7 miles  
6 downriver. They're currently analyzing the results of  
7 those sonar sweeps that they did. And they also ran a  
8 test fishery, like Charlie mentioned earlier. And they  
9 were able, like Charlie mentioned, to include spirit  
10 camp kids in that fish test fishery. And my biologist  
11 wanted me to also state that all of the fish that they  
12 caught were released alive and well. When they were doing  
13 the test fishery, they also took some exploratory  
14 genetic tests to do a small sample size on bank  
15 orientation to kind of ground truth the bank orientation  
16 theory that our communities have and the like  
17 preliminary results from that is that there is a very  
18 strong bank orientation. And so, they're writing into  
19 the next round of feasibility study a test -- another  
20 test study of the bank orientation that they'll conduct  
21 next year. And then the results of that -- the sonar  
22 sweeps all have them include that in the winter report  
23 once they're done looking over that data. The other  
24 project we ran was a co-host spawning study, and that  
25 was based off of indigenous knowledge that was found in  
26 the Gwich'in Place Names Atlas that came from the late  
27 Reverend Chief David Salmon. It identified a coho  
28 spawning ground in the Kvenjik Creek off of the Draanjik  
29 and the purpose of that study is to create a genetic  
30 baseline for those spawning coho up there, and to also  
31 update the Anadromous Waters Catalog to include that  
32 area. They just wrapped up their last study -- field  
33 session for that. And so, those results will also be  
34 included in the winter report. And then the last study  
35 that they are working on is a whitefish fin study. And  
36 that's for broad whitefish specifically up in the upper  
37 Koyukuk River. They're testing two spots, one in the  
38 Alatna River and one in the South Fork of the Koyukuk  
39 River. And the purpose there is to identify critical  
40 whitefish habitat changes in population from local use  
41 and stock composition. In 2023, they sampled 203  
42 whitefish that were caught from subsistence uses, and  
43 they also were able to collect 35 samples from fish that  
44 they caught themselves in 2024. The goal was to sample  
45 180, but due to high waters when they were out there,  
46 they only caught about 30. And that study also utilized  
47 local fishers in their process. And they're currently  
48 looking over the data that was collected there too.  
49  
50

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that  
2 awesome report. Any questions for Diloolaa? Go ahead,  
3 Eva.

4  
5 MS. BURK: Yeah. Thank you for your hard  
6 work. I enjoy working with you. I'm glad you're over at  
7 Tanana Chiefs Conference. It's really a really, really  
8 awesome. I had -- what I really picked up on was the  
9 coho spawning study, and I did read the article in the  
10 TCC newsletter and I was just curious, like because I  
11 really think that's a really -- it's the way we need to  
12 go about things is looking for our language to better  
13 identify those places that are important. And I'm just  
14 wondering, is there like from this study, is there other  
15 ways that we might want to start looking at some of our  
16 different Place Names? Because I can just think about  
17 in my own Native Council, the different studies that  
18 we've done over the years, how we've changed to the  
19 computer in some really nice studies are like tucked  
20 away in some office, you know, just wondering about --  
21 is there any ideas for looking for some of that?

22  
23 MS. ERICKSON: Yeah, there is actually  
24 one of the things that we're doing for the IES work with  
25 NOAA NMFS is we'll also be submitting a number of  
26 documents to the appendices, and a lot of those documents  
27 are including looking through indigenous authored  
28 literature to that, like points towards our long-  
29 standing relationship with chum salmon specifically. But  
30 we're also wanting to expand the section that we authored  
31 there to include, like broadly, indigenous peoples  
32 relationship to salmon on the Yukon. And so, we are  
33 like, kind of data mining some of those documents. We're  
34 looking through things like the language dictionaries  
35 that we have, like autobiographies from people like  
36 Sydney Huntington and Jimmy Huntington and Paul De  
37 Carlo. So, we're starting to go through that, but like  
38 you said, there's a lot. Yeah.

39  
40 MS. BURK: Thank you. I look forward to  
41 seeing more of that work. Thank you very much.

42  
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions  
44 for Diloolaa?

45  
46 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
47 just wanted to make a comment to let you all know that  
48 Diloolaa and I have been trying to find a time to sit  
49 down together and also with the Western Interior Council  
50 Coordinator to talk about how we can work better together

1 and do more outreach within our region. So, hopefully  
2 we'll have something to report back on that to you in  
3 the future. Thank you.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
6 for being here this afternoon. If there's no more  
7 questions. Thank you so much.

8  
9 MS. ERICKSON: Thank you.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, the ladies have  
12 requested a quick break before we go into proposals. Ten  
13 minutes.

14  
15 (Off record)

16  
17 (On record)

18  
19 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
20 is Council Coordinator Brooke. So, yesterday you all  
21 added to the agenda to take up some Board of Fish agenda  
22 change requests and proposals for Prince William Sound.  
23 And you didn't specify on the record exactly which ones  
24 you wanted to take up, but some of the ones mentioned  
25 were ACR 1, ACR 13, proposal 51, 52 and 53. So, it's up  
26 to you guys' which ones you'd like to take up and which  
27 one you would like to start with.

28  
29 (Pause)

30  
31 Do all Council members have a copy of  
32 ACR 13? I passed that out at the end of the day  
33 yesterday. If you're not able to locate it, I can get  
34 you another copy.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. ACR 13, reduce  
37 maximum depth of hand and purse seines, maximum lengths  
38 of leads, eliminate minimum lengths of leads and allow  
39 leads to be attached to either end of a seine in Alaska  
40 Peninsula area Commercial Salmon Fishery.

41  
42 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, I just have a  
43 little bit of guidance about agenda change requests. So,  
44 at this meeting, this work session, the comments that  
45 the Board of Fish is seeking are on whether or not this  
46 proposal should be added out of cycle. And there have -  
47 - it's -- there are three criteria that an ACR must meet  
48 or it must meet one of three criteria. And those are,  
49 the first one for a fishery conservation purpose or  
50 reason to correct an error in regulation, or to correct

1 an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when a  
2 regulation was adopted. So, I did hear you all mentioning  
3 that the first bullet there, a fishery conservation  
4 purpose or reason might be along the lines of what you  
5 were thinking for this one, but just putting that out  
6 there for you. And the last one, member Bassich to the  
7 Chair, was to correct an effect on a fishery that was  
8 unforeseen when a regulation was adopted.

9  
10 So, we had a question about the process  
11 for this, because these are Board of Fish proposals.  
12 They're not Federal proposals. We don't have to go  
13 through the same process that we would go through for  
14 our Federal proposals. So, if you wanted to give comments  
15 to the Board of Fish on this, you could make a motion  
16 and then we could record those comments and we could  
17 submit them to Board of Fish if you all voted in support  
18 of that. And comments are due October 15th so, this is  
19 a really quick turnaround. So, the more clear you can  
20 be about what you would actually like said in the comment  
21 letter would be super helpful. Thanks.

22  
23 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Mr. Chair, just a  
24 clarification for our discussions here. So, we're not  
25 here to deliberate or discuss the merits of this action  
26 that takes place. It's more a matter of trying to support  
27 the ACR so that it's taken up by the Board of Fish. I  
28 just wanted to make that very clear. So, we don't go  
29 down a rabbit hole and start talking about what this  
30 will do or what it won't do, or whatever. So, this could  
31 be fairly quick and painless, hopefully.

32  
33 If I might suggest a process, maybe if  
34 we could just have someone read what is asked for in  
35 this really quickly. And then we could just have a brief  
36 discussion on whether or not it meets those three -- one  
37 of the three criteria. That might be a really quick way  
38 to go through it.

39  
40 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,  
41 I think it would be helpful -- Charlie, read the little  
42 introduction but on this copy, the Western Tier Council  
43 did write -- answered the question: state and detail how  
44 this ACR meets the criteria. So, I'll read that and  
45 perhaps it'll be something that you want to comment on  
46 if you agree or not. The fishery has averaged 677  
47 (indiscernible) chums per season over the past five  
48 years, the highest five-year average in decades. While  
49 chum stocks in the AYK region are struggling to even  
50 meet escapement goals. So, by the Fishery, I believe

1 they're referring to the South Umiak and Shumagin  
2 Islands Fishery -- Juneau Fishery. The huge changes made  
3 in regulations for the area in 2004, and the recent  
4 rapid growth of the purse seine fleet, has resulted in  
5 this recent increase in chum interception in the  
6 fishery. Current regulations allow the aggregate length  
7 of purse seines and leads in this area to be up to 400  
8 fathoms in length, that is 60% longer than what is  
9 allowed in Kodiak and Lower Cook Inlet. There it's 250  
10 fathoms. The current regulations also allow purse seine  
11 depth in this area to be a maximum of 375 meshes. The  
12 deeper a purse seine, the more incidental chum and  
13 chinook salmon it will catch as they travel at greater  
14 depths than the other salmon species that are targeted  
15 in this fishery. So, what will happen if this problem  
16 is not solved prior to the regular Board of Fish cycle?  
17 So, the regular AYK meeting. Continued harvest of non-  
18 targeted salmon species in this fishery, with chums  
19 being currently predominantly intercepted by the purse  
20 seine fleet. For those non-targeted salmon species who  
21 are bound for the AYK region, another year of continued  
22 harvest of non-targeted salmon would further exacerbate  
23 recovery efforts in this region. I think that's what  
24 they're -- their predominant argument for why this needs  
25 to be taken up out of cycle.

26  
27 MR. BASSICH: Well, I'll start the  
28 discussion off to me. When I look at this, I see a  
29 conservation concern. There are two things that I think  
30 it meets both criteria one and criteria three. It's a  
31 conservation concern. Sorry.

32  
33 MS. MCDAVID: Could we please get a  
34 motion on the floor before we do discussion? Thank you.

35  
36 MR. BASSICH: Start over. I put the cart  
37 in front of the horse. I'd like to make a motion that  
38 the Eastern Interior RAC support ACR 13 to be forwarded  
39 to the Board of Fish for consideration in the upcoming  
40 meeting.

41  
42 MS. BURK: This is -- this is Eva, I  
43 second it.

44  
45 MR. BASSICH: Okay, now I'll speak to the  
46 motion. So, I was saying, I believe that this ACR should  
47 be taken up by the Board of Fish. I think the current  
48 fisheries, it is stated here that heavy chum bycatches  
49 are being taken as a result of the gear type and the  
50 size of the gear here. And I want to reference our



1 extremely low chum stocks on the Yukon River. They're  
2 intercepting Western chum salmon, bound for Western  
3 Alaska. So, I think there is a conservation concern. And  
4 given that our chum stocks are struggling to the extent  
5 that they are, I think this is really important. Not to  
6 wait to the regular cycle to address this. So, it does  
7 have a time concern. And in regards to correction of an  
8 unforeseen impact, I think it follows that. I think when  
9 this was put into place, I don't think people realize  
10 the effects on bycatch. And so, I think it's really  
11 important that this be looked at very closely, that maybe  
12 some changes to the gear type be made to reduce potential  
13 bycatch that are impacting subsistence uses in our  
14 region and throughout the State. That's all, Mr. Chair.  
15

16 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. I'll  
17 be supporting this motion. I -- you know, you talk about  
18 the numbers, the drainage wide for fall chum this year  
19 was the third lowest on record. And she said that the  
20 passage at the Canadian border for fall chum was the  
21 lowest on record? Yes. So, that is very concerning. And  
22 also, with the seven-year agreement, technically the  
23 fall chum could be on there. And this is concerning  
24 that, you know, pretty soon we are restricted again.  
25 Once again, we're restricted and other people are not  
26 restricted. So, for those reasons, I'll be supporting  
27 it. And also, just really thankful to the makers of this  
28 ACR and appreciate their hard work and their rationale.  
29 Thank you.  
30

31 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. And I just -- I think  
32 something that maybe is not fully understand [sic]. But  
33 when -- not all chum salmon stocks are the same. So,  
34 it's not really clear in a lot of the genetic sampling,  
35 the impacts of bycatch in some of the Area M to fall  
36 chum, they have a strong relationship to summer chum,  
37 which are also struggling on the Yukon River. But I just  
38 want to point that out because it could very easily be  
39 said that there are no fall chum in those bycatches at  
40 Area M, unless genetic testing is done. But they have  
41 shown up -- fall chum have shown up in those bycatches  
42 for Canadian-bound stocks, which have a very distinct  
43 genetic marker. So, it is -- they are recognizable. But  
44 the numbers in the past have been relatively low  
45 percentage wise. That's always been an argument of mine.  
46 Percentage wise, they always give everything in  
47 percentage of the total catch. And like in the Pollock  
48 fleet, if it's hundreds of millions of tons and it's  
49 only 1%, it doesn't seem like much. But to the Yukon  
50 River, where the numbers are down to 14 or 16,000, that

1 could be a huge number. So, I just wanted to point out  
2 that part of the support that we have, but it does indeed  
3 affect all Western stocks that bycatch there in some of  
4 this fisheries. Thank you.

5

6

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, Eva.

7

8 MS. BURK: Thank you. You know, Andy, you  
9 bring out an important thing about the genetics. And  
10 also, in the North Pacific Bering Sea/Aleutian Island  
11 Pollock Fishery, there's concern that there may be a  
12 large portion of fall chum that's in that's being caught  
13 as bycatch in that fishery and those genetics will be  
14 available. They're going to break out between summer and  
15 fall chum. This is what they told me at the North Pacific  
16 October meeting that that information is going to be  
17 available in December. So, we'll have more information  
18 on whether or not that is fall or summer chum. And then  
19 also, you know, even though they -- I wanted to make a  
20 point about, even though they're saying it's a low rate  
21 or it's a low number of fish we're not supposed to be -  
22 - we heard with the grayling, they want you to only  
23 harvest like 10% of the total run right? for biological  
24 reasons. I think for salmon, it's like 15 to 20%. That's  
25 what I heard on a podcast by a scientist. So, if you  
26 think about it in that, those numbers are actually huge,  
27 the amount of chum that they're catching, if you think  
28 about it in that way. So, I don't have that math in  
29 front of me, and I'm not going to do it on the fly, but  
30 I can tell you that it's -- the impact is probably bigger  
31 than we even are really giving it credit for. So, I just  
32 wanted to add that. Thanks.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you. I just want  
to say I'm going to be voting for this because I think  
it does meet the one of the criteria, at least one of  
the criteria for taking this out of cycle. So, one was  
conservation. So, I just want to reiterate that we are  
meeting the criteria. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody else want to  
say anything. Can you reinstate please?

MR. BASSICH: So, the motion was that the  
Eastern Interior RAC support ACR 13 to be accepted for  
consideration by the Board of Fish in the upcoming  
meeting.

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Seeing how we're all  
2 on the same page, we're going to ask for unanimous vote.  
3 Anybody against that? Okay, passes. Go ahead, Linda.

4  
5 MS. EVANS: I don't quite understand the  
6 ramifications of this CR 1 or AC 1.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh, I'm sorry, it's  
9 to shorten the nets and to lessen the depth so that they  
10 don't catch the kings and the chumps further down in the  
11 water. The fish that they're after swim closer to the  
12 top of the water, to the surface. So, if their depth,  
13 their nets are really deep, they're catching other fish  
14 down there that they're not targeting. And there you got  
15 bycatch. So, we're -- right here we're talking about  
16 taking the making the net shorter and less depth so,  
17 they don't catch our fish.

18  
19 MS. MCDAVID: And Linda, sorry we're on  
20 ACR 13. We -- yeah, we skipped over number one I'm sorry  
21 that wasn't clear. Yeah. So, Linda, this actually  
22 applies to something you were talking about earlier.  
23 About commercial fishing and interception of salmon that  
24 are bound. So, this would potentially address something  
25 in the Area M fishery, so.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good catch. Linda,  
28 you're paying attention. Really!

29  
30 Okay, then I can do that vote over  
31 again. Just for the record since we all seem to be in  
32 agreement here, then we're going to ask for unanimous  
33 consent. And if anybody is against that, then speak up  
34 now or forever hold your peace. Okay, passes.

35  
36 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,  
37 next you had a couple of Board of Fish proposals 51, 52  
38 and 53 and for process purposes my suggestion would be  
39 we do have the Park Service here and Ahtna Inter-Tribal  
40 Resources Commission here who were proponents for each  
41 one of these proposals. So, we might ask Park Service  
42 to come up and introduce their proposal and then do the  
43 same with AITRC.

44  
45 MS. CELLARIUS: I gotta get my phone up  
46 here because my computer is asleep. I have actually some  
47 -- I have some notes from our superintendent that I'm  
48 going to use to introduce the proposal. So, yeah, thank  
49 you for the offer. My name -- for the record, my name  
50 is Barbara Cellarius. I'm the cultural anthropologist

1 and subsistence coordinator for Wrangell-St. Elias  
2 National Park and Preserve. And I'm just going to give  
3 you a quick overview of Board of Fisheries proposal 51,  
4 which was submitted by the park. So, the proposal seeks  
5 to address the following issue. Management of the Copper  
6 River district commercial fishery by the Alaska  
7 Department of Fish and Game in five of the last six most  
8 recent years, that's 2018 to 2023 resulted in a  
9 disproportionately high harvest -- this resulted in  
10 disproportionately high harvest rates of early run  
11 Copper River salmon stocks. Without action by the Board  
12 to mitigate this issue, persistent disproportionate  
13 exploitation of stocks with early migratory timing has  
14 the potential to diminish the overall population  
15 diversity of Copper River sockeye and king salmon, while  
16 threatening food security for Copper River subsistence  
17 users, and particularly those who fish upstream of the  
18 Gakona River in the uppermost portion of the Glennallen  
19 subdistrict. So, the proposed regulatory change from the  
20 Park Service is to revise the Copper River District  
21 Salmon Management Plan by adding some text. So, I'm going  
22 to read you the text and I think the Council members  
23 have a copy of the actual proposal. It's the bolded and  
24 underlined text. So, the proposal is that the department  
25 shall manage the Copper River district commercial salmon  
26 fishery to conserve and avoid disproportionate  
27 exploitation of early run Copper River sockeye and king  
28 salmon stocks by comparing the cumulative sonar passage  
29 -- this is the Miles Lake Sonar -- and the management  
30 objectives by date as follows. After two commercial  
31 driftnet -- drift gillnet openings, the Copper River  
32 district shall not open to the commercial driftnet --  
33 drift gillnet fishing when the cumulative sonar passage  
34 is less than 70% of the cumulative management objective  
35 for the same date. So, early in the season, we really  
36 have no information and so, having a couple of commercial  
37 openers is helpful to get a sense of what's going on.  
38 But then after the sonar starts running, if the sonar -  
39 - if the sonar passage is below what the management  
40 objective is that they've figured out what needs to come  
41 past the sonar to meet the escapement goals, then it  
42 would slow down the commercial fishery.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Very good. Any  
45 questions? Nope, none at this time. Thank you so much.  
46 Public testimony we have Karen Linnell.

47  
48 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For  
49 the record, Karen Linnell, Executive Director for Ahtna  
50 Inter-Tribal Resources Commission, represents eight

1 federally recognized tribes, seven of which are  
2 dependent on the salmon on the Copper River. And we  
3 support the Park Service proposal 51. I don't know if  
4 you want me to speak to 52 or 53? Okay. And it --  
5 Wrangell-St. Elias when Mark Miller, the resource  
6 manager for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park first came  
7 on, I think he's been on board for a couple of months.  
8 And he showed up in March and in May we were having our  
9 first in-season report with the State biologist and so,  
10 they came to our office and then we proceeded -- the  
11 tribal members there proceeded to bawl him out -- the  
12 Park out, not Mark specifically, but the Park for using  
13 their in-season management authority to protect the  
14 subsistence needs of the folks that are most dependent  
15 on it. And told them that it's their job, their duty and  
16 he was brand new and I got him a little flustered and  
17 as I can do sometimes and -- but he heard us and started  
18 to look at that when we showed him that Gakona to Slana  
19 and that we hadn't met ANS since 2015 because Mark came  
20 in 2018, I believe, and he's like, wow, you know. And  
21 so, he started listening and started working on these  
22 things and started looking, and we were telling him how  
23 our families could see the difference and tell which  
24 salmon came from which stream. He started listening to  
25 us and started looking for research on it and doing  
26 genetic studies so that we can diversify our stocks. And  
27 so, this proposal was born out of that over five years  
28 ago now. And so, we do support it. We're grateful for  
29 Mark Miller and Superintendent Bobowsky, putting money  
30 and effort into this project and the research that went  
31 into it and the partnerships that have been formed  
32 through Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resources Commission, Prince  
33 William Sound Science Center and the National Park  
34 Service.

35  
36 In regards to our proposal, it's very  
37 similar to what Mark Miller put forward. He was looking  
38 at a cumulative total on the -- through the Miles Lake  
39 Sonar and ours was like, meet at one day, at least one  
40 day. So, we get -- trying to give options. But I believe  
41 that the stronger proposal is proposal 51. The other  
42 thing that wasn't said is that Tonsina to Gakona, which  
43 is just outside of Chitina, and the personal use fishery  
44 and the few fish wheels by the airport, after that  
45 there's the -- that Tonsina River to Gakona has not met  
46 their ANS amount necessary for subsistence since 2018.  
47 And so, we're trying to give the Board some options.  
48 Those first runs, as you know, are the ones that go the  
49 farthest and end up in the headwaters, the Gulkana  
50 hatchery which was put in by Prince William Sound

1 Aquaculture Corporation and the Department of Fish and  
2 Game, where they incubate the eggs and then release them  
3 into the Gulkana River. Those don't return until July,  
4 so they're not even catching the fish that they're  
5 putting into the into the river system. They're catching  
6 the wild stocks. And so, folks in Seattle are eating  
7 salmon before we are. And it used to be a long time ago  
8 that the late moose -- Bob Henrich used to bring -- make  
9 sure to bring a catch-up. And he'd take it all the way  
10 to Mentasta to Katie to make sure Katie had -- Katie  
11 John had fresh salmon before it got to Seattle. That  
12 doesn't happen anymore. And so just to know that the  
13 Ahtna people, the Ahtna tribes, are in support of the  
14 three proposals before you to try to get more escapement  
15 up to -- into and meet the amounts necessary for  
16 subsistence. And I know it's not a Federal term, but  
17 that's the only term that I have right now, because the  
18 feds haven't adopted a subsistence use amount for the  
19 upper Copper River or anywhere. And that's what, you  
20 know, we have to stick with something or put something  
21 out there. So, ANS needs to be met. The ability to  
22 harvest from our own, as you said, our own place, our  
23 own home is important.

24  
25 And so, I don't want to go to Kenai to  
26 fish either. And, and when there is no fish on the Kenai,  
27 they tend to move to Copper River to fish. This year  
28 they knew that the chinook salmon was, was going to be  
29 closed on the Kenai. And we were reported at our  
30 preseason meeting -- at the AITRC annual meeting that  
31 they expect 5 to 10 guides to come move into the Gulkana  
32 and Klutina River to fish for kings, because there were  
33 none on the Kenai Peninsula. And that scared us. It is  
34 like we're already stressed. And then thankfully, it  
35 didn't happen. It's not as easy as it sounds to switch  
36 rivers and gear your clientele to a new location, but -  
37 - and then the State ended up closing the chinook on the  
38 Copper River for the first time that I can remember. And  
39 so, they were urging the feds to close it as well.  
40 Thankfully, we were able to retain our subsistence rural  
41 priority and continue to fish under our Federal permits  
42 for a time. And so, and they -- even then they were --  
43 we were asked if we can closely watch our box and safely  
44 remove them, that please do so. But yeah, this is -- we  
45 appreciate your support on this in trying to get salmon  
46 to the upper reaches of the Copper River, which falls  
47 very well within your jurisdiction. And so, having an  
48 input in here to provide for your constituents is, is  
49 important. And I appreciate your time and in taking these  
50 three proposals up. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
Don't run away yet. Yeah. We have one question for you.  
Go ahead, Eva.

MS. BURK: Thank you. Thank you for your information and thank you for your hard work on all of this and giving credit and explaining the story of how this came about. It's really impressive. And I think that's what we need to look up to is when we work with tribes, we can actually make really good fishery management regulations. And so, I just wanted to have a clarifying question because I read in here that in the proposal it says the Gakona to Slana reach of the Glennallen subdistrict subsistence area has failed to meet ANS 17 of the past 19 years. Is -- and then, I know you gave me other numbers before, but is one of these -- should I be using one or the other, or both?

MS. LINNELL: Sorry. The ANS was set in 2006, and they met it twice for the Gakona to Slana area. And that includes Batzulnetas, yes.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I just want to ask Karen. So, would you advise us to vote for all three?

MS. LINNELL: I would but I would defer to you as well. I -- the proposal 51, I think, addresses all of our needs and concerns. If we give them too many options, they're not going to choose any. And so, if you guys want to pick one and just refer to see comments under 51, that would be -- that would work. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: And in terms of process, the Council could make a motion to support all three and then have your comments applied. They would probably take up -- Board of Fish will probably take up 51 first. So, yeah.

MS. BURK: This is Eva. I think Karen's advice is to -- and I know this from doing the Area M and Board of fish and having multiple proposals that it is best to get behind one proposal and echo that, and then refer to the comments that Karen has provided in 52 and 53. Right?

MS. LINNELL: So, usually what happens is they'll look at the proposals and you can move to

1 support one of them. And then on the other two you would  
2 say we've supported the similar proposal in proposal 51.  
3 Please see 51. And that's worked. And that's what we've  
4 done on multiple proposals that we liked and supported,  
5 but we picked one that was the strongest and went with  
6 that one.

7  
8 MS. MCDAVID: And I think that would work  
9 well, you all could make one motion to support all three.  
10 And then as well -- they were pointing at you Andy.  
11 Sorry. And then the comments would be for 51, and then  
12 we would as Karen suggested, we could -- just to simplify  
13 the motion process. You could do it for all three.

14  
15 MR. BASSICH: Are you saying that all  
16 three proposals would need to be identified in the  
17 motion?

18  
19 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, that's correct. So,  
20 how we do it from the RAC is we'll send a letter a  
21 comment letter to Board of Fish and then we'll, we'll  
22 specify in different blocks in that letter. Proposal 51.  
23 Here are our comments on 51. Proposal 52, it will just  
24 be see comments for 51 and the same for 53. So, the  
25 motion should say though yes that you support all three.

26  
27 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just want to clarify  
28 it because it is the Board of Fish, and now you're used  
29 to the Federal system. But I think I'm hearing what  
30 Karen's saying, you know, support one and then with one  
31 motion just 51 and then go to 52 and 53 refer to 51. So,  
32 you're trying to say that in one motion?

33  
34 MS. LINNELL: So, if I might it is better  
35 having gone to multiple Board of Fish and Board of Game  
36 meetings, it is better to be clear and concise. You're  
37 supporting proposal 51, in 52 and 53, you can just say  
38 we support the concept, but we are supporting proposal  
39 51. And it's because they're identical concepts but the  
40 proposal with the strength and vote behind it would be  
41 one proposal and which -- and we've done that before  
42 where we say we defer to proposal 51 instead of 52. That  
43 would be best. Thank you.

44  
45 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, in two motions.  
46 Yeah. That's how I understand it. Yeah. Take up one and  
47 then take the next one up. We support in reference to,  
48 we support the same concept, but we prefer 51. So, its  
49 --that's how I -- yeah. One motion and then a second.

50



1 MS. MCDAVID: Sure -- through the Chair.  
2 We can do it either way. There -- it's all go -- it goes  
3 in one comment letter, unless you want to send multiple  
4 comment letters. So, when we do a comment letter to the  
5 Board of Fish, we say which proposals you support and  
6 oppose all within one letter. So, if you take up multiple  
7 ones. Okay, just do it how you stated it, and it'll work  
8 out.

9  
10 (Pause)

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: First, let's have  
13 Jim Simon come up and do his testimony. Thank you. Jim.

14  
15 MR. SIMON: Thank you. For the record,  
16 my name is Jim Simon. I'm a consultant with Ahtna Inter-  
17 Tribal Resources Commission, but I'm speaking on my own  
18 behalf. I encourage you to support proposal 51 and take  
19 no action on proposal 52 and 53 based on your actions  
20 regarding proposal 51. First, I'd like to quickly  
21 explain some of the significant differences between  
22 Copper River management and Yukon River management. Just  
23 so, that you're all clear on why proposal 51 is so  
24 important. They're -- all salmon have the customary and  
25 traditional use determination for both the State and  
26 Federal systems. They are not species specific, like on  
27 the Yukon. They're unlike the Yukon, where there's an  
28 ANS for each stock throughout the whole river. The ANS's  
29 are split into three different reaches of the Glennallen  
30 sub district, including Balzulnetas or Batzulnetas or  
31 whichever term you use which is outside the Glennallen  
32 subdistrict, it's upriver. Katie John's camp is upriver  
33 from the Glennallen subdistrict. That is -- the main  
34 stem of the Glennallen subdistrict is the only place  
35 where subsistence salmon fishing is legal in the Copper  
36 Basin. There is one sonar way downriver, it is -- that  
37 -- and there's an in-river goal that is set each year  
38 that manages the commercial fishery at the mouth. The  
39 only data that they have is from those first two  
40 commercial fishery openings in the third and fourth week  
41 of May. So, the only way they know what's happening is  
42 to have a commercial opener, right? That's actually the  
43 way it used to be on the on the Yukon too. That's where  
44 most of the data came from as to assess how the run is  
45 doing. So, then all of the harvest must be reported at  
46 the end of season in both the personal use dipnet fishery  
47 and in the subsistence fishery, you know, what day and  
48 how many fish of what species you harvested. So, all of  
49 those historical catch information and days is put into  
50 a model to predict how -- and that's how they manage the

1 fishery. They see the sonar and they say, well, based  
2 on all the previous years, we should expect to see this  
3 many fish at the sonar. And if we open up the dipnet  
4 personal use fishery and the subsistence fisheries as  
5 normal, we would expect this much harvest to occur each  
6 day, right? So, it's all model driven. There's no real  
7 data except for the sonar count. And they do some mark  
8 recapture to distinguish -- there is no test fishery to  
9 apportion the species and stock of those sonar counts,  
10 right? So, there's a mark recapture that the native  
11 village of Eyak does to actually estimate what the  
12 chinook numbers are. So, this proposal says before you  
13 open up a third commercial fishery, you've already got  
14 salmon to the restaurants in Seattle, let's wait for  
15 some salmon to show up on the sonar so we know how many  
16 are actually entering the river. There is no other  
17 assessment, that's where the escapement is estimated  
18 through subtraction. What the sonar count is minus what  
19 the harvest is from the dipnet fishery and the Federal  
20 and State subsistence fisheries and then the presumption  
21 is that all -- the result of that subtraction exercise  
22 is all reaching the spawning grounds. And we've already  
23 spoken about the fact that that's not a good assumption  
24 in issues of environmental change. So, this proposal is  
25 saying before you open up a third commercial fishery,  
26 let's make sure that that cumulative management  
27 objective has at least been reached at the 70% level  
28 before another commercial opener is, because as the  
29 detailed information that the Park Service is going to  
30 be presenting and the superintendent and the salmon  
31 ecologist who developed this proposal will be attending  
32 the Board of Fish meeting. And they will be going through  
33 maybe excruciating detail that demonstrates how they are  
34 opening, prioritizing commercial fishing at the mouth  
35 before they have any confidence that the in-river goal  
36 and the sonar management objective is going to be  
37 reached. And they're disproportionately impacting those  
38 uppermost stocks that Unit 12 residents with C&T depend  
39 on. And they've not been meeting their needs for years,  
40 as Karen explained. So, that is the simple Simon  
41 explanation of proposal 51, and I encourage you to adopt  
42 it. Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
45 Any questions for Jim? Let's adopt. Thank you, Jim.

46

47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Mr. -- Charlie.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh!

50

1 MS: ENTSMINGER: It's just one question.

2

3

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

4

5 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just wanted to report,  
6 the Subsistence Resource Commission for the Wrangell  
7 Park took up these proposals, and they adopted all 3 in  
8 1 motion. So, for all the same reasons that we have  
9 heard here today they did not like -- there was a big  
10 concern about people in Seattle getting this fish before  
11 the people upriver get the fish. So, protecting the  
12 resource and ensuring escapement are important to  
13 everyone, and the burden of the conservation should not  
14 fall only on the subsistence users. The commercial  
15 fishery should also help. I might be reading that wrong.  
16 It was also noted it is part of Ahtna and Upper Tanana  
17 traditions to allow the fish -- first fish to go by, to  
18 celebrate them for the long travel to their spawning  
19 grounds. And just reporting that I didn't -- I'm sorry,  
20 Jim, I didn't have any questions. I just wanted to report  
21 what the Subsistence Resource Commission did. Thank you.

22

23

24

MR. SIMON: The question I heard was,  
what about this year? And I forgot to mention that. So,  
if I may, through the Chair. Thank you, Sue.

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So, a good example is what happened this  
year. You know, they determined that it was unlikely  
that the chinook drainage wide goal would be met on the  
Copper River. So, the State shut down the personal use  
dipnet fishery, the State subsistence fishery, and all  
sport fisheries in the tributaries, etc., while they  
continued commercial fishing and harvesting chinook  
salmon and selling them at the mouth of the river. The  
-- what will be in the record at the Board of Fish is -  
- I believe the letters from the Commissioner of Fish  
and Game, asking the superintendent of Wrangell-St.  
Elias to restrict the retention of chinook salmon in the  
Federal Subsistence Fishery, which is a very small  
overall portion of the total harvest. Fortunately, the  
Federal in-season manager, the superintendent, said in  
his response, well gee you know, you've opened  
commercial fisheries and sold as many chinook after  
you've shut the river down that the Federal Subsistence  
Fishery harvests on average each year, like 300 and some  
odd chinook salmon. So, I'm not shutting it down. So,  
that's a perfect example of how State management is  
prioritizing commercial fisheries as some of the -- as  
one of the attorneys on the Fairbanks Fish and Game  
Advisory Committee I've heard say, violates the State

1 subsistence law. So, that is another reason why it's so  
2 important to pass proposal 51, because sustainability  
3 should come first, and subsistence should come second.  
4 And that is not what is happening on the Copper River.  
5 Thank you.

6  
7 MS. ENTSMINGER: If there is no more  
8 public comment, I'm willing to make the motion. I believe  
9 I understand it, and the motion is to support the Board  
10 of Fish proposal 51 and take no action on 52 and 53 and  
11 reference to 51. Action on 51.

12  
13 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don. I'll second.

14  
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: Actually, you jarred my  
16 memory Karen, because I used to be on the Board of Game,  
17 and this is how we would take up -- the Board of Game,  
18 Board of Fish do things similar. You take all these  
19 similar proposals, and then you support one. And  
20 reference to the all the other ones that are similar  
21 reference to the one you support. This is a -- the way  
22 they do it and it makes sense, so.

23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: We need justification for  
25 the record, please.

26  
27 MS. BURK: This is Eva, for the record.  
28 It's very clear that subsistence needs are not being met  
29 on the Copper River. And it's really concerning that  
30 it's been for a number of years that those needs have  
31 not been -- being met. It's also concerning to restrict  
32 subsistence users when a commercial fishery has been  
33 opened, like we saw this year in 2024. And I think that's  
34 about it for me. It's an easy one.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

37  
38 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I'll continue on  
39 that. Basically, what we have is a case of the state of  
40 Alaska not following its own constitution and its own  
41 policies on sustainable salmon initiatives. It's that  
42 simple. So, I'm going to vote in favor of support of  
43 this. And I wish all the people in the upper Copper  
44 River future success because we've spent a lot of time  
45 talking about the Copper River, and those people are  
46 going to be just like what I am up in Eagle if things  
47 don't change. And I wouldn't wish that on anyone.

48  
49  
50

1 MS. ENTSMINGER: And I would add how the  
2 people up-river aren't real happy to see it sold  
3 commercially and then told to release them later.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd like to add that  
6 if you got a hatchery going on and you're selling wild  
7 fish and not selling your hatchery fish and it's coming,  
8 it's kind of some trickery going on and it's not right.  
9 I'll support this too. Thank you.

10  
11 MS. MCDAVID: Call for the question.

12  
13 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Can you restate the  
14 motion? Please.

15  
16 MS. ENTSMINGER: Support Board of Fish  
17 proposal 51. And take no action on 52 and 53 and refer  
18 back our reason as a supporting 51.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
21 Sue. And I think that we can go for a unanimous vote on  
22 this. So, if anybody is against it, please speak up.  
23 Hearing nothing, passes.

24  
25 MS. MCDAVID: We're going to stand down  
26 for two minutes.

27  
28 (Pause)

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, we're about  
31 ready to get started again. Thank you.

32  
33 (Pause)

34  
35 Next, we have ACR 1. Remove restrictions  
36 on gill net mesh size and length in the subsistence  
37 fishery for non-salmon fish in non-flowing waters of the  
38 Yukon area.

39  
40 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

43  
44 MR. BASSICH: I'd like to make a motion  
45 that we support ACR 1.

46  
47 MR. WOODRUFF: I will second that. Thank  
48 you. This is Don.

49  
50

1 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, speaking about  
2 this, I feel this is an absolute horrible proposal to  
3 try and initiate on the Yukon River given the impacts  
4 of incidental harvest if this was to take place and for  
5 conservation concerns I don't think that this should be  
6 done. I think that this ACR does not meet the criteria.  
7 In fact, it would contribute to the problem. And so, it  
8 should not be taken up at the next meeting. So, I am not  
9 -- I am going to support -- I'm sorry. I'm not going to  
10 support this. I think this ACR does not meet the criteria  
11 for the Board of Fish to take up. Because it does nothing  
12 for conservation. It actually is a negative impact on  
13 an already stressed out fish that is struggling to meet  
14 escapement goals and or ANS on the Yukon River. Thank  
15 you.

16  
17 MS. BURK: I will also not be supporting  
18 this motion. It's like -- it's kind of a little bit of  
19 a softball motion to me. And there's not like,  
20 identification of these non-flowing rivers that makes  
21 me very comfortable. So, I cannot support this motion  
22 at this time.

23  
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: For the reason said  
25 I will not be supporting this motion either. Thank you.

26  
27 MR. BASSICH: I'm going to ask for a  
28 question, Mr. Chair.

29  
30 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry, Amanda. We had these  
31 passed out before you arrived today, so.

32  
33 (Pause)  
34  
35 We'll let the record reflect that member  
36 Shockley is not included in the votes.

37  
38 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, the other thing  
39 I wanted to add -- this member Bassich, for the record.  
40 The other thing I wanted to add about this is that there  
41 is nothing time sensitive about this proposal. Usually  
42 when ACR are asked for -- they are because there is a  
43 detrimental effect happening to a stock and it's of  
44 concern time-wise action needs to be taken to correct  
45 that to protect stocks. This particular one has plenty  
46 of time to go through the process of submitting a  
47 proposal, having public discourse on it, and then going  
48 through the regular process and developing a really good  
49 proposal that is meaningful for subsistence users and/or  
50 other users on the Yukon. So, in my view, this doesn't

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1 meet the criteria for an ACR, because there's no urgent  
2 matter that this ACR would be positively affecting a  
3 stock that is in trouble. Thank you.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Are you prepared to  
6 vote now? Did you read it? And you're okay? Do you have  
7 anything, comment or anything you want to say? Okay, I  
8 think I heard somebody call question. I think so. So,  
9 we'll ask for -- since everybody seems to be in the same  
10 mind, we'll ask for unanimous vote again. And if anybody  
11 is against it, please speak up now.

12  
13 MR. BASSICH: So, I am a no for this. I  
14 do not support this to move forward.

15  
16 MS. MCDAVID: You all can just say nay  
17 at the same time into your mic if you want that. That's  
18 how that works. We don't have to go around. Okay.

19  
20 IN UNISON: Nay.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd like to say  
23 thank you to Mr. Eric Werwa from D.C. He's still online  
24 and it's about midnight there and we really appreciate  
25 you hanging in there.

26  
27 MR WERWA: It's only 10:00. Only ten  
28 still.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Still, it's late.  
31 Thank you.

32  
33 MS. BURK: I -- we're almost ready to  
34 wrap, but after listening to the -- my own presentation  
35 today, I would like to make a motion that the EIRAC  
36 support chum cap and that the EIRAC support time area  
37 closure in the North Pacific action that's coming up in  
38 February 2025.

39  
40 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second. Thank you.  
41 This is Don.

42  
43 MS. BURK: Thank you. Basically, we know  
44 that a lot of work is going into this. Also, listening  
45 to Gale Vick's presentation about the Bristol Bay AYK  
46 coalition. We know that there are a lot of people working  
47 on this concept across the State. We know that this is  
48 something that we have the opportunity to actually take  
49 an action. And with the seven-year agreement on the Yukon  
50 right now, we need to put forth actions that have other

1 people who are taking Yukon River salmon to share the  
2 burden of conservation. We want to support a  
3 conservation corridor and there's only a couple of  
4 regulatory actions right now that we've identified. And  
5 I think I know things will, you know, transform as we  
6 get more information. But at the moment, we are basically  
7 asking to reinstate protections and restrictions in the  
8 ocean that were previously in place when we had times  
9 of low salmon abundance. And so, I think it's really  
10 important for this Council to support that. I think this  
11 Council can be informed through the Bristol Bay, AYK  
12 coalition, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission,  
13 Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association and others  
14 as they're working on this and preparing for the February  
15 2025 Chum Bycatch Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact  
16 Statement. This will be the second initial review. And  
17 so, by us providing feedback on the alternative we're  
18 also responding to the Chum Salmon Engagement Plan,  
19 where this RAC was identified as an engage that -- to  
20 engage with the North Pacific Fishery Management  
21 Council. But the time of engagement is after the February  
22 meeting. So, I think it's really important for us to  
23 provide feedback before that February meeting. And if  
24 anybody has any other questions. Sorry, I'm just looking  
25 over here.

26  
27 MR. BASSICH: Just to clarify in what  
28 manner, what form is our support for what you're asking  
29 for, is it going to be a letter? Is -- okay. Thank you.  
30 I wasn't clear on that in the motion. Thank you.

31  
32 MS. BURK: Yes. Thank you. Sorry about  
33 that. Getting pretty tired here. We would like to write  
34 a letter. Comments are going to be due in January. We  
35 can always comment to National Marine Fisheries Service.  
36 Tribes can comment to them at any time or request  
37 engagement, but we can also comment to them as well  
38 about these. We have that option. So, we may want to  
39 send a letter to both National Marine Fisheries Service  
40 and to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.  
41 That's what I would recommend sending letters and being  
42 specific about what we want to see pushed forward for  
43 further analysis.

44  
45 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I'm in 100% support  
46 of that. I think that's what this entire meeting has  
47 been about. And I think it's crucial to begin to work  
48 on conservation corridors and any action -- meaningful  
49 actions that can be done to reduce bycatch of both  
50



1 chinook salmon and chum salmon for the AYK region.  
2 Crucial.

3  
4 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, if I could ask  
5 a question since I'll be helping draft the letter with  
6 working with you guys. But it would be helpful to state  
7 on the record, I know in the past, you guys have  
8 supported different caps at different levels. And if  
9 there's a certain level that you would like the cap to  
10 be at. Thank you.

11  
12 MS. BURK: Well, I always want to cap at  
13 zero, but that's going to shut the Pollock Fishery down.  
14 And I don't think that that's actually best for some of  
15 our coastal communities, to be honest. As a tribal seat,  
16 I have to think about other tribes. And so, I think the  
17 cap from in the presentation, I was trying to show the  
18 different levels of bycatch and in recent years  
19 historical and that if we're trying to actually reduce  
20 chum bycatch, that the average for the past ten years  
21 has been 280,000. And the cap that I would suggest is  
22 we shouldn't be analyzing anything over 280,000, because  
23 that would not be effectively reducing chum. And so, I  
24 would actually and if people are okay with this, I would  
25 recommend a cap of 200,000 or less because that's  
26 actually achievable. Last year they had caught 100, just  
27 over 111,000 chum as bycatch. So, it's definitely within  
28 their operational range. So, I would say a cap of no  
29 more than 200,000 in that 280,000 should not even be  
30 further analyzed.

31  
32 MR. BASSICH: And will this letter also  
33 address chinook bycatch, or is it mainly just focus on  
34 chum? Because if we're going to put chinook in there,  
35 we should also put a cap for chinook as well. And from  
36 my perspective, quite frankly, I'd rather go down to  
37 180. I mean, I think, you know, the low -- with the  
38 stocks in the condition we're in and as we're talking,  
39 we've demonstrated every fish counts, I think try and  
40 get those down and holding their feet to the fire to  
41 reduce bycatch to the extent possible, not practicable,  
42 but possible.

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: Would you all -- speaking  
45 to Andy's point about including chinook? It's my  
46 understanding that this action that the Council will be  
47 taking is specific to chum, but what we could do is  
48 include the letters that you have sent previously as an  
49 attachment that also address chinook bycatch there.  
50

1 MS. BURK: We could reference chinook  
2 bycatch in this letter in the sense that the three-river  
3 index, one of the alternatives that they're analyzing,  
4 is an abundance-based cap, and the abundance index that  
5 they're using is set up very similar to the way it was  
6 set up for chinook which is a three-river index. And  
7 like I was explaining before, I don't know if I fully  
8 agree with this three-river index. And so, maybe we can  
9 say we have concerns with how effective the three-river  
10 index is for chinook, and we would rather not see this  
11 cap, just have an abundance-based cap. We can have an  
12 overall cap. And that's actually what I think is needed  
13 right now. I don't think after looking at the abundance,  
14 I initially supported that concept, but I think we're  
15 going to be in this for a minute and we can always go  
16 back in and do things, other things. So, I'm concerned,  
17 I mean, for -- and full disclosure, I am concerned that  
18 the Council does want the abundance base cap. But I  
19 think they do not have a good handle on what low  
20 abundance is. They're managing us to extinction. I mean,  
21 that's what my whole point today about escapement goals  
22 is like, we're -- the escapement goal is too low, and  
23 it needs to be higher in order to get out of this.

24  
25 MS. MCDAVID: Just a couple more  
26 questions for clarification. No, you're doing good. I  
27 did want to see if we could get consensus on the cap  
28 because you said below 200K. Andy said and Charlie said  
29 more like 150 to 180. I think in your previous letters  
30 you said 150. So, if we could get consensus on what  
31 you'd like to say this time, that'd be great.

32  
33 MS. BURK: This is where -- this is your  
34 guys' -- this is up to you guys. And I would say you say  
35 150, I'm supporting that. Yeah.

36  
37 MS. ENTSMINGER: I would say we need to  
38 stick to the same numbers that we've always had,  
39 especially when they're lower.

40  
41 MR. WOODRUFF: And I would go with 150  
42 as well. Thank you.

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for clarifying  
45 that. And then also as part of the motion, you spoke to  
46 the support of a time and area closure. I know you  
47 presented on that earlier. Eva, would you like to add  
48 anything to the record now about that. What time frame  
49 you're speaking to and what area? Thank you.

50

1 MS. BURK: Yeah. So, there's in the  
2 motion, and I really should pull this up for you. There's  
3 -- that time area is one part of the motion where  
4 actually the Fish Commission is probably going to be  
5 trying to modify that alternative because it there's  
6 different areas broken out and you can't -- they're  
7 mutually exclusive. And so, I the -- and it's really  
8 hard to explain this without visuals, but basically, we  
9 want a time area closure, genetic cluster one has some  
10 of the highest bycatch of Western Alaska chum. And I  
11 believe the window for that is weeks 24th through 31st  
12 -- 24 to 31. And those how that translates to the  
13 calendar is like July, August and or June to August. And  
14 I have those dates so I can give those to you. But we're  
15 concerned that the one I presented, the historical chum  
16 Salmon savings area, because we're concerned that a cap  
17 in one area of only 50,000 is essentially like allowing  
18 status quo, like we need a lower cap and we need it to  
19 be a bigger area, basically. So, there's more to come  
20 on that. And we can speak to that in the letter. I can  
21 give you those numbers and just highlight those points.  
22 Yeah.

23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: I think that's all the  
25 questions for me now. Thank you.

26  
27 MR. BASSICH: Question.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Excuse me.  
30 Okay, again I'm going to ask for unanimous consent. For  
31 support of this letter. Oh, go ahead. Linda, I'm sorry.

32  
33 MS. EVANS: Could you repeat the motion?

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

36  
37 MS. BURK: I can't remember my motion.  
38 This is Eva. Let's have Brooke do it.

39  
40 MS. MCDAVID: I can help. So, and I'll  
41 paraphrase what all we've been speaking about since -  
42 so, the motion is to send letters to National Marine  
43 Fisheries Service and the North Pacific Fishery  
44 Management Council supporting a cap on chum salmon  
45 bycatch, which you all indicated you'd like to be no  
46 greater than 150,000 fish and also, to support a time  
47 and area closure in the area and during the part of the  
48 season where chum salmon are most commonly intercepted  
49 or bycaught.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Again, vote. I'm  
2 going to ask for unanimous consent. Anybody don't agree,  
3 please speak up now.

4  
5 (No response)

6  
7 Seeing and hearing no one passes. Thank  
8 you.

9  
10 MS. MCDAVID: All right. I'm hearing that  
11 we're getting ready to wrap up. I did want to make some  
12 comments about the agenda tomorrow morning because we  
13 do have a couple of time certain things that were  
14 scheduled. So, we'll start off in the morning after roll  
15 call with public comments on non-agenda items again. And  
16 then after that we have Alaska Department of Fish and  
17 Game is going to give a couple of presentations. So,  
18 once those Fish and Game presentations are over, we'll  
19 move back into our action items and finish up with the  
20 Priority Information Needs, the Annual Report and the  
21 SRC appointments, etc. So, those will be the last  
22 presentations before we get back into our action items.  
23 So, we probably have another full day tomorrow. I hope  
24 everyone gets a good night's sleep tonight.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, we're  
27 recessing for the evening. 6:24. We'll see you in the  
28 morning at 9:00. Thank you all.

29  
30 MS. BURK: Thank you, everyone, for  
31 bearing with us on the schedule. I appreciate all of  
32 your hard work. And stay until 6:30.

33  
34 (Off record)

35  
36 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Rafael Morel, for Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 148 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 9th day of October;

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

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 25th day of October 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rafael Morel  
Chief Project Manager