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SOUTHCENTRAL SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

BLM CAMPBELL CREEK SCIENCE CENTER
Anchorage, Alaska
October 11, 2024

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Encelewski, Chair
Michael Ophiem
Dennis Zadra
Judith Caminer

Regional Council Coordinator, Nissa Pilcher

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 10/11/24)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. Good morning, everyone. (Pause) Okay. We're back in session. We had an evening recess. Hope everyone had a good evening. As a reminder, if there's any public comments or -- you're welcome, each agenda item for the region concerned, including on the agenda. So, if you have a non-agenda item you want to speak to this morning, we'll let you come up and address it now. Also, we're borderline -- we don't have a quorum yet this morning. So, most of our business is reports. But we did want to take one action item. But, we can't get a quorum. We'll have to just deal with it. So, that said, any public testimony? Alrighty. Okay. What was I going to do is we're going to take a look where we dropped off. We were relevant Alaska Board of Fish proposals. And we had, and we had some discussion. We had a couple presentations and we -- the issue was around 51, I think we spoke about it quite a bit. I don't know if we could take action or not, Nissa. And -- short of writing a letter or support or whatever, thank you.

MS. PILCHER: Yeah. This is Nissa Pilcher for the record. Yeah. So, without quorum, the Council would not be able to take action on -- sorry, Karen emailed something to you guys. I was just looking at it. You guys wouldn't be able to take formal action on anything, but there's only one action item left, if you guys chose to take it up and that was the discussion of the Board of Fish proposals that you guys were involved in yesterday. I'm going to need to double check. But, the Council, the council members that are in attendance could request a letter be sent to the Board of Fish. And I might have to list your names individually and say members of the Western Interior RAC, but quorum was not met, and write a letter saying your guys' stance on the proposals, if you'd like. I'm not sure if that's okay or not, if -- I will double check and if it -- if you want me to do that and it is okay to do that, I will do it. And also, the local advisory committees haven't really started meeting yet. I mean, I think probably Fairbanks and Anchorage have, but the local ACs haven't met yet and a lot of you are either on those ACs or plugged into or involved in that system. So, there is

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1 also the possibility of you guys being involved on the
2 state side.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Judy, go
5 ahead?

6

7 MS. CAMINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
8 is Judy, and I'm glad George is here today. We heard
9 testimony yesterday on some trawler proposals as well
10 as number 50. And so, I was just wondering, when you go
11 to Board of Fisheries meetings, do you need to have a
12 letter in hand from the RAC or you and others also review
13 all the proposals from the subsistence aspect? And can
14 you comment on these proposals, even if you don't have
15 a formal recommendation from a RAC or others?

16

17 MR. PAPPAS: Through the Chair, member
18 Judy -- Council member Judy, George Pappas, OSM, State
19 Subsistence liaison. The Office of Subsistence
20 Management forms comments on proposals as selected to
21 the Fisheries Division, and those proposals are vetted
22 through the different land managers or fisheries
23 managers, depending on which CSU they manage. Asking
24 them for information and the Office of Subsistence
25 Management, if you remember a few years ago, all the
26 proposals they choose to comment upon and the proposals
27 they do comment upon have to be consensually [sic]
28 approved, consensus with the IOC. So, all five agencies
29 have to approve it. So, we definitely do comment on
30 these. I used to, for 25 years, but it's been -- now we
31 have a team of more and more folks involved. And it is
32 my job to make sure that the Board of Fish and Board of
33 Game understand which and where our comments are. Now,
34 if a letter comes in from the Regional Advisory Council
35 you know, OSM helps process that through Nissa there.
36 And I professionally make sure that it is pointed out
37 on record, during the committee process, during side
38 bars. That's why I'm a very, very valuable member of
39 this team here at the meetings. Come grab me. You know,
40 it's great. You know, during a meeting, during a break,
41 what have you, how do I get my voice better heard. Do
42 you have a speech that you want me to take a look at?
43 To take out a couple of words that will trigger folks?
44 Whatever. I will do my best to make sure that your voice
45 is heard. Now, for trawlers -- blue water, we have not.
46 Up until about 18 months ago, we specifically restricted
47 our comments to waters under federal subsistence,
48 federal subsistence fisheries jurisdiction. So, outside
49 the line, marine waters, offshore, (indiscernible). We
50 did not make comments. Eastern Interior didn't like

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1 that. The way our comments sounded like some of the
2 intercept fisheries out in Area M may not have impacts
3 on federally qualified subsistence users. No, our
4 comments were modifications out there actually do not
5 modify what we do in river, even though independent of
6 how many fish come and go. They want us to comment
7 further out. So, you're seeing that, and you'll see some
8 comments in this round for the Copper River that does
9 go outside of jurisdiction a little bit, saying, you
10 know, if this proposal is modified and commercial
11 fishing is gone up tenfold or down tenfold, yes, there
12 will be an impact on qualified one way or the other.
13 They're not solid yet. We're in the process of evolving
14 to it, and we are to report back to the Federal
15 Subsistence Board very soon on how it's working. And so,
16 I think I covered a lot of the bases, but you don't see
17 too many letters out of OSM to the North Pacific
18 Fisheries Management Council on the blue water trawlers.
19 Not trolling, trawlers. Is that what you meant? The
20 offshore trawlers?

21
22 MS. CAMINER: That's my recollection. His
23 name was Ryan and I'm sure Gabe will have it on the
24 transcript for his exact concerns. But, it sounds like
25 you'll have us covered. That there was quite a discussion
26 about 50 here yesterday. Which, you know, again, you'll
27 be able to see and I think you'll be able to tell what
28 the Council indicated. But, you know, perhaps,
29 unfortunately, won't be able to submit super formally.

30
31 MR. PAPPAS: If a letter comes in at --
32 a letter or a note from the -- goes in as a RC or PC,
33 public comment or RC before the meeting saying that you
34 had a total of five of ten at the meeting and all five
35 agreed upon this and support it. We couldn't get a quorum
36 -- that that speaks volumes. But you know, if -- it's
37 all together in the same, if it's 4 to 1 and they might
38 say, well, you know, might think about it. But, I hope
39 I helped you a little bit there.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. That,
42 that that clarifies that. That's good.

43
44 MR. PAPPAS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: George, yeah.
47 Okay. We're going to go ahead and move on. We got to get
48 off this. Do you guys want to send a letter from the
49 four of us supporting that? as Eastern Interior -- Okay,
50

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1 MR. ZADRA: I won't support it.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: So, then it'll
4 only be three. It'd be kind of -- no sense. Yeah. I'm
5 not sure that we need to do that at this time. Oh.

6

7 MR. ZADRA No. You stay down.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Who's talking?

10

11 MR. ZADRA: Oops, sorry. Mr. Chair, I
12 didn't know my mic was on (laughs).

13

14 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Oh, okay. I
15 thought, hell, I thought she said, "hell, no" or
16 something. Oh, okay. That's great. Okay. No, I think
17 that in light of just three members in favor of it here,
18 that's kind of -- that doesn't send a clear majority
19 that it was supported, I don't know. Yeah.

20

21 (Pause)

22

23 Is Dan here? Dan, I got -- we're
24 actually going to get off this subject, but I'm going
25 to go ahead and let you come up and talk a little bit.
26 And I think you had this in from yesterday. So, we'll
27 let you speak on it. Thank you.

28

29 MR. GORZE: All right. Thank you, Mr.
30 Chair, members of the Board. I just wanted to shed some
31 light on the background of the creation of proposal 72.
32 This is a proposal to close Gulkana sport or river
33 fishing to chinook and sockeye salmon by emergency
34 order, when the water temperatures at the Sourdough
35 station exceed 18°C at any time over a 24-hour period
36 for three consecutive days or exceeds 20°C. Fishing may
37 resume when temperatures drop to -- below that for two
38 days. I am a part of a working group for the State --
39 Statewide Temperature -- Stream Temperature Monitoring
40 Program. I work with a lot of folks around different
41 agencies, and we were talking about how to use our data
42 in a useful way, and the idea came up of using it for
43 management purposes in the Gulkana. There's a lot of
44 accessible stream miles here, and there's a lot of fish
45 here, but it's basically the only place left in the
46 state you can drive to and fish for chinook, one of
47 them. I'm -- the Gulkana River has -- it has about 25%
48 of the returning chinook to the Copper River Basin. Of
49 those 25%, 60% are above the tower spawners. The spawning
50 -- sorry, the counting tower for ADF&G, I can't remember

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1 what river mile it is, about 11 or 13 miles above the
2 Sourdough station and 40% of chinook spawn below that
3 tower. That's about 4,500 to 6,500 fish a year. It's
4 been pretty widely accepted that temperatures above 18
5 degrees are disastrous for chinook salmon, especially
6 big females, and increased fishing pressure stresses --
7 through heat stress, that's -- causes pre-spawn
8 mortality. Large females are impacted about twice,
9 they're about twice as susceptible as other salmon. And
10 the clarity I wanted to provide here is that, currently,
11 chinook fishing closes July 19th in the river. And so,
12 based on that, over the last -- since 2018 -- so, looking
13 backwards, this year 2024, there would have been seven
14 closure days as written in this proposal. Understanding
15 that chinook fishing already closes July 19th. So, we
16 might have to modify or amend some wording. So, there
17 would have been seven days closed. That would have been
18 end of June, 2023 zero days closed. 2022 there have been
19 14 days closed, that's June 28th to July 19th. 2021, zero
20 days. 2020, zero days. 2019 was the hot year, that would
21 have been 25 days of closure under this proposal. And
22 again, this is sport fishing, this fish had already made
23 it to the Gulkana. In 2018, zero days. So, weir sites
24 around the state, for example, the Andreescu weir, they
25 suspend any handling of fish after 17 degrees mean
26 Celsius daily temperature. The reason it's written here
27 as a maximum daily temperature is because there's
28 approximately a two-degree fluctuation diurnally and
29 it's easier to enforce when you can look at a high
30 temperature during the day. And it's also easier to
31 monitor. The USGS temperature monitoring station at
32 Sourdough is already in place, so it would cost no extra
33 money to the state. And, sorry, I have some scattered
34 notes here. Yeah. So, it wouldn't be unprecedented. It
35 wouldn't cost any money. It'd be easily enforceable. And
36 fish that make it to the Gulkana River would be able to
37 go out and spawn. Thank you.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Any questions
40 for Dan? Okay, well thank you. Come on up, George.

41
42 MR: PAPPAS. George Pappas, OSM. I did
43 have something to add to this. I did look into this for
44 other purposes. And there are regulations in other
45 states, like in Minnesota, if it's above, what, 16°C? I
46 believe they close their sport fisheries in Colorado. I
47 think it's closed from 8:00 at night until 8:00 in the
48 morning. Excuse me, it's only open from 8:00 at night
49 to 8:00 in the morning because it's too hot during the
50 day. You know, it's 100 degrees outside and the water

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1 is 80 degrees. You touch a brook trout, and it dies. So,
2 there are other states that do have something like this
3 by hour and by -- other states that have them by
4 temperature. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Thank you.
7 Good to know. Okay. Question you want to do -- Well,
8 we're just going to take a poll. See here if you guys
9 generally support this concept, you know yeah.

10
11 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes. No, I definitely
12 support it.

13
14 MR. OPHEIM: Yeah. No, I support that.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Well, we all
17 support it. So, you could take that to the bank and see
18 what you can get out of it. Okay, Okay. George, you're
19 hearing us. Okay. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Dan.

20
21 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher. For
22 the record, I meant to do this yesterday, and I forgot
23 Ed was having some technical difficulties yesterday
24 during the vote for WP2501. He did communicate to me in
25 writing. He heard everything. He just couldn't get
26 himself unmuted. And he was -- he voted in line with the
27 rest of the Council, which was to support the amended-
28 amended proposal. But that was it, what I needed to say.

29
30 This is Nissa Pilcher again, for the
31 record. If -- I would like to kind of do some
32 introductions. Everybody in, that's present in this room
33 did, I believe, give introductions yesterday. Oh, do you
34 want to -- We do have one new person that will introduce
35 themselves.

36
37 MS. KLEIN: Good morning. My name is Jill
38 Klein, and I work at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm
39 the regional subsistence coordinator, so I help support
40 our regional director in her participation at the
41 Federal Subsistence Board. And I'm also currently acting
42 for our Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation deputy
43 assistant regional director. So, good morning.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Good morning.

46
47 MS. PILCHER: All right. And then for
48 anyone who called in, if -- and you did not introduce
49 yourself yesterday if you could please go ahead and
50 introduce yourself now. What I didn't go over the -- if

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1 you have called in on a phone, you may need to press
2 star six. That will mute you. It will also unmute you
3 if you're muted. Your mute button on your smartphone
4 will also do the same thing. So, if you are out there
5 and didn't introduce yourself yesterday, please go
6 ahead, make yourself unmuted and introduce yourself now.

7
8 MS. LINNELL: Good morning. This is Karen
9 Linnell, Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission, calling
10 in today instead of being in person. Thank you.

11
12 MS. LEONETTI: Hi. Good morning, Council
13 members and Mr. Chair. This is Crystal Leonetti. I am
14 the currently Acting Director for the Office of
15 Subsistence Management, and I'm joining sort of
16 sporadically in between meetings. It's good to hear all
17 your voices. Thanks.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Good to hear
20 you, Crystal.....

21
22 (Simultaneous speech)

23
24 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair.....

25
26 MR. SIMON: Good morning Nissa and
27 council members, this is Jim Simon, a consultant with
28 Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission. Thank you.

29
30 MS. WESSELS: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
31 council members, this is Katya Wessels --
32 (indiscernible).

33
34 MS. PILCHER: All right. Good morning..

35
36 MS. PATTON: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
37 council members. Oh, go ahead.

38
39 MS. PILCHER: No worries, Eva. You go
40 ahead.

41
42 MS. PATTON: Good morning. This is Eva
43 Patton, the subsistence program manager for the National
44 Park Service at the regional office here in Anchorage.
45 Good to be on this morning. I'm just traveling back from
46 Kotzebue for our SRC meetings. Looking forward to
47 hearing your discussions today. Thank you.

48
49 MR. AYERS: Good morning, Mr. Chair. This
50 is Scott Ayers. I am OSM's Fisheries division

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1 supervisor. I'm glad to hear you all today and hear your
2 discussions. I'll like Crystal will be in and out of the
3 meeting today, but I really enjoy hearing what it is
4 that you have to say. So, I wish you well for your
5 conversations and making it through the agenda swiftly
6 today. Thanks.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Thank you.
9 Scott. Anyone else? Good morning.

10

11 MR. CUTTING: Good morning, good morning
12 Mr. Chair. My name is Kyle Cutting. I'm a wildlife
13 biologist calling in from Wrangell-St. Elias National
14 Park and Copper Center, Alaska. Good to be here.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Very good.
17 Anyone else? Okay. Well, thank you all. We're going to
18 go ahead and start our reports. As we go, time limit of
19 15 minutes, unless approved in advance. I'm flexible,
20 but not too flexible, so. We're ready to start?

21

22 MS. PILCHER: Just -- this is Nissa, for
23 the record, just to double check. Do we have any native
24 organizations or tribal governments that would like to
25 give a report at this time?

26

27 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. Come on
28 up. Who?

29

30 MS. PILCHER: She's on the phone.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Oh. Karen
33 Linnell. Go ahead.

34

35 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
36 is Karen Linnell with Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource
37 Commission. Just to give you a brief update on the
38 activities for Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission.
39 We were given Notice of Award for a FRMP grant but with
40 the transition from -- of OSM to from being under U.S.
41 Fish and Wildlife Service to the -- to be under the
42 Secretary's office, that funding was not awarded. And
43 that was to continue the Klutina River sonar project,
44 transitioning from Native Village of Eyak to Ahtna
45 Inter-Tribal Resource Commission. We're hoping that now
46 that the transition has happened, that the -- an -- a
47 contract will be awarded so that we can have a sonar in
48 the Klutina River in 2025. This is -- has been reported
49 before, based on a radio telemetry project that Native
50 Village of Eyak did about 15 years ago, 30, 34 to 53%

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1 of the sockeye return -- go into the Klutina River. Last
2 year, last summer, we were able to run the wheel a couple
3 weeks extra and captured the largest run in a single day
4 at that time by keeping it in a little longer. Which,
5 again, goes to that run timing changes that we've been
6 seeing and talking about throughout this meeting. AITRC
7 fisheries biologist also helped with this installation
8 and removal of the -- it's not a weir of it -- up near
9 Batzulnetas and with the Park Service and they're
10 looking at transitioning that from the Park Service to
11 AITRC. And so, having a couple people knowing how to
12 install and remove that device and the wier is just
13 passing on that knowledge and having a backup. As far
14 as wildlife is going, we've got our carnivore project
15 study had concluded a year ago. We're still trying to
16 get a report written. The -- our partners at the
17 Department of Fish and Game have left the department.
18 We're looking at trying to renew our data sharing
19 agreements so that we can get those reports finalized
20 and published before the Port Graham meeting in January.
21 We'd like to get a report done before they start to look
22 at wildlife proposals in -- next year, in January. We
23 are working in partner with Native Village of Tazlina
24 on a wolf project, we're collaring wolves within
25 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and preserve
26 boundaries. Looking at range distribution and diet. We
27 hope to start collaring early, mid -- early to mid-
28 November so that we can follow the wolves movements and
29 then look at potential kill sites or in that kind of
30 thing, and collecting fecal samples as well as hair
31 samples and that kind of thing in throughout the project.
32 It's a two-year project. We are also contracted by
33 Cheesh'na Tribal Council to assist in coloring Mentasta
34 Caribou Herd. The management plan for the Mentasta was
35 to have about 40 collars out there. Last year there was
36 only about ten. So, Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource
37 Commission, working with Tazlina -- or Cheesh'na bought
38 additional collars for deployment and our biologist was
39 in the spotting plane and helping Wrangell-St. Elias
40 locate caribou and -- while they collared them. We're
41 working closely with a biologist or a veterinarian on
42 the Wolf project, and we'll actually be doing some of
43 the capture and sample collection then. We're -- we were
44 working with the state last year on a caribou habitat
45 assessment, and, this year, we were not able to
46 participate, and but -- are looking forward to seeing
47 what the land can sustain, because we've heard that
48 multiple times that we have to reduce the Caribou Herd
49 because it's more than the land can sustain, but nobody
50 studied it,. So, we're hoping to help fill that data

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1 gap. Our ecologist has been busy working on moose health
2 and salmon health surveys. We're collecting samples on
3 salmon, regarding -- looking at their salmon health
4 ichthyophonous and any other diseases. Getting age, sex
5 and length through the otoliths and measurements there.
6 We assisted the department through last summer on their
7 otolith collections, looking at hatchery stocks and
8 their ranges there. And then our moose health survey,
9 initially started by a question from one of our elders
10 asking if our traditional foods are making us sick
11 because we have so many people with cancer. And, so
12 we're looking for heavy metals and that type of thing
13 in the moose by collecting kidney samples, liver, muscle
14 tissue, hair samples. And this year, we added the samples
15 -- blood samples, using a litmus to collect blood. And
16 then also the teeth, as you can count the teeth and or
17 cut the teeth, the front teeth and count the -- like the
18 rings on a tree so you'll know how old the moose is. The
19 first year we got 8 or 9 samples. Last year, I think we
20 got 30 some samples. And this year already we've gotten
21 about 39 samples. And we are still collecting samples
22 throughout the winter on -- through roadkills or
23 Potlatch harvests etc. So, we expect that number to go
24 up. The ecologist and a tribal citizen from Tazlina have
25 traveled to Texas A&M. That tribal citizen, Tamara
26 Jones, is working on her master's, and this is going to
27 be her master's project. And we're looking forward to
28 that. And we're excited that we're helping her with her
29 degree and giving her a project that benefits the Ahtna
30 people, but also helping to grow our own professionals.
31 So, we're excited about that. And just one thing that -
32 - I did send a letter, Mr. Chair, to you through Nissa
33 and to the RAC on looking at adopting the states amounts
34 necessary for subsistence as a subsistence use amount
35 until a time when we can establish subsistence use
36 amounts through the federal process. It's been 40 years,
37 and none was -- no subsistence use amount has been
38 developed because we thought that we'd go back to a --
39 single management. But it's clear that that's not going
40 to happen. And subsistence use amounts need to be adopted
41 for the Copper River subsistence users. And then, we're
42 also working on a tribal historic preservation office
43 and development of that. And there is -- through a study
44 done last fall, we found that there were graves on the
45 trail from O'Brien to Healy Creek. And the personal use
46 fishery was almost closed because of that. And we worked
47 with DOT and the State of Alaska, Department of Fish and
48 Game on trying to come up with a solution so that they
49 could have dip netting this year. And it was a temporary
50 fix, but we're looking at a more permanent solution.

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1 We're also looking at other areas throughout that
2 corridor where the personal use fishery is. There's been
3 expansion of the road and that kind of thing, but there's
4 a lot of cultural and historic sites that we're trying
5 to protect there. So, and our Ahtna ethnography will be
6 published. I believe, this December. It's been about
7 five years in the making. Working with Odin Miller, our
8 anthropologist, previous or former anthropologist who's
9 still on contract with us and Dr. Bill Simeon. So, you'll
10 see a book published on Ahtna's use of lands within
11 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Other
12 than that, I do serve on the U.S. Department of
13 Agriculture Tribal Advisory Committee and the Bureau of
14 Indian Affairs Budget Committee. If you folks have
15 anything that you'd like for me to address there, please
16 let me know. And that's all I have, Mr. Chair. Thank
17 you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Thank you.
20 Karen. It's a good report. Yeah. She did want us to take
21 a look at adopting the state system use amounts.
22 Subsistence use amounts. So, Judy, you want to talk to
23 that?

24
25 MS. CAMINER: Mr. Chair? Thank you,
26 Karen. I think that's a really good point. And so, maybe
27 perhaps part of our annual report would be questioning
28 the Board when or is there a process underway for
29 subsistence use amounts to be established for federal
30 users?

31
32 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Perfect.
33 That's good. We'll do that.

34
35 MS. LINNELL: Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. Okay,
38 next. I got a note. Scott, you're not a tribe or an org
39 -- but you're an organization, so I get that you want
40 to talk next, so go right ahead.

41
42 MR. AYERS: If that's all right, Mr.
43 Chair. Thank you very much.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: That's very,
46 that's mighty fine.

47
48 MR. AYERS: All right. I'll go ahead. I
49 just had a little bit of additional information that I
50 wanted to provide related to one of the first topics

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1 that was brought up during that last report, and it was
2 a fantastic report, and I really appreciate all that
3 great information that was shared. As was correctly
4 noted, OSM was not able to fund any of the 2024 projects
5 for -- that were submitted for the FRMP cycle. In their
6 first year that last round, it was kind of an
7 unprecedented situation where we did incur some
8 additional costs associated with our move, and we also
9 had a variety of other situations, including funding a
10 number of additional projects in the previous cycle that
11 we were still carrying over. And so, we reached out to
12 all of the applicants from the 2024 cycle and notified
13 them that those projects -- that none of the projects
14 had been selected for funding this round, because we had
15 no funding available for new projects during that cycle.
16 However, we asked if they were willing to let us hold
17 on to those applications in the event that we could have
18 a shortened period for up to three years instead of up
19 to four years, starting during this current fiscal year
20 2025. And at this point in time, we're just waiting to
21 find out what our budget is going to look like so we can
22 move forward with, hopeful, project selection and
23 continuing those projects on. We're really excited about
24 that Klutina sonar project. The first bit of information
25 that's come out of it has been very interesting, and
26 we'd like to see it continue to move forward. So, with
27 that, Mr. Chair, I just thank you for allowing me to
28 have a moment to add some additional information.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Yeah, we
31 appreciate that, Scott. That's good info and we briefly
32 discussed some of that a little earlier yesterday. But,
33 anyway, thank you very much for that heads up. Okay, is
34 there other tribal governments or native organizations
35 would like to give a report?

36
37 I'm going to take my board chair hat off
38 for a second, and I'm going to give a report for the
39 tribe, for Ninilchik. Since Ivan is not here or Darrel.
40 I briefly talked about it yesterday, but I would like
41 to get it on record, you know that we formed a fish
42 commission with the Cook Inlet tribes. They call it
43 Takotna. That means the Cook Inlet area, and it's made
44 up of Tyonek, Solomon, Chickaloon, Ninilchik, Knik,
45 Kenaitze and Eklutna. And also, we've invited three
46 other tribes, Seldovia and Alexander Creek, and a couple
47 others. The purpose of that was to support the
48 subsistence issues, and one of their big issues was the
49 economic exclusion zone, EZZ zone, is now managed by the
50 feds, and we would like to get a permit to be able to

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1 get fish in the inlet for the tribes there. So, that's
2 a big thing that's going on there. Other than that, I
3 told you about Ninilchik fishery was a tremendous
4 success and we move forward and continue. We took close
5 to 5,000 reds this last year and supported all the
6 permits that were out in the community -- community, so
7 that was good. So, I already gave my report and I just
8 wanted to get that on the record. That's something we're
9 working forward to, and you'll probably hear more about
10 the fish commission started. Thank you.

11
12 Okay. Any other native organizations?
13 I'm trying to find someone to replace me for Ninilchik.
14 Thank you. All right, we're going to move on. Jackie,
15 Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

16
17 MS. KEATING: Okay. Good morning, Mr.
18 Chair and members of the Council, again for the record
19 Jackie Keating, Division of Subsistence, Alaska
20 Department of Fish and Game. And we have our standard
21 one-page update that I believe is somewhere in the
22 supplemental materials book, kind of looks like this.
23 So, I thought I'd walk through a couple of things on
24 this and then give some updates - oh, go ahead, Nissa.

25
26 MS. PILCHER: It's on page 37.

27
28 MS. KEATING: Great. Thank you. And then
29 I'll give some other updates that aren't on here too,
30 but wanted to update the Council and the public on the
31 various projects that the Division of Subsistence has
32 been working on in the South-Central region. The first
33 one is the Copper Basin Community Harvest Assessment.
34 This is a partnership with the Ahtna Intertribal
35 Resources Commission and Wrangell-St. Elias National
36 Park and Preserve. And I think I've presented on this
37 before. We did comprehensive household surveys in
38 Mentasta, Chistochina and Mentasta, both Lake and Pass,
39 in the winter of 2023. Last winter in February 2024, we
40 did Slana and Nabesna Road. And again, this is very much
41 a partnership. We had survey staff from Fish, AITRC and
42 Game and the Park Service. And then specifically, I'd
43 like to give a shout out to the anthropologist, David
44 Hooper, with AITRC and then Amber Cohen and Barbara
45 Cellarius, they played a very proactive role, especially
46 with the ethnographic interview component of the
47 project.

48
49 We're doing a community data review in
50 and Slana on October 23rd to go over those draft results.

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1 And then all of the results of this project will be
2 incorporated into the Prince William Sound Board of Fish
3 this December and the Board of Game meeting coming up
4 in January. We're working on the final technical paper
5 for that, and it should be out in about a year or so
6 from now.

7
8 Secondly, we're doing a comprehensive
9 subsistence update down in Port Graham. So, we surveyed
10 that community in January. This was a partnership with
11 the Chugach Regional Resources Commission. So, two of
12 their biological staff came down and helped us do surveys
13 there as well. We returned in May to do an ethnographic
14 key respondent component to that. Looking to do the
15 community data review sometime this winter. Then we'll
16 be publishing that in December 2026. And along with that,
17 we also have another project with Chugach Regional
18 Resources Commission to look at moose traditional
19 ecological knowledge in Port Graham. There's a
20 biological component of that, that CRRC is doing to look
21 at moose abundance in the area. And then we assisted
22 with some life history mapping and more ethnographic
23 component of that, that will be part of the larger Port
24 Graham technical paper publication. We completed a
25 project, also a collaboration with CRRC, a Chenega clam
26 recovery project. So, there's a technical paper online
27 for that that was co-written by the department and staff
28 at Chugach Regional Resources Commission. There's a link
29 where anybody can go download that paper, and then a
30 handful of things that aren't on this summary. We
31 participated in a weeklong workshop in Cordova that was
32 put on by the Chugach Regional Resources Commission,
33 looking at marine mammal research and collaborative
34 research across the agencies and tribal groups. So,
35 really appreciated the opportunity to be involved in
36 that. We are working with the Native Village of Eyak and
37 the Chugach Regional Resources Commission to get funding
38 to do the comprehensive surveys in Cordova. It's been
39 over ten years since those have been done, so that's a
40 priority for us to get that in place. We're hoping that
41 falls into place to do in the winter of 2026. And then
42 lastly, I just wanted to put out a plug that last year
43 was the first year the Alaska Board of Fish had a
44 specific traditional knowledge testimony component that
45 followed staff reports. This was in an effort to
46 acknowledge that there are a variety of different types
47 of knowledge that should be brought into the process.
48 We believe they're doing that again this year. As soon
49 as there's any formal outreach on that, I'll make sure
50 that it's sent out to all the relevant groups. But it's

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1 a good opportunity for folks with that traditional
2 knowledge to come and give a little bit of a larger
3 testimony just to educate the Board on local things.
4 That's all I have. Happy to take any questions, but
5 thanks for the opportunity to present.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: That's very
8 good, Jackie. Got questions? Michael.

9

10 MR. OPHEIM: Not really a question. Just
11 thank you to Jackie. One of the things that's not on her
12 list is she just attended our Federal Subsistence Board
13 training that CRRC held in Girdwood, and it was great.
14 We had a lot of the OSM staff that's here at the training
15 and was very well accepted, and hopefully we'll get to
16 do that more often.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Did they
19 accept your traditional knowledge?

20

21 MR. OPHEIM: Yeah.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay, good.

24

25 MR. OPHEIM: We won't share it here, but
26 it's traditional.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Well, it's
29 good, it's good. Yu'pik hunting. But anyway. Thank you,
30 Jackie. Very good. Anyone else? No. Thank you. Okay.
31 Okay, Todd. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Kenai
32 National Wildlife Refuge.

33

34 MR. ESKELIN: Good morning, Mr. Chair,
35 Council members, Nissa. Todd Eskelin, Kenai National
36 Wildlife Refuge, for the record. As I typically do, I
37 didn't put anything in the supplemental or the handouts
38 because many of our hunts are still going on. So, we'll
39 give you a full wrap up of that at the winter meeting.
40 But I just want to give you some quick updates. Bring
41 up a couple of thoughts. For 2024, most people are
42 concerned about the moose permits the most on the Kenai.
43 It's one of our more valued resources and we were so far
44 down a little bit on the number of subsistence permits
45 for FM1505. There's still the late season coming up, and
46 we continue to issue a few more permits. But my take on
47 it from 2022 and 23, we had roughly 142, 143 permits.
48 We're at 125 now. And I think what we're seeing was the
49 addition of Moose Pass and the excitement of let's all
50 get a permit. And then the realization that Moose Pass

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1 to GMU15 is a long ways away and we don't really know
2 where we're going. And we've seen a, you know, a decrease
3 in those permits. And then, of course, just attrition
4 through aging out of being able to participate. And not
5 as many young folks coming into the fold as we see with
6 a lot of our activities on the refuge. So, down just a
7 little bit on permits, moose harvests so far this year
8 was five in the early season. I believe that's up just
9 a little bit from last year. It's a little bit more
10 typical. Last year was so warm and wet. Nobody wanted
11 to go hunting. And more people are focusing on the late
12 season now, even though there's a little bit more of a
13 risk of getting ready or readier meat with that. Last
14 year we had quite a bump up in our late season harvest
15 because we had a couple additional weekends before the
16 snow fell, which meant people could four-wheeler back
17 to the refuge boundary line. That's one of the big deals
18 of having that late season is, it gets to where you
19 can't actually get from the end of Oil Well Road back
20 to the refuge boundary safely. And so, also, as you
21 pointed out, Mr. Chair, a lot more people with the high
22 density of Moose in 15C right now, a lot of people are
23 harvesting on state and native land. They've gotten a
24 subsistence permit as another alternative. But they
25 harvested closer and more easily and end up putting "do
26 not" - "did not hunt" on their on their moose permit.
27 For the drawing hunts we had one caribou harvested and
28 one "did not hunt" from the Kelly River Caribou Herd.
29 For the sheep hunt, we had one "did not hunt". And then
30 for the goat permits we had two "did not hunt". And two
31 people who haven't responded yet. They're not late
32 because the season goes all the way 'til, I believe,
33 November 14th. But we do ask them to let us know when
34 they know they're not going to do it for the season. So,
35 I have a couple that haven't responded. But we did get
36 a caribou harvest out of that, which is great. I think
37 the only other thing I had to bring up, before I
38 entertain questions, is we had a problem with the -- I
39 believe OSM can clarify, but I think we had a problem
40 with the multifactor authentication requirements and the
41 online reporting that we typically have on the harvest
42 cards. That's going to result in some of the same
43 difficulties the state struggles with now that we
44 dropped the sealing requirement. I, as you know, Mr.
45 Chair, I hound people for those harvest reports, but we
46 probably were seeing 65% of our harvest reports coming
47 in online. Especially as we continue to ramp up our
48 technology and our, in our, you know, villages and local
49 communities. So, this is going to probably result in a
50 little bit less of a reporting success for each of these

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1 permits. And then, you know, triple the burden on me to
2 keep hounding people to, to get them in. But we're making
3 the best of it for now. Hopefully the new system will
4 rectify that. Right now I'm asking folks if they are
5 going to throw them in the mail, most of them want to
6 take a picture and text me so that they have a backup,
7 and they're covered in case the Postal Service loses
8 their little postcard and it doesn't get to me. So, just
9 some of the little workarounds we're doing. But that's
10 it for me. I'll entertain any questions you have.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. I just
13 got a quick question on the dual, the authenticators.
14 Is that an IT problem they're having for reporting? It's
15 just the extra additional identification they got to do
16 on it? I know IT wants everything now.

17
18 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Lisa Grediagin
19 again with OSM, for the record. And I can't speak to all
20 the nitty gritty details of this multi-factor
21 authentication, but yeah, I mean, basically it's an IT
22 issue. It's a requirement that the federal government
23 is mandating, you know, it was not optional. We had to
24 do it. And so, we've been working since December with a
25 contractor to completely redo and migrate our database
26 to a whole new platform. And, as a result of that, we
27 currently do not have this online harvest reporting. And
28 I think the hope is it'll be up and running again by
29 like spring of 2025. And, you know, it's a little
30 frustrating right now that we don't have it. But in the
31 long run, you know by next year it'll be a much smoother,
32 better system, updated system, so.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Appreciate
35 that, Lisa. Okay. Okay, questions for Todd. Don't let
36 him off that easy. Okay, Todd, thank you. How about we
37 take a quick five-minute break for coffee and wake up a
38 little bit and go on to the balance? We'll be right
39 back.

40
41 (Off record)

42
43 (On record)

44
45 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Back and going
46 here.

47
48 (Pause)

49
50 Yeah. Okay, I'm going to go ahead.

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MS. PILCHER: We're gonna get going.

CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. We're ready for the National Park Service report.

MS. PILCHER: Oh, actually, hold on one sec. Let me do the gravel-to-gravel. I went to go talk to Joe.

CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay.

MS. PILCHER: I did want to -- this is Nissa Pilcher, for the record. There is a gravel-to-gravel flyer in your guys' supplemental material. Judy had asked for information on that at the last meeting. Unfortunately, both the Fish and Wildlife Service employee, Boyd, and I cannot say his last name, Blihovde? As well as Becky with BLM who worked together on that initiative, were busy today, but I did want to include the flyer. Jill, did you want me to read what you emailed me? Okay. And then I can give you guys a really quick update. Of course, my -- it wasn't ready.

Okay, so the gravel-to-gravel Keystone initiative was started in early 2023. From the beginning, it is centered on tribal input and involvement. The original effort focused on coordination with the Association of Village Council Presidents, CRRC and Tanana Chiefs Conference, but with tribal direction. Gravel to gravel has invited all 110 tribes within the initiative to join the restoration and resiliency effort. To date, approximately 40 projects totaling \$36 million have been funded in the region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. These projects will be discussed during our second in-person meeting being held in October, which is the 10th and the 11th. So, it overlaps entirely with this meeting. Hence, why they couldn't be here, also in Anchorage. At this event, partners will provide updates to these projects, and we hope to finalize a Memorandum Of Understanding between tribes and federal agencies. And that is the update. And maybe at the winter meeting, we can get a little bit more information on that, if you guys would like.

CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. Sounds good. We got any questions on it? All right. Now we'll go ahead and move on then to the National Park Service.

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1 MS. COHEN: Good morning. My name is
2 Amber Cohen. I'm cultural anthropologist at Wrangell-
3 St. Elias. Today we have three reports for you. Two of
4 those are from people online. So, through the Chair, I'm
5 going to shoot it over to Dave Serafin, our fisheries
6 biologist. And that report starts on page 181 of your
7 materials.

8
9 MR. SERAFIN: Good morning. Yeah. Thanks,
10 Amber. This is Dave Serafin, fisheries management
11 biologist at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and
12 Preserve. So, you should have the fall fisheries report
13 that we could go through together here. So, I'll just
14 mainly go through the summary of key updates and touch
15 on a couple other points, maybe. Beginning with the
16 Tanada Creek weir, it operated through September 25th,
17 and we documented a total passage of 14,704 sockeye
18 salmon and 13 chinook salmon through that. And that's a
19 little bit below the long-term average we've had, which
20 is about 18,000 fish. So, not a bad return, but not
21 quite up to average, part of what might be happening
22 through observations at the site though -- we had a
23 period of really low water where it was -- appeared to
24 be not suitable for salmon entering the creek. And we
25 had a delayed start on some of our runs. Coincidentally,
26 we heard reports from up at Copper Lake that a very
27 large number of sockeye adults did return this year,
28 which is kind of unusual. And it's an interesting anomaly
29 that seems to be happening, that I believe we may need
30 to start monitoring the combination of Copper Lake and
31 Tanana Lake to get a combined escapement for the system,
32 because it appears maybe the fish continue on up to that
33 upper lake when they can't get into Tanada. And on the
34 Copper River, salmon run, you know, as the in-river run.
35 Anyways, as we, you know, we monitor it by relying on
36 the Department of Fish and Game's Miles Lake sonar. So,
37 it you know, it began weak again as it has in several
38 recent years, it seems, and then an increased in strength
39 as the season progressed. So, harvest opportunities
40 continued throughout the season and the sustainable
41 escapement goal should be achieved. And Miles Lake sonar
42 had a total passage estimate of 946,188 -- 946,188
43 salmon, and that's 58% above the management objective
44 they had of 599,000 through the period of operation of
45 the sonar. And then assessments by Fish and Game of the
46 In-river chinook salmon. They indicated an abundance
47 that may not meet the minimum bound of the sustainable
48 goal range of 21,000 to 31,000 fish. And so, State took
49 management actions that closed all state chinook salmon
50 fisheries in the upper Copper River by mid-season. And

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1 in the federal fishery, we issued 202 Chitina
2 Subdistrict Federal Subsistence Board permits. 293 for
3 Glennallen subdistrict and then two for Batzulnetas.
4 Historical subsistence harvest records are shown in
5 tables one through four, and one of the key ones is the
6 table one where it shows, you know, the combined
7 subdistrict harvest for the entire upper Copper River.
8 And so, you can see the -- for 2023, anyways, we're
9 still getting harvest reports for 2024. So, it's a -- I
10 can't speculate on what that'll be exactly. But for 20
11 -- you know, recent years -- 2023 was between the five-
12 year and ten-year average. And, you know, there has been
13 -- I guess touching on some of the concerns we've heard
14 regarding ANS, it is one thing to consider with the
15 federal. You know, we do have the Chitina Subdistrict
16 subsistence as well, and that's not accounted for in the
17 ANS. So, there are different considerations, if we do
18 pursue looking into subsistence-use amounts it may be
19 worth noting that Chitina has an effect on this as well.
20 We do have, you know -- we did a change in management
21 strategy beginning in 2018 and 19, and we saw increasing
22 uses in harvests by federal users when that occurred.
23 So, there's some different dynamics going on that may
24 be worth looking into. Then the other thing to note was
25 the lower -- the federal subsistence fishery in the lower
26 Copper River you know, this is information that we get
27 through the Cordova District Forest Service office. And
28 they issued 80 permits for that fishery, and the total
29 in-season reported harvest was 425 sockeye salmon and
30 two chinook salmon. And that, I think completes my report
31 for you. And I'm open for any questions.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Thank you,
34 Dave. We've got a question. Michael, go ahead.

35
36 MR. OPHEIM: Michael Opheim for the
37 record. In the ADF&G bullet it says here, "the minimum
38 bound of the sustainable escapement goal range of 21 to
39 31,000." You're talking about the chinook salmon, is the
40 number on page 182, 8,871 chinook salmon. Is that the
41 number that you're referencing in that first bullet or
42 that bullet?

43
44 MR. SERAFIN: Let's see, I don't have the
45 same booklet with page numbers. So, you're finding this
46 reference where?

47
48 MR. OPHEIM: Okay, so on your summary of
49 key updates on bullet one, two, three -- on bullet four
50 assessment by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game of

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1 In-river chinook salmon. It says, "an abundance that may
2 not meet the minimum bound of the sustainable escapement
3 goal range of 21,000 to 31,000 fish". But it doesn't say
4 how many chinook salmon passed. But on the next page
5 under upper Copper River fisheries, paragraph two, it
6 does mention season total commercial harvest for the
7 Copper River district, and it says 8,871, but that's
8 harvested fish, correct? Not how many fish.....
9

10 MR. SERAFIN: Yes, that -- yes, that is
11 harvested -- that's harvested as reported through the
12 fish and game website for the commercial fishery. So,
13 that's in marine waters before the fish enter the river.
14 And the in-river assessment primarily relies on the Mark
15 Recapture project that Native Village of Eyak performs.
16 And so, it's in season, it's all kind of preliminary
17 information until we get a better picture when they have
18 reviewed all their data and provide a final estimate.
19 The department is also utilizing their new sonar
20 technology that they can distinguish size, and they're
21 developing or investigating the development of a size
22 apportionment to possibly utilize in-season as well for
23 that.
24

25 MR. OPHEIM: Okay. So, we don't have the
26 escapement goal number, the actual number yet, because
27 they haven't done their data completion. Is that what
28 you're saying for the king salmon?
29

30 MR. SERAFIN: Yes. That's correct. So,
31 yeah, we'll need to look at NVE's estimate for in-river.
32 And then we need to account for all the harvest reports
33 we get from upriver. So, I believe they were tracking,
34 you know, somewhere -- the actual in-river estimate to
35 be right around where that minimum bound was. And so,
36 if we have, you know, a couple thousand chinook salmon
37 that may have been harvested upriver, that will come out
38 of the in-river assessment to give us what we believe
39 the escapement to be.
40

41 MR. OPHEIM: Okay. So, we'll probably see
42 that data at the winter meeting?
43

44 MR. SERAFIN: Yes. I anticipate that
45 would be a reasonable timeframe to expect that.
46

47 MR. OPHEIM: All right. Thank you.
48

49 MR. SERAFIN: Certainly.
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Any other
2 questions for Dave? Thank you, Dave. It was good.

3
4 MR. SERAFIN: You're welcome.

5
6 MS. COHEN: Okay. Our next one is by Kyle
7 Cutting, our wildlife biologist, and that will start on
8 page 49 of your supplementary materials.

9
10 MR. CUTTING: Okay. Thank you, Amber.
11 Good morning, Mr. Chair and South-Central RAC. My name
12 is Kyle Cutting, I'm a wildlife biologist at Wrangell-
13 St. Elias National Park and Preserve. I've been the
14 wildlife biologist here for the last two years. Today
15 I'll give a brief update on long term monitoring efforts
16 on subsistence wildlife species, including the Mentasta
17 and Chisana Caribou Herd, moose and Dall sheep. These
18 long-term projects are described in protocols that have
19 been developed by the National Park Service Inventory
20 Monitoring Program which is which is based in Fairbanks
21 and in conjunction with individual park units. So,
22 Wrangell-St. Elias has two caribou herds found in the
23 park, including the Mentasta and Chisana Caribou Herds.
24 Both herds are small and have been subject to long-term
25 monitoring or population surveys, composition surveys
26 of age and gender ratios, and radio collaring of animals
27 to track movement and survival and to inform our surveys
28 have occurred. There's a multitude of different partners
29 involved with caribou monitoring and management at
30 Wrangell-St. Elias, including Alaska Department of Fish
31 and Game, Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission, the
32 Government of Yukon, Department of Environment, Kluane
33 First Nation, White River First Nation, Tetlin National
34 Wildlife Refuge, and Wrangell-St. Elias Park. This past
35 fall, I'm just going to hit a few high points here to
36 keep my time short, in collaboration with AITRC and
37 Alaska Fish and Game, we deployed ten additional GPS
38 collars on Mentasta Caribou, bringing the number to 29
39 individuals, the GPS collars in that herd. Last week we
40 also deployed 15 new GPS collars on Chisana Caribou Herd.
41 This brings the number of GPS collared animals in that
42 herd to 27. Our Yukon partners will deploy 5 additional
43 GPS collars this March in Canada. Recently, Wrangell-
44 St. Elias, along with partners, received a scientific
45 grant to evaluate historic changes and herd overlap
46 across the last 30 years among the Mentasta, Gulkana and
47 the larger Nelchina Caribou Herds. This work --
48 evaluating herd overlap and factors driving that, will
49 be used for future harvest management and conservation-
50 based decisions. I'm excited to share for moose that we

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1 conducted a survey last fall across 2.5 million acres
2 spanning the north, west and south side of Wrangell
3 Mountains to the Mentasta Mountains to the north, the
4 Copper River drainage on the west, and the Chitina River
5 drainage on the south. We counted moose across this large
6 area. We estimated that the population size,
7 unfortunately, was nearly 40% lower than the previous
8 survey in 2013 and the estimate was slightly lower than
9 the 2007 and 2010 population estimates. We're using
10 modern spatial models to evaluate spatial patterns in
11 these moose counts. And from these spatial models, we
12 show that the decline in moose observed in the fall of
13 2023 occurred strongest on the north side of the Wrangell
14 Mountains and less so on the west and south side. We're
15 currently writing up this data in a scientific paper
16 that creates a structured decision tool to inform
17 different types of management decisions for moose by
18 using this survey data. Lastly, I'll conclude on sheep.
19 We're excited to report that Wrangell-St. Elias and the
20 inventory monitoring program and support with the
21 Subsistence Advisory Council within NPS surveyed a large
22 area in the northeast part of the park. Roughly 1,500
23 miles of transects were flown where we estimated Dall
24 sheep populations in the long-term monitoring area of
25 the Nabesna area on the north side of Wrangell's, and
26 also the Mentasta mountain range, and also the Notzotin
27 mountain range to the east. Preliminary results indicate
28 that sheep still remain at a very low level but maybe
29 the good news is that they appear to have stabilized at
30 this new low level. You know, so, we observed similar
31 sheep numbers this past summer as we did in 2023 in our
32 long-term monitoring area. The really encouraging news
33 is that all three areas had similar ewe -- lamb to ewe
34 ratios and ewe -- and lamb counts, which is above the
35 long-term average. And so, yeah, thanks for your time.
36 And that concludes my report.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. Thank
39 you, Kyle. Questions for Kyle before we move on. It's
40 an awful large area, you're doing a survey on, trying
41 to figure out 2.5 million acres to survey, but anyway.
42 Great. Okay. Thank you.

43
44 MS. COHEN: Okay. And now my report.
45 Again, for the record, this is Amber Cohen, cultural
46 anthropologist at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and
47 Preserve and the Subsistence and Anthropology Report, I
48 believe, starts on page 45 of your supplementary
49 materials. Okay, so starting at the top there with our
50 hunting permits that were issued for this past season,

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1 we have an updated number. As of October 9th, we have
2 issued 227 permits and those are for caribou, goat, moose
3 and sheep hunts in the park. There might be a few more
4 that will be issued throughout the winter. We do have a
5 winter moose hunt that goes from November to January,
6 so we'll give updated numbers as well as updated harvest
7 reports in your spring meeting. We also had some people
8 have issues with reporting due to the online system being
9 down. So, we did send out an email to all of our
10 permittees and let them know that they can just email
11 us back their harvest reports, call us, mail us. But so
12 far, we have about 50% of our moose reports in. So, I
13 don't want to give any harvest data until we are kind
14 of at higher numbers of reporting. So, we'll get back
15 to you in the spring on that. And then the next section,
16 there on our upper Copper River communities, the harvest
17 assessments, Jackie really covered that. So, I just want
18 to acknowledge Jackie and the rest of the Division of
19 Subsistence Staff for all the work that they did on that
20 project. It was really great teamwork between us and the
21 State and also the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource
22 Commission. So, I just want to highlight that
23 collaboration that went into that project. And then the
24 bottom there is about the many community outreach
25 meetings that we held for funding opportunity from the
26 Inflation Reduction Act funding that the park received
27 about \$1.3 million to go towards a project that would
28 enhance community subsistence food security resilience.
29 So, in order to figure out what projects communities
30 were interested in doing, we went out to 11 tribal
31 councils and 6 community meetings, and we have received
32 12 proposals. So, to put that in perspective, we have
33 about 23 communities at Wrangell-St. Elias that have
34 subsistence rights in the park, and we got about half
35 that gave in projects as well as some regional
36 organizations. So, right now we're reviewing those
37 proposals and projects will start to be funded later in
38 2025. So, it's really exciting updates there. You can
39 kind of skip ahead to the third page that starts off
40 with traditional knowledge, ethnographic and subsistence
41 projects. We have a lot of great work going on at
42 Wrangell-St. Elias and Karen from AITRC pointed out
43 about the Ahtna and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and
44 Preserve ethnographic overview and assessment, and as
45 she had mentioned, this was a project in the works for
46 many, many years and we're very excited that it has
47 finally been completed back in September and will be
48 published later this year. It will also be available
49 online. So, we'll have physical copies and an online
50 version that will be available on our park website and

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1 so we're really excited that this came together. And it
2 was again a great collaboration with AITRC. So, we're
3 really glad to see that come through. And then on the
4 next page, we have reported before on our Changing
5 Environmental Conditions project and the one update that
6 I have is that we are still working on an outreach
7 product that will reach our general public, and we're
8 working with that with the University of Alaska
9 Fairbanks. And the next project in -- you know, Kyle
10 just mentioned the sheep surveys that the park has been
11 doing. In conjunction with those, we have also been
12 conducting a series of local knowledge interviews about
13 Dall sheep with longtime hunters and others that have a
14 long history of observing sheep within the park. And we
15 did eight interviews, right now we are working on coding,
16 compiling the data and then writing up a summary report.
17 And we want to thank the NPS Alaska Subsistence Advisory
18 Council, as well as the Alaska Geographic for funding
19 that project. And we're excited to have that report to
20 kind of give context to the surveys that Kyle and others
21 are doing in the park. The next one that we're excited
22 to start about, it's a little bit outside of South
23 Central, but we're excited it's happening. It's about
24 an ethnographic landscape study that will be done on the
25 coastline. We'll be working with the Native Village of
26 Eyak and with the Yakutat Tlingit tribe to look at the
27 lands along the park's coastline to do a baseline
28 documentation for park management on coastal resources
29 that might be at risk of being lost due to climate
30 warming and glacial melt. So, while it's a little bit
31 outside of our area, we just want to mention that the
32 project is coming together in 2025, 2026 and 2027. And
33 then, finally, with the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource
34 Commission, we did a pilot project this past summer on
35 Copper River in-season teleconferences that were modeled
36 off of the ones in the Yukon. And this was a great venue
37 for Copper River subsistence fishers to come together
38 with managers and give firsthand, you know, observation
39 and knowledge about what was going on in the river and
40 with their fishing experiences and what they were
41 harvesting. And, you know, we had really good
42 participation in the beginning, and it sort of teetered
43 out as the season went on, and people were fishing less
44 and less. But it was a really -- for a project that kind
45 of came together really quickly, got outreach very
46 quickly. We were really satisfied with the amount of
47 participation that we got and the insight, and it was a
48 great way for managers to give information to those that
49 were fishing and for people who are fishing to give
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1 information back to managers. So, that is what we have
2 going on at Wrangell-St. Elias. Thank you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: That's a lot.
5 It's good. I like the coastal study. That's really cool.
6 Anyway, we had a lot of that at Prince William Sound.
7 We were wanting to find out about. Questions for Amber,
8 anyone? Good. Very good. Thank you.

9

10 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa, for the
11 record. Just to let you know, the next one up was Denali
12 National Park and Preserve. The person that was calling
13 in to give that was unable to attend today. But you guys
14 do have the handwritten report in your supplemental
15 material on page 53 for review.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay.
18 Victoria, I think I got you up next. Amended Alaska
19 sports hunting and trapping regs, final rule.

20

21 MS. FLOREY: That's right.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: 188.

24

25 MS. FLOREY: Yes. So, as you just said,
26 it can be found on page 188. And yeah, for the record,
27 my name is Victoria Florey, and I'm on the National Park
28 Service subsistence team at the regional office. And
29 we're just giving you an update on what occurred or
30 became effective on August 2nd of this year. So, the
31 National Park Service amended its regulations for sport
32 hunting and trapping on national preserves in Alaska.
33 And we just want to emphasize this is on national
34 preserve lands, and it's for sport hunting and trapping.
35 The harvest practices at issue in this final rule are
36 specific to harvest on national preserve land only, and
37 to harvest under the authorization for sport hunting and
38 trapping in ANILCA. And we just want to emphasize that
39 none of these rules address subsistence harvest by rural
40 residents under Title 8 of ANILCA. The public was invited
41 to comment on the draft environmental assessment and on
42 the proposed rule that published on January 9th of 2023,
43 over the past two years. The National Park Service staff
44 presented on the draft Wildlife Rule at all NPS
45 Subsistence Resource Commission meetings and all NPS
46 Nexus Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
47 meetings and solicited your feedback. All comments were
48 reviewed and informed this final decision. So, just to
49 break it down a little bit, the 2024 Final Wildlife Rule
50 explicitly addresses the two topics in the National

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1 Preserve lands in Alaska, and those two topics are:
2 prohibits bear baiting for sport hunters on national
3 preserve lands in Alaska and then it clarifies how a
4 firearm can be used in conjunction with trapping. So,
5 bear baiting is prohibited for safety reasons, and the
6 concerns are both immediate, relative to bears defending
7 a bait station, and more long-term relative food
8 conditioning. And then we believe that this rule will
9 lower the risk that bears will associate food at bait
10 stations with humans and become conditioned, like
11 previously stated. And then the trapping portion of the
12 rule applies both to those trapping under state
13 regulations and national preserves and to federally
14 qualified subsistence users trapping in national
15 preserves as well as in national parks and monuments
16 open to subsistence. So it -- this final rule clarifies
17 existing regulations that individuals may harvest a
18 furbearer with a firearm under a trapping license only
19 if the furbearer is: one, ensnared in an intact trap;
20 two, ensnared in a trap that is no longer anchored, so
21 like dragging a trap that has become an unanchored. And
22 three, is mortally wounded by a trap, but the animal has
23 broken free of the trap. And free ranging furbearers may
24 not be harvested with a firearm under a state trapping
25 license on NPS managed lands. Rather, on open hunting
26 season and hunting license would be required. And that
27 is everything. Does anybody have any questions?

28
29 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay, that's
30 good. Questions for Victoria? Judy.

31
32 MS. CAMINER: Thanks, this is Judy. The
33 -- I think the draft rule had a lot of other aspects to
34 it. No hunting with lights or taking wolves out of the
35 den. That just fell out, I guess?

36
37 MS. COHEN: I suppose so, I wasn't
38 involved with the making of the policy or anything, but
39 yeah, this is what the two main topics came down to,
40 being changed. Yeah.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay.

43
44 MS. COHEN: All right. Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Thank you.
47 Okay, Bureau of Land management.

48
49 MS. KETRON: Hello, everyone. For the
50 record, this is Caroline Ketron. I'm the anthropologist

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1 and subsistence coordinator at the Bureau of Land
2 Management, Glennallen field office. Am I coming in
3 pretty good?

4

5 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Good enough.
6 Very good. He's tuning you...

7

8 MS. KETRON: Okay, thank you.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Yeah.

11

12 MS. KETRON: First off, I have some
13 staffing updates. Our field manager, Marnie Graham, has
14 left us, but Alicia Hancock, also a long-time local
15 resident, is now in detail as field manager of the
16 Glennallen field office. Wildlife biologist Leanne
17 McDonald has also recently taken another position, but
18 we just welcomed Tessa Whitman to the detail wildlife
19 biologist position for our field office, and I'm glad
20 she could be there in person today. For subsistence
21 permitting updates, we issued 853 federal moose permits
22 for Federal Unit 13 Moose hunt FM1301. In previous years
23 that included a caribou hunt. Our moose permit number
24 is normally higher or has normally been higher in
25 previous years, closer to 1,100 or 1,200. This is likely
26 since hunters targeting caribou and Unit 13 typically
27 also get a moose permit, just in case. And without the
28 caribou hunt, some people may be choosing to target moose
29 elsewhere, so, we're a little down on our permit numbers,
30 but still the highest in the state for moose. We spent
31 three days in Delta Junction this year, issuing moose
32 permits to federally qualified residents there. We
33 stayed busy, but the numbers of people participating in
34 that event were also down about the same proportion.
35 Federal Subsistence Board Action on Wildlife Special
36 Action 2406, closed federal public lands in 13B to state
37 moose hunters this season through June 30th, 2026. BLM
38 responded to data requests on this issue, produced maps
39 and public outreach materials, and fielded phone calls.
40 Unlike other agencies, some of our harvest reports are
41 still coming in. I'll send out an overdue reminder to
42 hunters next week, but our preliminary harvest number
43 for this federal Unit 13 Moose hunt is 46 moose. I'll
44 have hunters' success rate based on permits used later
45 in the year also, and I have a breakdown for you of
46 moose harvests by subunit in Unit 13. Again, this is
47 also preliminary, but for 13A we have one moose harvest;
48 for 13B, 31 moose; 13C, 1; 13D, 9; and 13E, 4. And that
49 concludes my report.

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1 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay,
2 questions? Looks like we're good here. Thank you.

3
4 MS. KETRON: Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. U.S.
7 Forest Service. Andrew.

8
9 MR. SANDERS: Good morning. For the
10 record, this is Andrew Sanders, a subsistence program
11 manager for the Chugach National Forest. I also have a
12 one small staff update for the RAC. Carrie Case is no
13 longer the acting forest Resources and Planning staff
14 Officer, Darren Warwick has moved into that detail role
15 currently and hasn't been permanently filled yet. So,
16 that's my supervisor and everybody else is still the
17 same. We didn't carry out any special actions this year.
18 Oh, and I should let you guys know this is -- should be
19 on page 189 of your book. Sorry about that. We just
20 rolled over into a new cost share agreement with the
21 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and we've got that
22 funded up at least through the next couple of years for
23 various aerial surveys and other cooperative projects
24 that we do with Fish and Game. So, that just continues
25 the cooperative work that we're doing with the State and
26 Unit 6 and 7, which has been a very fruitful partnership.
27 We are also continuing to work with CRRC, Chugach
28 Regional Resources Commission, through another cost
29 share that we have with them, so we are hoping to get
30 that Kings Bay Moose survey flown this year, finally.
31 So, last year there was a lot of weather issues and CRRC
32 had a lot of other aerial surveys they were working on,
33 and there they've been getting through their list, and
34 I believe Kings Bay is next up when we have a good
35 weather window.

36
37 So, getting into the seasons, as other
38 folks have mentioned, there's a lot of harvest reports
39 that are still coming in and a lot of seasons that are
40 still open. The big one in the Prince William Sound zone
41 would be 6C moose. So, we received 847 applications this
42 year for 44 moose permits. That's 24 bulls and 20 cows.
43 So far, we've had 15 of those 24 bulls have been
44 harvested and nine of the cows. So, that's an update
45 from what you have in your books. That should be the
46 most recent numbers there. That's the same number of
47 tags that were issued last year. We had slightly more
48 applications last year. And then I held a public meeting
49 on August 15th just to meet with hunters and make sure
50 that any folks who perhaps are less experienced hunters

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1 got all the information that they needed to be as
2 successful as possible and not run afoul of the rules.
3 Let's see. The deer season is ongoing, we did our deer
4 pellet transects as per usual earlier this year, and did
5 seem to indicate that the deer population in the Sound
6 is a little bit lower than it was the year before, which
7 is, I believe, five years in a row. We've seen of a very
8 gradual decline, but they're still in what we would
9 consider a moderate density levels. And there's, you
10 know, a lot of interpretation going into those deer
11 pellet numbers. And so, we are piloting a game camera
12 project this year. So, we'll be deploying game cameras
13 on Hawkins Island and working with ADF&G to use the
14 camera data with their statistical wizardry, with their
15 biometricians to come up with a population estimate that
16 we can pair with the deer pellet data and start seeing
17 if we can't come up with more recent and accurate deer
18 population numbers to help with management. So, we're
19 really excited about that to start getting some better
20 deer data out there. If it goes well on Hawkins, then
21 we'll start moving to other islands in the sound. The
22 black bear project is still going on, so we sent off a
23 number of tissue and blood samples to have their stable
24 isotopes analyzed. That tissue chemistry will help
25 inform us about what the bears are feeding on and start
26 looking into the different habits of the bears and tying
27 that to their telemetry collar data. We're still working
28 on that. We just got the data back from the lab and so,
29 now we're working on processing that data and trying to
30 get something out of it to draw conclusions from.
31 Mountain goats in 6D are open until February 28th. Right
32 now, there's two permits out and one of them successfully
33 harvested a goat. So, last year we issued three permits,
34 and one goat was harvested. So, we're pretty par for the
35 course there. And regarding salmon, on the Cordova side
36 of things, we issued 110 permits. There were some
37 handwritten permits that I don't think were included in
38 the number that's in the book that you guys have. So,
39 that's why it's a little bit higher now, and that --
40 those harvest reports won't be coming in for a while.
41 So, we don't really have any information right now on
42 what was harvested under those permits. Last year, we
43 issued 102 and that was, you know, 43 sockeyes, 324
44 cohos I think that was updated to 439. That was the
45 updated number when we finally got all the harvest
46 reports back. And then I won't speak any further on the
47 lower Copper River Dipnet Fishery, which you guys heard
48 about from the National Park Service. So, on the Kenai
49 side of things, we held 6 community meetings this year
50 to issue permits and get out in the communities and talk

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1 with folks. Those were pretty successful. It's always
2 nice to get out in the communities and speak with
3 subsistence users. We did have a Unit 7 Dall sheep hunt
4 this year, so that was the first time that that hunt has
5 been held since it was created. We issued 1 permit by
6 drawing, that person that drew, did hunt, but was not
7 able to successfully harvest an animal. And we had a
8 very successful field season, collaborating with the
9 refuge on looking at Dall Sheep in the area that was
10 impacted by the 2019 Swan Lake fire, and looking at
11 vegetation and sheep forage, so not a lot of information
12 put together on that. So, still, a few years I think,
13 before we can really start putting all that together and
14 figuring out what's happening there. But we're really
15 starting to collect a lot of data, and that project's
16 gaining a lot of momentum. We also have another Unit 7
17 Dall sheep project that we started this past year doing
18 lambing surveys for the Crescent Lake population. We
19 have some data for our pilot year and unfortunately,
20 what we found was a very small number of lambs and very
21 low lamb-to-ewe like ratios. So, we only identified two
22 lambs and the lamb-to-ewe ratio was 13.3%, which was
23 very poor. So, we're hoping to expand that with more
24 observations next year and a larger area, and to see if
25 we can identify any other lambing areas that that
26 subpopulation utilizes. Unit 7 moose ended on September
27 25th. We issued 77 permits and 4 moose were harvested.
28 So, that's a little down from 2023 when 82 permits were
29 issued, and 7 permits were harvested. I think it was the
30 same situation that Todd mentioned for Unit 15 moose,
31 very similar things going on there. The Unit 7 mountain
32 goat hunt is going on right now. It closes November 14th.
33 And we just recently discussed hunt areas with ADF&G and
34 based on the distribution of goats on the landscape,
35 we'll be going with the same hunt areas again next year
36 that we have for the drawing this year. And then I
37 believe the refuge already spoke on salmon harvest over
38 there. There is a small typo in the books, it says 284
39 permits were issued, but that should be 184 permits that
40 were issued to the communities that have C&T for the
41 National Forest. And then, as others have mentioned, the
42 loss of the online harvest reporting feature has been a
43 challenge for us and for tracking harvest. So, we're
44 really excited to be testing the new database, and we
45 really hope that the online reporting can come back. And
46 even better would be if people could apply for permits
47 online, because it is difficult for people to make it
48 into the office when they live in really remote areas.
49 And I think that would be helpful for folks. So, that
50 concludes my report. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay, Andrew.
A lot of info. Any questions?

MR. SANDERS: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. Looking
at my sheet here. My cheat sheet. Lisa? Go ahead.

MS. GREDIAGIN: All right. Thank you. Mr.
Chair, members of the Council. My name is Lisa Grediagin.
I'm the wildlife division supervisor with OSM. And on
behalf of OSM, I would like to express our sincerest
thanks and deep appreciation for all the work you guys
do as Council members on behalf of your community and
subsistence users and the resource. We really appreciate
your time and dedication to coming to these, you know,
volunteering your time to come to these meetings and
even on your 54th wedding anniversary. So. So, yeah.
Thank you. It's, you know, it's the highlight of, you
know, many of our years for OSM to come to these meetings
and hear your knowledge and discussion of the issues.
So, thank you. An update on OSM's administrative move.
I think you are all aware OSM moved and at the --this
was at the request of many stakeholders made during
listening sessions and tribal consultations across the
state. Congress has administratively moved OSM from the
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service directly to the Office
of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and
Budget. This move became effective July 15th, 2024. This
move is one of many efforts that the Department of the
Interior is making to strengthen federal subsistence
policies and structure, and to ensure that federally
qualified subsistence users and Alaska Native people
have an opportunity for meaningful engagement in the
federal subsistence management program implementation.
This move is a response to the concerns and input of
Alaska Native communities and people, many of whom rely
on subsistence use and to the need to enhance program
operations for all federally qualified subsistence
users, particularly in the face of climate change. OSM
responsibilities and functions of administrative support
to the Federal Subsistence Board and Subsistence
Regional Advisory Councils remain the same following
this move to the Office of the Secretary. Federal
subsistence management programs operations continue
seamlessly. That might be a little bit of an
understatement, but to the extent possible, seamlessly
and regulatory cycle is going on without any
interruptions. If you need to reach out to OSM staff,

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1 we know -- we now have new email addresses that have
2 been updated on our website. The main contact phone
3 number remains the same, 907-786-3888 and our main email
4 address is subsistence@ios.doi.gov. That's subsistence
5 at interior office of the secretary dot department of
6 interior dot gov. And now, an update on the Wildlife
7 Final Rule and Regulations booklet. The final rule for
8 the Federal Subsistence Management regulation for the
9 harvest of wildlife on federal public lands in Alaska
10 for the regulatory years 2024 to 2026, have been
11 published in the Federal Register and went into effect
12 August 29th, 2024. The regulation booklets are available
13 online and on the -- at the program website, and hard
14 copies are available in this meeting. If you're in person
15 at this meeting, you can pick up a hard copy, and if
16 you're listening on the phone, you can contact us, and
17 we can mail you one upon request.

18
19 An update on the regulations regarding
20 the Federal Subsistence Board composition. Based on
21 requests during joint consultations, the departments of
22 the Interior and Agriculture departments are in the
23 process of revising regulations concerning the
24 composition of the Federal Subsistence Board. In the
25 proposed rule, the departments proposed to add three
26 public members to the Board. These members would be
27 nominated or recommended by federally recognized tribal
28 governments in Alaska, and would be required to possess
29 personal knowledge of, and direct experience with
30 subsistence uses in rural Alaska, including Alaska
31 Native subsistence uses. The proposed rule also defines
32 requirements used to select the Board Chair and affirm
33 the Secretary's authority to replace Board members and
34 the Secretary's responsibility and oversight regarding
35 Board decisions. The final rule regarding these proposed
36 revisions is expected to be published in the Federal
37 Register soon and become effective 30 days after
38 publication. Tribes are welcome to nominate or recommend
39 public Board members for these three new seats
40 anticipated in the final rule. Please direct any
41 questions and nominations or recommendations to Raina
42 Thiele. That's Raina_Thiele@IOS.DOI.GOV. Raina, R A I N
43 A underscore T H I E L E @ IOS.DOI.GOV and Sarah Taylor,
44 Sarah underscore Taylor @ ios.DOI.GOV. An update on the
45 deferred wildlife proposal, WP2401, which was a proposal
46 to sell brown bear hides. At its public meeting on April
47 3rd, 2024, the Board deferred its action on wildlife
48 proposal WP2401, a request to allow the sale of brown
49 bear hides taken under federal regulations. The Board's
50 justification for deferring the proposal was twofold;

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1 one to allow time to explore options for a federally
2 qualified subsistence user to obtain a permit allowing
3 the sale of a hide from a federal agency, and two to
4 potentially establish a working group to negotiate with
5 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game concerning the
6 use of its permit to sell a brown or grizzly bear hide
7 and or skull. Our update is that ADF&G is not able to
8 permit the sale of brown bears on behalf of the Federal
9 Subsistence Management Program if the proposal is
10 adopted as submitted. In other words, ADF&G cannot
11 permit sale of brown bear hides taken in units with one-
12 bear harvest limits under federal regulation. OSM is
13 therefore exploring opportunities for fairly qualified
14 subsistence users to obtain permits from a federal
15 agency. We'll update the Board on this option at the
16 Fisheries Regulatory Meeting in February of 2025. And
17 now, for some OSM staffing updates. Since the All-
18 council meeting held in March of this year, OSM welcomed
19 our new Acting Director, Crystal Ciisquq Leonetti. She
20 will be in this acting role until the end of November.
21 In her permanent position, Crystal is an Alaska Native
22 Affairs specialist at the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
23 Among regular OSM Director's responsibilities, Crystal
24 has been leading OSM through its administrative move and
25 is doing a fantastic job. OSM Director's position was
26 advertised on September 5th and closed on October 2nd,
27 2024. OSM also had some staff departures. Theo
28 Matuszkiewicz, OSM supervisory regulatory specialist,
29 retired in July after over 20 years of faithful service
30 and OSM staff will miss him greatly for his in-depth
31 knowledge of regulations, his kind advice and wonderful
32 sense of humor. Justin Kohler, OSM fisheries biologist,
33 has been acting as a supervisory regulatory specialist
34 in the interim and was able to jump right in to ensure
35 that OSM final and proposed rules, as well as meeting
36 announcements, are seamlessly moving through the
37 Approval and Federal Register Publication process. This
38 position will be advertised for permanent hire fairly
39 soon. Kayla McKinney, OSM Subsistence Outreach
40 coordinator left OSM due to a move to another state.
41 Leigh Honig and Sherry Goldfarb are covering some of
42 this position duties in the interim while performing
43 their regular duties, and they are doing a superb job.

44
45 The vacant positions of the Subsistence
46 Outreach Coordinator and the Records Management
47 Specialist will be advertised in the near future, and
48 we encourage all individuals with diverse outreach
49 skills and records management skills, and interest in
50 working with subsistence issues and rural communities

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1 to apply. In August, we were also saddened to learn
2 about the departure of OSM Deputy Director Amy Howard.
3 She left federal service for a new job with the Aleut
4 Corporation as the Director of Lands and Natural
5 Resources. Her last day with OSM was August 30th. While
6 congratulating Amy on her new job, we will sorely miss
7 her inclusive and fair management style, her great
8 support for the entire OSM team and her smile. Katya
9 Wessels Council Coordination Division supervisor, is
10 serving as acting deputy director until the end of
11 October. After that, Brent Vickers, Anthropology
12 Division supervisor, will serve as the acting deputy
13 director for the next two months, November and December.
14

15 An update on some litigation. A detailed
16 litigation update was provided to the Councils at their
17 March 2024 All Council meeting since then. In the Kake
18 emergency hunt matter, the Alaska Department of Fish and
19 Game versus Federal Subsistence Board briefing is now
20 in progress before the Ninth Circuit Court. And in the
21 Kuskokwim matter, U.S versus ADF&G, the District court
22 found in favor of the US on all claims and enjoined the
23 state from taking any further actions in violation of
24 Title 8 on the Kuskokwim River. The State has appealed
25 and briefing just recently commenced before the Ninth
26 Circuit Court. I also have some updated talking points
27 about correspondence, if you guys are interested in
28 hearing that. Okay. So, as you know, the Council has
29 submitted quite a few letters to the Secretaries, and I
30 mean, not just this Council, but all Councils across the
31 state. And I don't think any Council has ever received
32 a response from the Secretaries in the history of the
33 program. But the positive news is that the Secretary's
34 office is reviewing the Council's letters that were
35 forwarded by the Board. The letters cover a broad array
36 of issues, such as financial compensation for Council
37 members, salmon fisheries and transboundary mining,
38 among others. Some of the issues are straightforward and
39 will be resolved more quickly, while others are more
40 complicated and will take more time to address. Some
41 cover multiple regions, and others are specific to 1 or
42 2 regions. The Secretary and her team are working on
43 responses to these letters and the next step forward for
44 all these issues. As these issues are resolved, the
45 Secretary or her staff will provide responses to the
46 Councils, including next steps forward, where
47 appropriate. The Secretary thanks the Council for their
48 diligence and thoughtfulness in discussing these issues
49 and continuing to elevate them. With the elevation of
50 OSM to the Office of the Secretary the Secretary looks

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1 forward to continuing active engagement on these and
2 other issues affecting subsistence users, and I realized
3 one other staffing update that might be of interest to
4 the Council is Sue Detwiler, our -- the acting director,
5 previous, you know, retired at the end of last year. She
6 was rehired as kind of an advisor to the -- as like a -
7 - to help with the transition. So, as an advisor to the
8 Policy, Management and Budget Office of the Secretary
9 team. So, she -- that's another update on staffing. So,
10 thank you. That concludes my updates. And if there's any
11 questions, I'll be happy to address them.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Go ahead
14 Dennis.

15

16 MR. ZADRA: Oh, just a general question
17 and I think I know the answer but are there any other
18 states that have federal subsistence?

19

20 MS. GREDIAGIN: No. That's an easy, easy
21 question. Pretty unique to Alaska. Yep.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. You did
24 a lot of shuffling of staff. Wow. A lot of updates there.
25 Thank you, Lisa. Any other questions? Okay. Very good.
26 Thank you.

27

28 (Pause)

29

30 Kevin, there's someone that wants to
31 talk first. Is that okay? Okay

32

33 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher, for
34 the record. Eric Werwa, the deputy assistant secretary
35 for policy and environmental management is on. Eric,
36 would you like to say hello to the Council and any other
37 information you'd like to share?

38

39 MR. WERWA: Sure. Hi again. It's been
40 great to be able to be a part of most of this meeting.
41 Really helpful for me to better understand subsistence
42 issues that you're facing in South Central, but also
43 across the State of Alaska. And so, yeah, we're really
44 excited to have OSM here in the Office of the Secretary
45 and look forward to working with you all and hoping to
46 get out there as well to experience some things on the
47 ground. Happy to answer any questions if anyone has any.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Questions.
50 Judy has a question for you, Eric.

1
2 MR. WERWA: I said, try to answer any
3 questions.

4
5 MS. CAMINER: Hi Eric, and thanks for
6 listening in as much as you've been able to, we certainly
7 like to invite you to any or all of the meetings going
8 on here. I guess my question has to do with having heard
9 all these vacancies in OSM, are you able to help pursue
10 getting these vacancies filled as quickly as possible?

11
12 MR. WERWA: Yeah, we are working on that.
13 And should be interviewing candidates for the director
14 position soon. So, we're working to -- as quickly as we
15 can through the process to fill the positions.

16
17 MS. CAMINER: Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay, Eric.
20 Thank you. Any other questions for him? Thank you for
21 participating. Okay, Kevin, now, I think we got you.
22 Thank you.

23
24 MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr.
25 Chair, members of the Council. Good morning. Nearly
26 approaching afternoon. For the record, my name is Kevin
27 Foley, fisheries biologist with the Office of
28 Subsistence Management. And I'd like to provide everyone
29 with an update and information on our partners for
30 fisheries monitoring and a Notice of Funding Opportunity
31 that's coming up. The Office of Subsistence Management
32 will soon post a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the
33 partners for Fisheries Monitoring program later this
34 year, or in early 2025. This is a competitive grant for
35 Alaska Native and rural nonprofit organizations. The
36 intent of the program is to strengthen Alaska Native and
37 rural involvement in federal subsistence management by
38 providing salary funds to organizations so they can hire
39 a professional biologist, social scientist, or educator.
40 The grant also provides funds for science and culture
41 camps and paid student internships. More information on
42 this funding opportunity is available on Grants.gov and
43 grant solutions. You may also contact Karen Hyer by way
44 of email or phone, and Karen's contact information is
45 on the partners web page at
46 www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners or if anyone here is
47 interested, please come see me at any other time during
48 this meeting. Mr. Chair, that concludes my update and
49 information. Thank you for your time.

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1 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Thank you,
2 Kevin. Questions for Kevin?

3
4 MS. PILCHER: All right. This is Nissa
5 Pilcher for the record. The next several agenda items
6 are mine and with the Chair's okay, I'll just keep going
7 until I'm done. Okay, so, the next agenda item is 805C
8 report. Mr. Chair, members of the Council. Again, my
9 name is Nissa Pilcher. I just wanted to draw your
10 attention to the report. While each member should have
11 received a copy in the mail or via email, an additional
12 copy can be found on page 192 of your meeting book. This
13 is an informational topic and not an agenda item. Of
14 course, the 850 report is a report of, if the Board
15 differed from any of your recommendations. They need to
16 let you know why they did so. So, that is in your meeting
17 book. 2025 Council Application and Nomination open
18 season, this has not opened yet. But just to let you
19 guys know, currently we do have three vacancies.
20 Although my hope is when we do get the confirmation
21 letters in the winter that maybe we won't have these
22 vacancies anymore, but we will see what happens. There
23 are a couple members whose terms are going to expire in
24 2025 and for those members, trust me, I won't let you
25 forget. I'll pester you until you either tell me that
26 you are not planning on putting your name back in the
27 hat, or until you give me an application. Yep, yep.
28 There's a there's a handful. The next agenda topic is
29 correspondence update. This looks like it takes up a lot
30 of paper on the agenda, but it's pretty quick. I have
31 included, just for your guys' record, the final copies
32 of your Council letter concerning the delegation of
33 authority and the proposed Federal Subsistence Board
34 tribal members, as well as a joint Council letter
35 concerning Council compensation and correspondence
36 issues that were all approved at your winter meeting.
37 And then you guys did say at that winter meeting that
38 while you did not sign on to a statewide caribou concern
39 letter or a bycatch in salmon management letter, that
40 you did want to see the end result. So, you guys are not
41 co-signers on those two letters, but they are included
42 in your meeting book for your guys' reference. And that
43 -- yes, Judy.

44
45 MS. CAMINER: I guess just one more
46 thought. And Greg and Michael, you could probably help
47 with AFN coming up next week if there's opportunities
48 to advertise or let you know, let your networks know
49 that we need more RAC members, would be really helpful.

50

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1 And I know Karen's working on that for the Ahtna region
2 too.

3
4 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, and we do. OSM does
5 have a booth at AFN, so if you would like you can always
6 let the networks know to come talk to us while we're
7 there and we can help out.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Yeah, we'll do
10 that. Good. We got -- they also have subsistence
11 committee from the AFN themselves. So, there's a lot of
12 stuff going on there. Okay, Brian, I guess you're up.

13
14 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Brian Ubelaker, wildlife biologist with OSM. I'd just
16 like to give you a brief update on several actions the
17 Board took regarding wildlife special actions. First
18 one, the Board approved Wildlife Special Action, WSA
19 2402, earlier this year. The action closed federal
20 public lands to caribou hunting by all users in Units
21 11, 12 remainder and 13 for the 2024 regulatory year due
22 to conservation concerns. The modification to the
23 special action provided exception for traditional
24 religious ceremonies and cultural and educational
25 program permit harvest. There was no action taken on
26 WUSA 23 -- 2403 due to action taken on 2402. The Board
27 stated that conservation concerns warranted a closure
28 to caribou hunting on federal public lands by all users.
29 Board also approved WSA 2404, which extended the fall
30 moose season by ten days in the portion of Unit 12 within
31 the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge and those lands
32 within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve --
33 National Preserve north and east of a line formed by the
34 Pickerel Lake Winter trail from the Canadian border to
35 Pickerel Lake, which is the FM 1203 hunt area. The Board
36 stated that additional harvest opportunity during a ten-
37 day extension was not expected to increase harvest
38 beyond sustainable levels, and would provide more
39 meaningful opportunity for federally qualified
40 subsistence users, many of whom reported having
41 difficulties harvesting moose due to warmer fall
42 temperatures. The Board also approved WSA 2406 with
43 modification, which closed federal public lands in Unit
44 13B to moose hunting by non-federally qualified users
45 for regulatory years 24 and 25. The submitted request
46 asked for closure of all federal public lands in Unit
47 13 to non-federally qualified moose hunters, but the
48 Board modified the request to only close federal public
49 lands in Unit 13B. Board stated that due to conservation
50 concerns and heavy harvest pressures within 13B, the

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1 closure is warranted for both the conservation of
2 healthy populations of moose and to allow for
3 continuation of subsistence uses. And that is as brief
4 as I can get. If you have any questions, I'd be happy
5 to answer them.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Good,
8 questions? Nope. Looks like you got off good. Thank you,
9 Brian.

10

11 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher
12 again, for the record. The next agenda item you guys
13 have is a news release from BLM on Ambler Road and ANCSA
14 D1 land protection. This is informational. I wasn't
15 expecting BLM to speak to it. It's just in there because
16 you guys had discussed D1 land at other meetings. I
17 don't believe South Central has -- Nope. Never mind. I'm
18 not saying that, taking it back. But anyhow, it's in
19 there for your information. Okay. And then the next one
20 is mine too. Do you want me to keep going?

21

22 MS. PILCHER: Yep. All right. This one's
23 a long one, so bear with me. So, as you guys may have
24 heard during this meeting and previous meetings, OSM has
25 moved out of Fish and Wildlife Service. And we are now
26 in the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, under
27 the office of the Assistant Secretary and Policy,
28 Management and Budget. This transition gives us the
29 opportunity to revise some administrative processes. One
30 would be the way that OSM processes travel for council
31 members on official business. OSM is considering ways
32 to make the way we process Council member travel more
33 efficient and user friendly, and we would like your
34 feedback on this matter. Currently, Council members
35 receive about 60% of their estimated total per diem in
36 the form of a check at the start of each meeting. This
37 is called a travel advance. The remainder of the per
38 diem is mailed to you in a second check once travel
39 vouchers are processed after the meeting. Rather than
40 continuing to issue and mail checks, we are considering
41 switching to declining balance card. These are like
42 debit cards but would be loaded with funds for you to
43 use for meals and incidental expenses during Council
44 meetings instead of having to deposit or cash a paper
45 check. If OSM proceeds to use declining balance cards,
46 each Council member would be issued a card that would
47 be their responsibility to keep safe and bring to each
48 meeting. If the card is lost, it can be replaced, but
49 it may take several days to get a new one in the mail.
50 Council members would be able to use their card while

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1 in travel status, or to withdraw cash from an ATM. Your
2 coordinator would be able to tell you how much per diem
3 has been deposited on the card. The cards can be used
4 to pay for expenses such as meals, taxi fares, groceries,
5 taxi -- that's interesting. It says taxi twice, but it's
6 in opposition to each other. So, I believe taxi fares
7 would not be able to be charged on this. You would still
8 need to turn in taxi and parking receipts to me - to --
9 so, I could submit them so you could get reimbursed for
10 those on that second payment. We would continue, of
11 course, to book flights and lodging. Council members
12 would use their declining balance card when they check
13 into the hotel or other lodging accommodations. The
14 remaining per diem owed to Council members after the
15 meeting would be directly deposited into your bank
16 account. Any ATM fees would be reimbursed as part of
17 this direct deposit, as well as any unused portion of
18 the travel advance funds on the card. The card would be
19 turned off between meetings, so it can't be accidentally
20 used. If OSM decides to proceed with using declining
21 balance cards and in order to set them up, we would
22 require council members to submit forms that contained
23 personal identifiable information, such as your date of
24 birth and your banking information. Please know that we
25 respect your privacy, and this information would be
26 confidential. Declining balance cards are a potential
27 new tool, and no final decision have been made. We are
28 hopeful that they could help reduce the administrative
29 burden that comes with processing travel for over 100
30 Council members twice a year, and help you receive your
31 per diem payment more quickly. To help us elevate this
32 potential change, OSM would like to hear your feedback
33 and questions. And this is a topic at all Council
34 meetings in the fall. So, one example where this would
35 have come in handy is last meeting. Andy got stuck in
36 Anchorage for like six days and funds could have been
37 put on a balanced card. But please be candid in your
38 conversations or your feedback to me about how you would
39 feel about that process and giving us that information.
40 Okay.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. You got
43 a lot there. I don't know who wants to go first, but
44 I'll just tell you, I just think you ought to bring a
45 bag of money. Did you -- cash the damn checks? And that's
46 the way we're going to have cash. I could foresee a lot
47 of problems there, but maybe not. Go ahead. Michael.

48
49 MR. OPHEIM: Yeah, Michael Opheim, for
50 the record yeah, I just see a lot of issues with using

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1 a card -- debit card fees and things like that. Losing
2 a card. What if the card doesn't -- the funds don't get
3 used and it gets turned off. You know, it just -- Yeah,
4 I would rather just stick with the check or what --
5 Didn't we do a bag of money at Chistochina or someplace
6 in the interior? We did a meeting and we, they brought
7 us cash, so it can be done. So.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWSKI: Judy, go ahead.

10

11 MS. CAMINER: Thanks. This is Judy. Well,
12 how would this card be transmitted to individuals? Is
13 that a mail-in thing? And that's got potential problems,
14 too.

15

16 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa. That's an
17 excellent question, Judy. The only information I know
18 is what I have written here, so I don't know. That seems
19 like it would make sense, but that's a good question.

20

21 MS. CAMINER: And just a quick follow up.
22 This might just be my problem, but when things get sent,
23 registered or certified mail and have to go to the post
24 office, it's on the relatively inconvenient side, which
25 probably doesn't affect people nearly as much in a
26 smaller post office, let's say.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Just give us a
29 credit card and be done with it. Okay. You got our
30 feedback.

31

32 MS. PILCHER: I sure did.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Sounds like
35 there's some concern, but it's workable, but concerning.
36 Okay. Thank you.

37

38 MS. PILCHER: Can I add a couple more
39 things that aren't on the agenda?

40

41 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWSKI: Sure.

42

43 MS. PILCHER: I just wanted to.....

44

45 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWSKI: No, no, no. You
46 can't add any more to the agenda.

47

48 MS. PILCHER: It's super -- I just wanted
49 to draw your guys' attention to -- in your blue folder.
50 In the additional material, I did include a letter on

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1 Marine Mammal Protection Act eligibility. Fish and
2 Wildlife Service has been working with tribes, with
3 government to government consultations on marine mammal
4 co-management and qualification for harvest. I know this
5 was a topic that Hope had mentioned a couple of times,
6 so I mostly included the letter for Hope, who is not
7 here. But I just wanted to let you guys know the copy
8 of the letter is in the back of your guys' meeting
9 packet.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay. You read
12 up closing comments. Judy, you want to start?
13

14 MS. CAMINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
15 guess one more thought on this payment part. I mean, is
16 there not a way to either deposit in advance that 60%
17 to -- directly to people's bank account? Then people
18 would have the money when they start travel and then
19 likewise directly to people's account for the second
20 part of the payment. It's another option.

21
22 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, I think the issue
23 would be as if we had what happened at this meeting
24 where people were going to come and then ended up not
25 coming, and then we'd have to get it back from them
26 somehow.

27
28 MS. CAMINER: Okay, thanks. Well, we
29 really did cover a lot in this meeting. Appreciate
30 everybody's time and work to put together all these
31 massive materials and present us with good information.
32 So, we think we made the best choices we could. I do
33 hope we can get better attendance at our next meeting.
34 Maybe we can look into what would help people get here
35 better. I mean, we have our schedules long time in
36 advance, so hopefully people can keep their calendars
37 as clear as possible. If people get sick, obviously
38 that's something we can't plan for and they didn't want
39 either. So, good discussions today and appreciate
40 everybody's input.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Michael, do
43 you want to go?
44

45 MR. OPHEIM: Yeah. No, it was great
46 meeting, super bunch of material to go through. You know,
47 thank OSM staff for putting it all together. It's quite
48 a feat. And getting us here, great facility. Thanks to
49 Greg for leading us through this meeting and getting us
50

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1 through pretty quickly and efficiently. And hopefully
2 we'll see everybody next meeting.

3
4 MR. ZADRA: Yeah. We'd just like to
5 reiterate the thanks for the work and the effort and
6 putting this together, and the appreciation I have for
7 being able to be part of this process. Regarding the
8 next meeting, tentatively scheduled for Cordova. We'll
9 make sure that it is well handled, and Cordova is ready
10 for everyone. I know the last Board of Fish did not turn
11 out well, but we recognize the problem. And so, I hope
12 it happens. I think it'd be great for everybody to have
13 the opportunity to see what Cordova is all about. Thanks
14 for everything, especially you, Greg -- you. I
15 appreciate more and more the efforts you put into that
16 as I share a couple of other Boards and it's a lot, lot
17 involved with it.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Yeah, thank
20 you. Yeah, it's been a good meeting. I got to work on
21 Nissa. She tries to slip an awful lot in on me. But
22 anyway, that's okay. We're going to tighten it up. We
23 got it down pretty good. Just one comment on the
24 attendance. You know, I've been on the South Central RAC
25 for a long time, 20 plus years. I don't know, but we've
26 always made a quorum. And so, yeah, we got a few that
27 are sleeping here. We'll work on them. But generally,
28 we've had a really good turnout for our RAC'S, so I'm
29 very proud of that. But anyway, yes, a lot of
30 information. I don't like to make light of any of it.
31 There's a lot of details coming out now. I just want to
32 reiterate my concern for our resources. There are a lot
33 of things that are needing attention and we're having
34 to reallocate the usage. And so, anyway, it's a great
35 meeting. Thank everyone. And I could say more, but I'm
36 not because I'm going to get on the road and get out of
37 trouble. Okay. Thank you. Okay. With that I'll entertain
38 a motion to adjourn. Even though we don't have a quorum
39 to pass it, we can't adjourn.

40
41 MR. OPHEIM: We can't adjourn. Guess
42 we're done. I'll make a motion to adjourn.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Thank you,
45 Michael. Is there a second?

46
47 MR. ZADRA: I'll second.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Dennis
50 Seconded. All in favor?

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IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON ENCELEWESKI: Okay, we stand
adjourned.

UNIDENTIFIED: Congratulations, team.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 46 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SOUTHCENTRAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 11th 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 6th day of November 2024.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager