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1 WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

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4 PUBLIC MEETING

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7 VOLUME II

8
9 LARSON CHARLIE COMMUNITY HALL

10 Galena, Alaska

11 October 3, 2024

12 9:00 am
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16 COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT:

17 Jack Reakoff

18 Jenny Pelkola

19 Tommy Kriska

20 Don Honea

21 Robert Walker

22 Timothy Gervais

23 Darrell Vent
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28 Regional Council Coordinator, Nissa Pilcher
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Galena, Alaska - 10/03/2024)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're going to come back to order again. We've been trying to get other Council members on the phone, and we had a Council member call in and then drop out. Are you on here? Don, are you on the phone? Or Darryl or Tim? If you're there Don, you got a star six. You're muted if you're trying to talk, Don. Is that Don?

MS. PILCHER: That might have been.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Who is that?

MR. HONEA: Hey, this is Don, Jack.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Don. Well, good. All right, we're bringing the meeting back to order. We're on evening break. So, good morning. So, we were in the agenda, we were on the PINs or the Priority Information Needs for the Kuskokwim River. We were actually in vote, and then Tim Gervais dropped out. We went into recess for evening. Tim texted that he actually was in favor, and he was -- he had dropped out. So, he texted that he actually was voting for that. So, that would have given us quorum. That vote will stand. And so, the Kuskokwim priority needs, we covered all that. And were you listening to that part Don? The Kuskokwim priority needs those Yukon.

MR. HONEA: I don't know when that was. I had a Tribal Council meeting yesterday afternoon, so I was pretty busy.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's fine. So, we're finished with that. That vote will stand Timothy Gervais registered that he was affirmative on on those Priority Information Needs and the and the discussion that we had. So, where are we going to go here now that we have quorum? Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: Good morning, everyone. This is Nissa Pilcher for the record, I guess we should open the floor up to -- unless you wanted to get through the action items before we open it up to non-agenda topics.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah I prefer to do any of the action items that we need to do while we have quorum.

MS. PILCHER: Okay so, then we can launch in and we would start on number. Oh, that's right, yes. We should do a roll call. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah.

MS. PILCHER: So, we'll start right now with the roll call. And then we will start after the roll call of Council members, on number 13C the Annual Report.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, you want to call roll, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: Sure can. So, first on the phone we have Don Honea.

MR. HONEA: Don Honea, here.

MS. PILCHER: Oh, I'm sorry. For some reason, I started mispronouncing your name a little bit ago, and I can't seem to make myself stop. It also looks like we also have Council member Vent.

MR. VENT: Yes. I'm here.

MS. PILCHER: Are you on? All right.

MR. VENT: I'm here, yes.

MS. PILCHER: Thank you, Darryl. And just one more double check. Do we have Timothy Gervais on? All right, and then in the room. Robert Walker.

MR. WALKER: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: Tommy Kriska.

MR. KRISKA: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: Jenny Pelkola.

MS. PERKOLA: Yes.

MS. PILCHER: And Jack Reakoff.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Here.

MS. PILCHER: So, with the -- what is that? Two, four, six members out of eight, we do have quorum. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right. So, we're going to move into Annual Report item C on the agenda and Board FY23 Annual Report Replies. Nissa Pilcher.

MS. PILCHER: All right. So, very quickly Mr. Chair, members of the Council, for the record, my name is Nissa Pilcher and I wanted to draw your attention to the Federal Subsistence Board F3 Annual Report Reply to the Council, which starts on page 23 of your supplemental materials book. This is also found by navigating to the Supplemental Materials tab on the Western Interiors Meeting Materials website that was given previously, which is www.doi.gov/subsistence. Under the regions tab choose Western Interior and then the meeting materials tab. So, once again.

So, this is not an action item. We will start with action items. Next this was just drawing your attention to the Annual Report reply. And the Board does appreciate your effort to communicate through this Annual Report to the Board issues outside of the regulatory process that affect Subsistence users in your region. And once again, this is not an action item, but we will launch right into an action item, which is identifying issues for your next annual report. So, the FY 24 Annual Report.

So, this is the time that the Council is to decide what issues to include in this Annual Report. For your information, there is a briefly or there is an updated version of the guidelines for this report can be found on page 93 of your supplemental materials book. That's the one bound with the ring instead of the comb binding. So, ANILCA established the Annual Report as a way to inform the Federal Subsistence Board of regional subsistence issues and needs, and to provide recommendations for regional Fish and Wildlife management strategies, policies, standards, guidelines and proposed regulation. Section 805-A3D of ANILCA stipulates that your annual reply could contain identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region,

1 and evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence
2 needs for fish and wildlife populations within the
3 region. A recommended strategy for the management of
4 fish and wildlife populations within the region to
5 accommodate such subsistence uses and needs, and
6 recommendations concerning policies, standards,
7 guidelines and regulations to implement the strategy.
8 So, in order for the Board to adequately understand and
9 respond if needed to Council's Annual Report topics
10 Council members should discuss in detail on the record
11 the issues that they would like to include in the report.
12 Some issues might be better communicated through letter
13 writing. Council should indicate whether topics are
14 informational only or if they would like a response from
15 the Board. If a response is requested, the Council should
16 clearly articulate what they are asking for, such as the
17 Council's requesting a Board action. To make the Annual
18 Report process more productive consider the Board's
19 authority under Title 8 of ANILCA when formulating your
20 Annual Report replies. So, as a brief summary of that,
21 you guys already do identify in your Annual Report what
22 is informational and what you would like the actions
23 you'd like the Board to take. But if you would like to
24 extrapolate that more on the record, that would be
25 helpful. And then your Annual Report ensures that the
26 Board has the most up to date awareness of issues,
27 concerns, and current events that impacts your
28 Subsistence way of life. With your report and
29 recommendations, the Board can make informed decisions
30 on regulatory and policy actions. Items shared today
31 will be drafted into topics of your Annual Report based
32 on the information that is provided today, and the
33 Council will review it -- the draft at your next meeting
34 winter 2025 in order to provide edits and approve it.
35 And if you cannot think of topics right now, we can do
36 so after like, throughout today. Like, if something else
37 comes up, it can be added. But that is all, Mr. Chair.

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39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, is any Council
40 members have topics that they would like to put into the
41 Annual Report to inform the Federal Subsistence Board
42 about various issues that are affecting our region. Any?
43 Go ahead, Robert.

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45 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
46 members of the Board and staff here. We, down to Lower
47 Yukon subregion, what we call for the Tanana Chief area
48 or the Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross and our
49 regular annual meeting that we have for villages that
50 Area M came up more than once. So, this is a discussion

1 where -- and I did explain to them, a lot of them didn't
2 know what it was because we don't have a government-to-
3 government relationship with anybody. Nobody is sending
4 us info on what is going on with Area M, and I asked for
5 this time and time again in the past when I was on the
6 Board, and it never ever happened to us. Even -- I was
7 off the RAC for -- we never, never ever got anything
8 from OSM. The only people that we got some stuff was
9 from the BLM, the Park Service and that's it. But we
10 never ever hear from OSM on talking about high seas
11 fisheries, NOAA. And unless I went to a meeting where I
12 could hear this but other than that, no correspondence.
13 And I am very dissatisfied with how this function. And,
14 Jack, you know, we did talk about this numerous times,
15 having a government-government relationship because we
16 are a federally recognized tribes [sic] and we all are
17 a federally recognized tribes [sic] for that. So,
18 somewhere along the line, I think that it's going to be
19 -- have to be readdressed to all the tribes again. Thank
20 you, Mr. Chair.

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22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, this Council
23 has submitted an agenda change request to the Board of
24 Fish to restrict some of the gear types, the sein depths
25 and so forth for the commercial fishery and in Area M.
26 So, we've submitted the -- that agenda change request.
27 We have not gotten -- we have not gotten any current
28 data at -- about the bycatch of chum salmon and so forth.
29 And so that might be available later on when we get into
30 ADF&G reports and so forth. Go ahead, Robert.

31
32 MR. WALKER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair,
33 members of the Board. That being on the YRDFA Board
34 also, you know, we asked that somehow we would
35 communicate with the other RACs and other agencies that
36 how could we be informed of -- if there's any kind of
37 investigations into dumping fish over board down in
38 Area M or False Pass or have there been any kind of
39 wildlife troopers boarding ships and investigating into
40 their catches or all of these incidents? And -- YRDFA
41 did come out at the very beginning of their meetings,
42 and they were reporting this. And toward the summer they
43 stopped reporting it. And I asked, why did you stop
44 reporting it and the biologist -- the State biologists
45 and the State Fish Manager and even the Federal Fish
46 Manager never said a word. So, and that's something that
47 I asked that we put on the agenda for. So, when they
48 reported that we know that the State is doing their job,
49 but apparently maybe the State told your YRDFA since
50 YRDFA is the State functioned organization. So, I don't

1 know if this is being hushed up, or this is being shut
2 off to all the answers that they're doing. And the really
3 good example is that last spring we had a meeting with
4 the biologist and this and that from the Tribal function,
5 I was invited to the Hilton to do this, and I did discuss
6 this right out openly. I said, how could you represent
7 the State when they are mismanaging the fish? And the
8 lady who was in charge didn't bother to answer that
9 question.

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11 I said, I'm -- and I said it again. And
12 a friend of mine, Maurice McGinty, he did State that he
13 ate his last jar of fish from the year before from their
14 fishing. And the next day's newspaper that came out on
15 my phone, you know, you have that fish report and it
16 didn't say anything about me saying, why is the State
17 mismanaging? Why is it money is more important? They
18 didn't say that, but they did mention Maurice McGinty
19 ate his last jar of fish. And that is how -- when you
20 look at it, the newspaper, the news people, how do they
21 function? Do they fall in favor with the State? Does the
22 State tell them what to print? Does the State say, well,
23 you delete Walker's comment but put Mr. McGinty's
24 comment into the newspaper. So, and I asked that
25 question, and I asked the lady that was in charge, and
26 she says, I don't know anything about it. So, it just
27 kind of blew me away because is there a cover up for the
28 State on all these functions that goes on? You know, I
29 mean, is there somebody going to their reports and
30 deleting all the stuff that's going to be telling the
31 truth or what? So, that was -- just kind of blew me
32 away. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Robert.
35 Yeah, we're going to have ADF&G and the Yukon -- and in-
36 season manager later on reporting. And we can ask, you
37 know, questions about bycatch effects on the returns
38 this year, the abysmal returns that happened. And but
39 we -- the Annual Report, this -- the subject before us
40 right now we have a sheep management strategy that we
41 have been working on for -- this will be the -- we
42 started working on that in the spring of 2023, April
43 meeting of 23. And so, we should need to add that on the
44 Annual Report that sheep management strategy, it is
45 going to move forward. We want other Regional Councils
46 to be involved with at least going over what the
47 management strategy -- a lot of Councils have the same
48 problem, sheep throughout all of Alaska.

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50 MR. VENT: Jack, this is Darrell.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Darrell.

MR. VENT: Yeah, I have some concerns with what you guys are -- I have the same concerns with what you guys are talking about there. But I think the key thing here is that when, you know, when they went in agreement with ANILCA, they were saying that subsistence was a priority. The Federal Government needs to make sure that the State complies with, you know, our food management, I mean, our subsistence, they call it. But we need to hold them to the fire on how they manage our food resources because it's not for our food resources and they don't want to -- they don't want to document anything. And that's what Robert was talking about there. We need to make sure that they comply with that food resource for subsistence people. And they don't want to put that on paper because they're saying, oh, there's nothing wrong. The people are not complaining about it when it goes to the Federal Government, because we're not down there sitting down in Washington D.C., you know, saying that, you know, they're complying with anything or they're not complying with anything. So, we're getting left out of the loop because we're advisory only. I just, you know, I had to, you know, bring that point up because Robert started talking about our subsistence priorities. And I just want you to know, hopefully, that we can, you know, address that problem there with the State. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, I want to get to that. That issue is out in front of us. We haven't even gotten to those reports yet. So, I want to -- I would like to do this Annual Report or at least work on this Annual Report. And when we get into the reports from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the in-season manager, we'll talk about the Fisheries parameters of what occurred, and we can ask them what bycatch influence were from -- the area South Alaska Peninsula, Shumigan Fishery, the Area M issue. And so, we're going to be asking that. But we're basically shooting in the dark until we got them on the phone and can actually talk to them. So, we're -- that's in a future agenda item here. So, we'll get to that after this. But we can add.....

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF Yes, go ahead.

1 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Mr. Chair, this is
2 Don. I completely agree with -- I like the Area M, I
3 completely agree with -- I think we ought to have our
4 priorities, and the members of the Board are well aware
5 of all of our, all of our problems. And I think, you
6 know, I would be happy with whatever -- every request
7 in fishing, disasters, fishing. I mean, something to
8 bring our fish back. I've been out of kind of out of the
9 loop there. I don't know when they had the controversy
10 of meeting at AFN about the Area M, I don't know like -
11 - for instance, how long that was going to be in effect
12 or what did, I mean, the stations and everything on
13 that, but I just wanted just as a member of the -- to
14 say that I would agree with you guys on with Robert,
15 everybody else to make the whatever we put in the Annual
16 Report to be -- make fishing a priority. Thank you.

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18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We can -- well, we
19 can start the topic of Area M and Nissa, did you have a
20 comment?

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22 MS. PILCHER: I did. I am trying to find
23 it looks like my version doesn't have what it needed.
24 You guys did have a part of your Annual Report from last
25 year that had concerns over the State and the Federal
26 Government not meeting your subsistence or not being
27 able to meet your subsistence needs. Yeah, that's the -
28 - it's the -- that's the -- what's the word, that's the
29 guidance on how to write the Annual Report. So, it's
30 right after that or it should be. So, starting on --
31 there it is.

32
33 So, action item or excuse me, on your
34 Annual Report from last year, number one and this starts
35 on page 23, looks like number one was the North Pacific
36 Fishery Management Council's recent conservation
37 measures are lacking, leaving the burden of conservation
38 on subsistence users. And item number two was the Alaska
39 Board of Fisheries recent conservation measures are
40 lacking, leaving the burden on conservation on
41 subsistence users. And number three was loss of faith
42 in regulatory process due to continual subsistence
43 fishing closures in the Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers. And
44 item number four, continue to encourage Federal agencies
45 to assist in salmon recovery. So, this Council has
46 already and I'm not saying that means you don't have to
47 continue to do so. You have definitely been expressing
48 your concern in the way that this Council can about
49 these issues. Typically, Robert, we have had someone
50 from (pause) the -- I'm blanking right now, but Julie

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1 with -- I can't remember she's with NOAA or the National
2 (indiscernible), but she normally does a presentation
3 to us. I didn't arrange it this time. And that's on the
4 -- that's on the trawling. I didn't arrange it this time
5 because I wasn't quite sure how Galena was going to work
6 out with it not being in Fairbanks, but we can definitely
7 invite her to the winter meeting and make sure or --
8 yeah, the winter meeting. And I can also extend an
9 invitation to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game,
10 the Area M biologists. That's -- I am not quite sure the
11 Kuskokwim staff or the Yukon staff are going to be able
12 to give you the information that you want because they
13 manage, and I am not speaking for the State, but what
14 they have said previously is they manage their areas and
15 they don't -- they can't necessarily give you
16 information about other areas, but we can request the
17 State have somebody come to your winter meeting to
18 discuss these issues with you. It is up to the State
19 whether or not they do attend and they do provide that
20 information.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Robert, go
23 ahead.

24

25 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
26 understand that Nissa, you know, I like to -- and another
27 issue that with this program that's going on there, I'd
28 like to see a report from the Department of Fish and
29 Game, the Wildlife Protection Agency, to see what has
30 been going on down there. Has there been investigations
31 into other alleged actions that have been done down
32 there? And I believe the OSM should step into that too,
33 because I think, you know, they represent us, and they
34 should be looking into that for us. You know, we
35 shouldn't be doing that ourselves, because if we're
36 going to have an investigation into something that we
37 have, the people who work for us should be doing this
38 for us. Am I wrong here?

39

40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: There's -- the
41 authority for management of Area M is the state of Alaska
42 and they enforcement has been the state of Alaska. And
43 last year they actually busted ten boats that were
44 throwing chums overboard. So, there was reports of that.
45 That was that big Fisheries meeting where everybody
46 attended and was supporting -- I forget what the proposal
47 number was, but the Board failed. But the discussion
48 revolved around this chum chucking problem, and the
49 State enforcement actually busted those boats doing
50 that. And so, they -- the state of Alaska -- that's what

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1 our Annual Report here is -- the Board of State or the
2 Federal Subsistence Board is telling us. We're pointing
3 out that Alaska Board of Fisheries conservation measures
4 are lacking. Our Annual Report from last year is telling
5 the Board that. But the response is, as previously
6 mentioned, the Board shares your concerns about bycatch
7 and so forth. The waters outside the three-mile limit
8 are managed by NOAA Fisheries or known as the Marine
9 Fisheries Service's. Three-mile boundary in that area -
10 - and in that area is long established, and any changes
11 in the boundary is a matter between the State and the
12 Department of Commerce. They -- we do need to get
13 information; we do need information about what's going
14 on down in the South Alaska Peninsula, Shumigan, Area M
15 Fishery which is impacting the returns to the Yukon River
16 drainage and the Kuskokwim River drainages. The state
17 of Alaska is not taking genetic samples off of that
18 bycatch. They don't want to know where those fish are
19 going to and there's some real issues. And so, there's
20 a need but it should -- well it can be an Annual Report
21 topic that we feel that their management lacks in the
22 Area M Fishery. And there's a whole bunch of -- we could
23 just have a laundry list of things that the State needs
24 to address. And they -- and the Federal Subsistence Board
25 needs to step up to the plate and go, the State is --
26 you're affecting the fishery resources for
27 sustainability on the entire drainage. The in-season
28 managers on the Yukon are doing all they can. State and
29 Federal managers are doing all they can to try and get
30 these runs back. But if they're extra territorial,
31 waters are open to interception, there's hatchery
32 releases in the billions of salmon, smolt going out onto
33 the static releases, continuing to release billions of
34 fish into a marine crash or got dead birds all over the
35 beaches and stuff. The state of Alaska is doing things
36 that are -- they should not be doing, and the Federal
37 Subsistence Board needs to point it out that this is
38 highly affecting the sustained yield management of
39 Alaska, the Yukon River fisheries and the in-season
40 managers here cannot protect the salmon unless they have
41 salmon coming into the river. So, it is a topic we can
42 put it down as the fisheries issues topic. It's not just
43 Area M. Area M is just one of the bycatch problems.
44 We've got area M, we've got the static release of 1.2
45 billion pink and chum salmon smolt onto the onto the
46 high seas annually just from Alaska alone, which are
47 basically they eat those pink salmon. We eat everything
48 that comes into the ocean. And a lot of -- that's why
49 we need to have genetic sampling at Area M, that's for
50 the stocks from the Yukon River, chum and coho and

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1 chinook stocks, many of them will go into the North
2 Pacific.

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4 They're in direct contact with that
5 competition from hatchery fish. There's a bunch of
6 issues going on that needs to be continuously brought
7 up before the Federal Subsistence Board. Yeah, they
8 can't do anything about it, but they need to get into
9 discussion with the state of Alaska about what they need
10 to do to address this severe management declines. We're
11 losing these populations of salmon not only from the
12 trawl fishery, but we're also losing them from, you know,
13 mismanagement. All this caught flat out, say what it is.
14 You cannot release that kind of hatchery release into
15 the -- into a marine system that's in decline. That just
16 cannot happen. And they refuse, the trawling industry,
17 the hatchery associations have a huge influence on the
18 Board of Game, because the Board of Game is made up of
19 predominantly seiners and stuff. There are -- in the --
20 and state of Alaska benefits from that cost recovery.
21 The state of Alaska actually has 11 hatcheries that they
22 actually have paid themselves. Cost recovery, they catch
23 the -- their hatchery fish that have taken the food out
24 of the wild stocks mouth. So, this is a topic, but I
25 would -- we can put it under the list. Yes, we'll have
26 it on the list. But I also want to talk to the State in-
27 season managers before we move past this by as one --
28 as a completed topic. We will complete this topic after
29 we have discussions later on today. Go ahead, Robert.

30
31 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes,
32 I understand all that, you know, too. And it just kind
33 of like we're sitting here talking, I think the third
34 or fourth, even -- we're talking about food, that's what
35 we're talking about. And a lot of people who are in our
36 tribe and Lower Yukon subregion, you know, and the Yukon-
37 Koyukuk subregion and, you move up in a TCC area and
38 that's only us two. That's over in (In Native), AVCP,
39 Bristol Bay. But I just can't believe that, why is the
40 State censoring so many newspapers and so many meetings
41 that come out and are telling the newspapers what they
42 could or could not print? I'm not too sure if they're
43 doing that, but I am going to say that they are. I mean,
44 I'll put my name on the line for that. And another thing
45 too, I'd like to have OSM start a fish commission to
46 investigate into this because I think that we have a
47 right to know on what's going on. And all this time in
48 these last couple of years, we've just been sitting dark
49 and we've been talking the same thing over and over and
50 over again. And this is getting to be coming back to

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1 where we started. And I feel -- I think the Federal
2 Government, the OSM Should stand up for us because they
3 work for us, we don't work for them. They should go and
4 do an investigation into the State fisheries. And one
5 other thing too watching Deadliest Catch. Why are they
6 up on the Russian line? Because there's no more crab,
7 no more brown crab, no more red crab, where is it? I
8 mean, why? And the State let this go on because it's
9 money. And I'm going to ask Brent if he could form a
10 fish commission to look into all these things with the
11 State, because I think we have the right to know on what
12 is going on. Mr. Chair, thank you.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Does OSM want to
15 respond to that?

16

17 BRENT VICKERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
18 Council member Walker. For one thing, that I -- crosses
19 my mind is that when we are developing these Annual
20 Reports, we do -- it will be very helpful for each item
21 to have the specific ask, exactly what are you asking
22 of the Board? Are you informing them? Do you want
23 information? Do you want a letter written by the Board
24 or OSM? Do you want us to invite speakers at the next
25 meeting? It seems like we're going in that direction,
26 so, that's great and I just want you to think about that
27 with each of these -- for items. But in regards to this
28 request for OSM to form a fish commission, I well -- I
29 -- one question I have is what is this fish commission
30 look like, who is part of this commission? As far as OSM
31 doing an investigation on -- it seems like quite a bit
32 what is happening in Area M and what is going on with
33 other things. I will say that OSM does have very limited
34 resources. We don't have a lot of staff that we could
35 put into doing -- we don't do independent research. We
36 don't have the resources for that. We don't have the
37 resources to have fisheries biologists, etc., dedicating
38 their time to doing a research. We don't have the money
39 to do research. We are basically have just enough staff
40 to write these analyses to try to get -- collect
41 information that's readily available, to request
42 information for the State, and to pull those into
43 analyses and to try to get everything we can prepared
44 for you at these meetings. So, I don't know what we can
45 do about an investigation, but I am curious to know more
46 what your thoughts on this fish commission and how OSM
47 might be able to help in organizing such a thing. And
48 what would be the goal of the fishery -- of this fish
49 commission? Thank you.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, the Council
2 is the commission. The Council is -- we're the liaison
3 between the Federal Subsistence Board, OSM assists us.
4 We can't order them to do stuff like that. So, Federal
5 Subsistence Board -- we can request a report from the
6 Alaska Department of Public Safety, the troopers, what
7 was their enforcement this last year in 2024 in Area M.
8 We can ask NOAA enforcement to give us a report in this
9 -- at our next meeting about what their enforcements
10 were and in regards to outside the three-mile limit and
11 their Federal waters, what's going on in the North
12 Pacific? There was enforcement actions done in the North
13 Pacific trawlers. All we talk about is the Bering Sea
14 but our fish -- what I keep saying is our fish from the
15 Yukon River go into the North Pacific. There's a bunch
16 of them going to the North Pacific. And that's what the
17 problem is. There's not enough -- what our Annual Reports
18 needs to be talking about is the lack of biological
19 information for that -- for the stocks that move through
20 the Area M area that go into that rear in the North
21 Pacific, and the effects of interception at Area M and
22 in the Shelikof Strait Interception fisheries along the
23 South Alaska Peninsula up through Kodiak Island. There's
24 a whole bunch of stuff going on in the North Pacific,
25 and we want to highlight those to the Federal Subsistence
26 Board. And we need a report back from the state of Alaska
27 about how they're going -- how the Board of Fish -- we
28 should write to the State Board of Fish how they're
29 going to address the marine crash that's very apparent
30 by the size of the salmon of all species of salmon in
31 all of Alaska now, and how they are going to reduce that
32 hatchery release. The State Board of Fish has been
33 sitting on their hands, not wanting to talk about the
34 elephant in the room, that the hatchery release is eating
35 the food right out of the wild stock's mouth. And we
36 need to have the state of Alaska -- we need to write a
37 letter to the state of Alaska Board of Fish, the State
38 enforcement, how they're going to address this issue,
39 because they're exceeding sustainability of the entire
40 state of Alaska's fisheries, statewide. And the Federal
41 Subsistence Board, it has to be in the annual report
42 that we're really super concerned about the lack -- this
43 let's just see what happens aspect. It's like we've got
44 to stop that kind -- that's not management. We need to
45 start. The state of Alaska needs to step up to the plate.
46 The Board of Fish has got to do their job, their
47 constitutional job for sustained yield management. And
48 they're not doing it. They don't have run returns in
49 many areas. But OSM there, they assist these Councils.
50 They don't set up Boards. They don't have that kind of

1 management authority. The Board of -- the Federal
2 Subsistence Board would have to direct them, but they
3 don't have -- that gets into exterior, you know, the
4 state of Alaska and other, NOAA one gets into a whole
5 bunch of other stuff. But the Federal Subsistence Board
6 can talk to the other agencies and to the state of
7 Alaska. They want they sometimes even have State-Federal
8 Board meetings or discussions. This has to start
9 happening, this by guess and by golly, let's see what's
10 going to happen. We've been waiting way too long. Now
11 we're looking at a declining populations to the point
12 where I don't know that they can actually recover when
13 they get to this low a level. Are these spawning
14 escapements so low that we may never actually see them
15 return? And the state of Alaska has got to look
16 themselves in the mirror and say, why did we continue?
17 If you look from 1974, where there were no hatcheries,
18 none and moving up to 1.9 billion salmon smolt released
19 into the North Pacific and we watch our salmon declines
20 at the same rate. You can look at the look at a graph
21 and it's apparent, but the state of Alaska is not doing
22 anything.

23
24 This OSM is an agency to assist the
25 Councils. They don't do -- they can't set up
26 investigatory commissions. That's not what they do.
27 That's not what this agency does. We are an advisory to
28 the Federal Subsistence Board, we can write letters to
29 Federal and other agencies. We can write to the Federal
30 Subsistence Board, but we can't make this agency go make
31 an investigative [sic] that's like -- or they're not
32 even in -- they don't even have an enforcement. Do you
33 have anybody in (indiscernible) [43:00] on your staff?
34 They don't have enforcement people. They don't have that
35 kind of people. This is not what this agency does. But
36 I'm super concerned about what's going on. And our Annual
37 Report should reiterate all of the various aspects, it's
38 not just one topic, not just Area M, it's catch and
39 release, Area M interception, other interceptions in the
40 North Pacific and the lack of return into the systems.
41 There's [sic] many aspects of this whole issue. And Area
42 M is a very concerning issue because there were a lot
43 of fish getting caught incidentally, that every last one
44 of them is precious on spawning grounds this year. We're
45 looking at returns at 10% for some drainages on the
46 Yukon River. So, yes, that's a -- that's an Annual Report
47 topic. We need to put that out. But we can't get this
48 agency. We can say that we can say stuff, but that's not
49 going to happen. That's just not the way this works. The

1 Federal Subsistence Board can't even make OSM do that.
2 They don't even have that ability to do that.

3
4 What we do need -- the Federal
5 Subsistence Board needs to step up to the plate and flat
6 out say it to the state of Alaska. You are going to
7 start getting these runs under control. You are going
8 to start doing -- reduce this hatchery release, because
9 you're going to cause these fish to be under endangered
10 species status. That's what's going to happen with
11 chinook if they keep it up. I'm super frustrated, I'm
12 sorry I talked too long, but we can't make OSM set up a
13 commission to investigate this. That's not going to
14 happen. That just cannot happen. That's not the way this
15 agency works. I've been with this Council for 31 years,
16 I've never heard of anything like that. They can interact
17 with other processes like the Board of Fish process. But
18 the Board of fish doesn't even do what they're supposed
19 to be doing. They don't listen to the advisory
20 committees. I can tell you flat out, as an advisory
21 committee member, the State Board of Fish and the State
22 Board of Game rarely listens to the Advisory Committees,
23 rarely. I'm getting super concerned about that because
24 they're under statutory requirement to -- Nissa used to
25 be a Coordinator for them. They're under statutory
26 requirement to listen to those Advisory Committees.
27 They're not doing it. Well, who's going to sue them
28 about that? Right. I'm frustrated with that. Go ahead,
29 Robert.

30
31 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
32 understand that you are frustrated too, also. And I read
33 everything that I come across what I can get my hands
34 on. I do read to make sure that I am speaking with
35 something that it's not -- I'm making up, but like the
36 Fish commissioner came to our meeting, he didn't even
37 give us a forewarning that he's going to give it to a
38 seven-year moratorium. Why? On the Yukon River, AYK. And
39 when you look at this and say why -- I asked him right
40 out in the YDRFA meeting, I said, why is Area M and all
41 these other fishing boats out there fishing for salmon,
42 and we can't fish on Yukon River, because you're going
43 to protect the fish. Us protect them. We don't take more
44 than, I would say, 10 to 15,000 chinook salmon on the
45 Yukon River for food. And they're dumping you look at
46 their bycatch, I mean, good grief, that bycatch is like
47 three times the fish that we need, but we have to suffer
48 for it so they can make money. And I think that the
49 state of Alaska has been censuring the tribal people. I
50 will say that, and I will put my name on that line, and

1 I will tell the State people that you guys have an
2 organization, I did mention it to them in their meeting.
3 Nobody answered my question. I said, you guys work 8 to
4 5, we don't work at all, and you have money to buy food.
5 We don't have that kind of money to buy food. All our
6 food comes from the river and the land, and we never
7 said a word. But that's true because when you hear people
8 talking, even on the street, they're talking about fish,
9 this, that, you know, because that's our food and we
10 have to suffer for something that money has taken a
11 priority for the State. So, Mr. Chairman, I would like
12 to end this, but I am going to say that I believe the
13 state of Alaska censoring a lot more things than we
14 know. And OSM, maybe they should too take a look at this
15 and come back and report in February, see if they could
16 do a fish commission, if they could form a budget, if
17 they have money to do that. I'm going to ask that right
18 now. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brent.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Jenny. Go ahead.

21
22 MS. PELKOLA: Jenny Pelkola. I don't
23 know. I know there's a fish commission out there
24 somewhere, but I don't know who runs that. Is that TCC
25 or Ben Stevens? And I know there's a group of them, but
26 I don't know what they're doing.

27
28 MR. WALKER: We have a lady here from TCC
29 who could come. Probably could answer that for you,
30 Jenny. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: State your name for
33 the record.

34
35 MS. ERICKSON: Good morning, Dilool
36 Erickson. Tribal resource stewardship with TCC. There
37 is a Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. It was
38 previously a program under TCC, they're filing for 501
39 C3 status and there breaking off. Currently in the
40 process of breaking off from TCC and becoming their own
41 established fish commission independent of us. And
42 that's chaired by Karma Ulvi, Chief Ulvi of Eagle. And
43 I think, Tommy, are you a commissioner? Are you also
44 Robert? Yeah. And I think they have 40 commissioners of
45 the, like, 100 and something, and they're working on
46 filling out their commissioner's seat so that they have
47 representation -- tribal representation from the mouth
48 to the headwaters. This last meeting they had in July
49 of this year, they had representation from First Nations
50 up in Yukon, and they're filling out the Lower Yukon

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1 seats. The next meeting, I think, is tentatively set for
2 January 2025, and I could send out an invite to this
3 Board. Ask Karma to send out an invite to that meeting
4 if you guys would like. Thank you.

5

6

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Nissa.

7

8 MS. PILCHER: I would also like to say
9 that over the course of (distortion) just give me one
10 second, over the course of this discussion, staff has
11 been sending me links to different pieces of information
12 that you guys have been asking for. Genetics, hatchery
13 information that's available online. I don't have a way
14 of printing it. They're also not small documents, so I
15 wouldn't expect you guys to be able to read them. But
16 what I will do is when I get back to Fairbanks, I will
17 print them and mail them to you guys so, you can have
18 them, and then also include where I got them from. So,
19 you guys can trace that information back to where it
20 came from. I'm not saying all of your questions were
21 answered, but some genetics, both Federal and State and
22 hatchery information was sent to me.

23

24

25

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Enforcement
actions.

26

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MS. PILCHER: Not that, but I have it in
my notes to follow up on a report about that. Okay.

29

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, that was you,
Don or Darryl on the phone?

32

33

34

MR. VENT: Yeah, this is Darrell.

35

36

(Simultaneous speech)

37

38

MR. HONEA: No, Mr. Chairman.

39

40

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, okay. Let's go
with Don first, Don.

41

42

43

MR. HONEA: All right. No, I did not have
a comment. Thank you.

44

45

46

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, okay. I'm.
You're getting crossovers there. Go -- Darryl, go ahead.

47

48

49

MR. VENT: Yeah. I'm also on the fish
commission for our Koyukuk River area.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, I think
2 the Fish Commission is actually the avenue to address
3 this issue. That Fish Commission would have a lot of
4 authority with because of tribal statuses, would
5 actually have a lot of authority to ask the hard
6 questions from the state of Alaska, that fish commission
7 can ask, what are you going to do about Area M, and the
8 interception. What is the genetic makeup of those stocks
9 moving through there? What are you going to do about
10 this whole hatchery release thing, which is the
11 completely the elephant in the room? Why are those fish
12 so small? Because they're a hatchery fish are even really
13 small. They're less than half the size that they should
14 be. It's showing they have a nutrient problem in the
15 ocean, and they keep dumping them out there. They don't
16 stop, they keep dumping the same amount. You're going
17 to get the State's report on hatcheries. Your commission
18 needs to get those hatchery reports. I got one, it gives
19 graphs of showing this rocketing hatchery release year
20 after year going higher and higher. (Distortion)
21 sustainability of hatchery release on the ocean. They're
22 affecting all, even their own stocks are not even now.
23 And so, the that your commission can actually ask those
24 hard questions and you can ask the hard question is the
25 State manipulating the public perception? Of course they
26 are. They're in the -- their current Fish and Wildlife
27 Management with the state of Alaska is public. It's
28 called political science. They manipulate the perception
29 of the public about caribou eat themselves out of house.
30 Everybody seems to think Caribou eat themselves out of
31 house and home. No, they don't. Caribou don't eat
32 themselves out of house and home. That's a fallacy. But
33 they say it enough. It's a mantra. And the hatchery fish
34 aren't doing anything. It's a marine climate. Yeah, it's
35 the marine climate. But when you keep dumping the same
36 amount of hatchery fish, they don't want to address the
37 issue. So, they manipulate the public opinion, and the
38 news media just laps it all up because they don't know
39 anything about fish or anything. So, the news media are
40 easily manipulated by public science. That's not hard
41 to do. That happens constantly. So, the Yukon River
42 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission actually can ask those
43 super hard questions with your tribal status. That's
44 what OSM -- that's just a brick wall. I -- there's not
45 that's not going to happen, it can't happen. But they
46 don't have that authority.

47

48 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

49

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2

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead. Who's that. Say your name.

3

4

MR. HONEA: Yeah, this is Don, Mr. Chair, members of the Board. You brought up a interesting thing there. The most of us are on that on the Board, and you're exactly right that, you know, that we should be we should be bringing those concerns through that forum, and I agree with Diloolala for mentioning that and I'd just like to -- I guess we could only as a RAC do so much in certain areas. That particular topic, I believe that we should bring in a foremost to the on our prioritizing that to Karma. Karma does a wonderful job you know, working on our behalf for that organization. And I think, you know, instead of talking a lot, I mean, I know this is a priority, but you know, if we could kind of like I said, all of these things that we're bringing up are concerted efforts at one organization, to me is not going to be able to unless we all join forces on that. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Don. Yes, we want to include this topic in our Annual Report again. But these are -- we want to lay out what the parameters are of our concern. It's not we're going to scatter them all over all in various topics. This topic is going to be the extreme concern for continuation of salmon on the -- in within our region. And we want to lay out we're extremely concerned about hatchery release, we're extremely concerned about vast reductions as necessary for the marine -- the NOAA takes marine inventories. They know for a fact that those marine inventories are going to show really low numbers of marine nutrients for these salmon. We're really concerned about this interception of the few salmon that actually survive on the marines systems and getting through the fisheries, the interception fisheries that especially that are taking components of various other stocks that aren't even -- they don't even the South Alaska Peninsula has very few indigenous salmon that are actually going to spawn in their in their district. And then, you know, the Bering Sea trawl fishery and the North Pacific trawl fisheries, those are also deep concerns because, you know, we just talk about the Bering Sea chinook interception. Well, we've got a chinook that are out in the in the North Pacific, and there was 5,000 chinook salmon that were caught. And, you know, just the other day, well, I bet if you took genetic samples, some of them were from the Yukon River fish. That's where

1 they go. Everybody knows that because the way the
2 current, the Japan current flows along the South Alaska
3 Peninsula in the southeast Alaska, that's where all the
4 nutrients are. That's where the salmon go. That's where
5 they get fat. And so, we have a whole bunch of issues
6 that we feel that the Federal Subsistence Board needs
7 to be looking at, and they have to interact with the
8 state of Alaska. What are you going to do about that?
9 Because the subsistence priority for Alaskan residents
10 and the rural residents, especially for the Federal
11 process, are lacking in food resources, and our security
12 is almost in a crisis situation at this point. So, that's
13 a discussion topic. We should write a letter to the
14 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission laying out what the various
15 things that we -- that they should also be looking at
16 too. YRDEFA should be looking at that, they talk to them,
17 YDRFA talks to them, we've seen Serena down there in
18 Fairbanks when we were coming over here. Yeah, they talk
19 about hatchery release. The Board of Board of Fish has
20 got to step up to the plate and do something about it.
21 So, it's a discussion topic, but that's what the response
22 is. Our response in -- from our last Annual Report
23 discussed these various things, and they keep saying,
24 well, we can only deal with the fisheries that are
25 inshore. That's what they're telling us. That's what
26 this program -- this is the only thing this program can
27 do. But this -- the Federal Subsistence Board can talk
28 to other entities in the Federal Government. Go ahead,
29 Robert.

30
31 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
32 my final thing is that, you know, on the Yukon River
33 here, and we have wildlife troopers who are patrolling
34 Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, 5. And the reason why I brought the
35 first part up is when happened out in Area M, you know,
36 the wildlife troopers out there working with their boats
37 and everything, are they pursuing the illegal fisheries
38 or whatever is happening out there with the fisheries
39 like concern to the Yukon River as a good example that,
40 you know, we had some people fishing in Nulato, and I
41 think the wildlife troopers went there. I think Tom could
42 probably tell more about it. I'm just going to use that
43 as one example. And it was a concern because people went
44 there for food, they went out to get fish for food. And
45 this is something that really struck me because the
46 wildlife trooper went right to the smokehouse of the
47 elder person and asked and looked, and I was told that
48 she wouldn't let the wildlife trooper in. Correct me,
49 Tom.
50

1 MR. KRISKA: But I wasn't around in
2 Nulato at the time.

3
4 MR. WALKER: Okay, well, and you know,
5 how often do you see a wildlife trooper board one of
6 their fishing vessels? I understand they're 56ft long,
7 24ft wide, and they're made for waters up to 16 to 20ft.
8 So, and their purse seine is like a three quarters of a
9 mile and 700ft deep. So, and these people were fishing
10 with a four-inch net, and what is the difference why we
11 have to shut down completely and they can still do that.
12 This is racist, I think. And I could see that it is
13 racist because we've been here for 10,000 years, it's
14 been recorded, and we never had an issue like this once
15 ever, to our tribal people in the AYK region, North and
16 (indiscernible) and the southeast. So, this is kind of
17 like a slap in our face. I really feel -- I just can't
18 see how this is happening to us because this is some
19 like a cruel joke and we have to wake up and it's going
20 to be still there. And OSM has been created for us to
21 do this and as a RAC Board, we are supposed to advise
22 them and ask them. You know, to form a fish commission,
23 you don't need 50 people or so. All you need is probably
24 an anthropologist, probably 4 or 5 biologists and some
25 staff people do the writing. I mean, Jack, don't you
26 know? I mean, you want to answer that, but we already
27 went through that. And we will let Brent, you know, give
28 us a report back in February, see what could happen.
29 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Brent.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: OSM can report back
32 on that at our winter meeting but -- regarding the
33 commission. But we need to move along here and we're
34 getting all bogged down on this issue. This is an
35 important issue and we're very impassioned. And I
36 apologize for my deep concern and compassion for things
37 that should -- it's very apparent what has to happen.
38 And when you're you -- it's like watching a train wreck.
39 There's a tree across the train tracks and you're trying
40 to flag down the train, it's going to hit that and it's
41 going to derail the train. It's like watching a train
42 wreck, but no one wants to even address the issue. The
43 Board of Fish doesn't want to deal with it. They don't
44 -- the Board of Fish is the main responsible party for
45 this problem on the Yukon River and the entire salmon
46 fisheries of the Alaska. The State Board of Fish should
47 be sued for doing what they're doing to these fisheries,
48 by not pulling back, they had opportunity to pull those
49 hatchery releases back, and they refused to do it. They
50 keep refusing to do it because the Seiners Association

1 has a stranglehold on that Board. They have members on
2 that Board, and so they refuse to even cut a little bit
3 back, even though they got -- they know they got salmon
4 sizes declining like a like a stone. Tommy.

5
6 MR. KRISKA: Do I have a few things that
7 -- Tom Kriska. Anyway, I've been going to a lot of these
8 meetings for a lot of my years. And you know, the
9 problems we're about the fishing is getting worse. And
10 we're saying that, you know, the Board of Fish is the
11 problem in a lot of this. And, you know, when you work
12 on a job, you're starting your labor, you're starting
13 your carpenters, you're starting up the chain there, and
14 it all goes back to who's paying the bill. And I, you
15 know, for me, in all the hunting, fishing and all this
16 baloney that's happening it all goes back to the Federal
17 Government or the State or whoever is funding all of
18 these hatcheries, because I -- back in 1990, the
19 hatcheries borrowed \$90 million from the State and was
20 supposed to pay it back. Never got paid back, it didn't
21 have to be, because now I'm finding out that that's
22 who's running all these hatcheries, this -- the State,
23 the Government. And so, I think the Board of Fish is
24 just a cover for the Government, a way to use this tool,
25 as you know, because they need the fish. The whole world
26 needs fish. The United States, everyone in it, it's not
27 a, I mean, you know, for me, it seemed like it's just a
28 cover up for that name to cover for someone else that's
29 paying the bill. So, I think, you know that a lot of the
30 things like the guy going to the smokehouse and all this
31 stuff that's happening for the Natives out here. And he
32 was right about the racist part. I'm pretty sure that's
33 happening because there's been so much money trying to
34 patrol and do all this baloney, and they're doing it in
35 the wrong place. They should be out there doing it with
36 the fish. But I don't know how that's going to happen.
37 Like yesterday, I said for all the agencies that are
38 here, all the departments that are here, and we're
39 sitting here and like, they're all on that side, they
40 know damn well what's going on throughout everything
41 that's being said here and done here. It's kind of a --
42 we're not going to ever win anything. It's a win-win
43 situation on their side. So, I was asking yesterday that
44 you guys need to, you know, try to help out. What, who
45 are you, you know, what is it benefiting for us is
46 nothing. Benefiting for you, you got your bread and
47 butter on the table and we have nothing. So, no matter
48 what you do in any departments that you're working on,
49 you're going to do your job. And we're on the last, you
50 know, the bad end of the stick here. So, I don't know

1 how this is ever going to come about. You know, we could
2 talk all day, talk forever on our part and nothing will
3 never happen because you guys have the tools to do
4 anything you want, it seems to me. So, I think that
5 there's going to have to turn around and start taking
6 care of this problem. We can't do it, I think that it
7 goes all the way back to maybe the White House. I don't
8 know, he doesn't really know what's going on, but the
9 managers do. And for their benefits what they have to
10 do. But anyway, I'm just kind of -- I could talk all day
11 on that subject, but I'm kind of really upset like the
12 rest of us and get frustrated about things. When you've
13 been sitting here for -- going to meetings way back in
14 the Sydney Huntington days, Lester Hart, a lot of those
15 guys were more meaningful than anyone, anybody in those
16 departments for what they managed all their days and
17 what they were taught, and from what it would have been
18 done then. I mean, nothing been done then, nothing been
19 done now. So, how can we ever get anything done when we
20 had stronger people in front of us in, you know, in the
21 past. It's kind of really frustrating to even sit here
22 and listen to all these little areas and everything that
23 you have to cover to make it happen, you know, back
24 wherever -- whoever's paying the bill. I'll put it that
25 way, because I don't know who and who you work for or
26 what you're here for or seem like nothing for us this
27 last 40 years I've been on this going to these meetings.
28 And it's very frustrating, and I understand these people
29 that get frustrated. And I would back that grandma, I
30 wish I was there when the State trooper went to that
31 smokehouse, because she's only trying to feed her kids
32 as well as you guys have your own grandchildren and
33 everything in that -- it bust your heart if you can't
34 feed them, and it damn well broke hers. And I would
35 probably say something or did something and it's getting
36 out of hand. So, I would advise you to, you know, go
37 back to wherever you were working and whatever you do,
38 and try to make things right. That you all believe in
39 the Lord, and I think that's where it should start. And
40 that, you know, if you believe in that guy, maybe you
41 got something in your heart to do something about it.
42 I'm sorry to talk like this, but I don't -- I'm kind of
43 in the corner. And sometimes you back the wrong people
44 into a corner and bad things come out of it, so, I don't
45 know. I'm not threatening anybody, it's just that, you
46 know, we're going to come down the road in somewhere
47 where we're not dummies, we're we got very smart people.
48 And we'll figure it out if you can't. So, I can talk all
49 day. Thank you.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay so, I think
2 we've this is a topic, we're going to have more fisheries
3 discussions later on in this meeting. We can add to this
4 topic. And later on, we're going to move through that
5 topic, the sheep management strategy that's a topic. I
6 would like a topic about concerns about expanded harvest
7 for caribou, for the Arctic populations from the Road
8 in Unit 26B.

9
10 I have concerns that the harvest limits
11 are going to be too high, that we want the Federal
12 Subsistence Board to be aware that if that herd
13 population gets driven to way far below the management
14 objectives that they need to -- that there's there may
15 be necessary actions by the Federal Board process,
16 that's a that's a heads up to the Board. This was to
17 identify needs and the subsistence use of Caribou is a
18 significant need in the Northern portion of this of this
19 region. Identification of current and anticipated
20 subsistence uses of wild fish and wildlife. And we're
21 giving the State -- Federal Subsistence Board a heads
22 up that the State Board of Game has extended harvest
23 limits that will (distortion).....

24
25 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, this is Don.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF:could be
28 future management actions needed by the Federal
29 Subsistence Board. With further data that's going to be
30 coming forward in the next couple of years. And so, you
31 can't give the entire.....

32
33 MR. HONEA. Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF:Alaska 5 cow
36 caribou bag limits that cannot, that should not have
37 happened but that's what happened. So, that's a heads-
38 up topic. These are just heads up topics and points of
39 discussion, but not necessarily asking for a response,
40 but just informational to the Federal Subsistence Board.
41 The Federal Subsistence Board does not attend these
42 meetings. This Annual Report avenue is how we speak to
43 the Federal Subsistence Board. That's what we're doing
44 with these annual topic reports. Any other annual topic
45 reports that Council members would like to put up at
46 this time? We have through the end of this meeting to
47 put up additional topics. The -- we can finalize a
48 commission topic with OSM at our spring meeting. We could
49 put that down as topic.

1 MS. PILCHER: It needs to be this way.
2 This is where you put all the topics.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, let's put that
5 down now. And so, we'll finalize it. And so, I don't
6 feel that that's the right avenue. I feel that the Inter-
7 Tribal Fish Commission has the avenue. And I feel that
8 the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission needs to speak directly
9 to the Governor and the Commissioner of Fish and Game.
10 The root of the problem, where's the buck stop is in the
11 Governor's office. That's what you're asking, that's
12 what you were saying, that's where the buck stops. And
13 the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission needs to get directly
14 in Dunlavey's face and Doug Vincent-Lang's face. You're
15 exceeding sustainability, you're affecting our
16 communities excessively on the Yukon River. The State
17 managers are doing all they can but if they don't have
18 anything -- you can't bake a pie if you don't have any
19 ingredients. That's what the problem is. So, the Inter-
20 Tribal Fish Commission can get in their face. The Federal
21 Subsistence Board process is not going to get in the
22 Governor's face. That's just never going to happen.
23 That's not the way this program even does stuff. So, any
24 other topics, we need topics for this Annual Report.
25 Nissa.

26
27 MS. PILCHER: Robert, you've expressed
28 concern to me in 21A about non-local hunting pressure
29 in there that this could be a good avenue in order to
30 put that in. There's a mix of Federal and State land in
31 that area.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The controlled use
34 area.

35
36 MS. PILCHER: That's in in part of it. I
37 don't want to put words in your mouth, but this would
38 be a good avenue to let the Federal Subsistence Board
39 know that there are concerns on both Federal and State
40 lands of what is going on in that area. Not saying that
41 this is the only thing that should be done, but this is
42 one additional thing that could be done.

43
44 MR. WALKER: Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Robert.

47
48 MR. WALKER: Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr.
49 Chair. That I did bring it up about the control use
50 area, and we find that being approached by the Chairman

1 -- from the AC Board Chairman from Grayling, Anvik,
2 Shageluk, Holy Cross approached me and said that we are
3 -- maybe have an issue that taking place in 21A and if
4 you look at your map, it's right next to 21E where all
5 the green area is that if we could put a control use
6 area through the State or through the Federal
7 Government, but we would like to have a OSM and the YRAC
8 Board, Lower Yukon, etc. Boards support this control use
9 area because it does have moose travel from that area
10 to our area and have their caps in 21E and then go back
11 up into 21A, and this is recorded with the Federal
12 biologist, I can't remember the lady's name. I read the
13 report 20 years ago, and not only that, but a lot of
14 other moose would come down in the winter and or in the
15 summer, spring, and spend the summer there and then go
16 back up into 21A. So, there's a crossover for the borders
17 here with our moose here that -- and with the discussion
18 with the AC RAC member from 21E is that planes are coming
19 in from Galena, Fairbanks and Anchorage into this area
20 and taking moose and even the biologist, I think it's
21 from Kevin Wentworth -- Whitworth, who also had a
22 concern. I didn't really have a chance to talk to him,
23 but now that he has resigned and I'm kind of like little,
24 not disappointed, but I'm just kind of a little bit --
25 that we didn't have a chance to discuss this. And the
26 transporters from all this area has [sic] been targeting
27 this area very heavily, and we have to take some kind
28 of a concern here. And I think that the four villages
29 of Unit 21, Anvik, Grayling, Shageluk and Holocaust, we
30 are under the Tanana Chiefs Conference, it's called
31 Lower Yukon subregion, and we have our meetings there
32 and TCC helps us with that. So, we did bring this up as
33 a concern and a resolution and where we have TCC's
34 resource working on this also with us and Jeff
35 Beyersdorf. I don't know if Jeff's on this morning, but
36 and he is wanting to biologist, BLM biologist that has
37 helped us along, and we are trying to coordinate this
38 with everything that to follow the law to make sure that
39 this is done right.

40
41 We're going to ask for it at the antlers
42 be sawed so that you know it would lose the trophy
43 outlook for the hunt there. And you know, that would be
44 a start. So, hopefully by February, come next year that
45 we would have this all put together and present it to
46 the Board and present it to OSM. And this is where we're
47 going to ask OSM to help us also on this too, you know,
48 support us and ensure that we get this done right where
49 we don't have to drop back and say, well, where did we
50 go wrong? And I don't want to have to lose, I want to

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1 have to win on this one. And Mr. Chair, you know, this
2 is something that we've been looking at for a year, but
3 it just having a hard time getting started as we are.
4 And I've worked with Nissa on this, she has been very
5 helpful. Thank you, Nissa for that. And you know, and
6 so, this is where we are in a way right now and we will
7 come forward. Hopefully we'll have this put together by
8 then. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Nissa.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, I -- it's
11 premature without a map and a delineation of where the
12 boundary extension would be. And Nissa gives me a message
13 here that I got Kevin Whitworth on the phone. Are you
14 there, Kevin?

15
16 MR. WHITWORTH: This is Kevin. Can you
17 hear me, Mr. Chair?

18
19 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I can hear you.
20 Kevin, did you want to -- are you working with Robert
21 on this? This this controlled use extension? Is it into
22 21A, into the unit?

23
24 MR. WHITWORTH: You know, I don't have
25 much comments on the controlled use area. But I do -- I
26 can share a little bit of what we're seeing here in
27 McGrath. As far as if you guys want to hear that side
28 of the story, there's a lot of concern here in McGrath
29 as far as this hunt.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, yes. Go right
32 ahead. We're discussing.

33
34 MR. WHITWORTH: Okay, yeah. I heard my
35 name when Robert was speaking there about this concern
36 because -- and I've been speaking with folks here in
37 town and McGrath because we have a guide and a
38 transporter that work out of McGrath. They're very busy
39 all through September and transporting folks out to the
40 Innoko Refuge. There's a few controlled uses -- there's
41 a few areas where they go and.

42
43 (Simultaneous speech)

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Kevin.

46
47 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah. Can you hear me?

48
49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You dropped out
50 there for your first part of your discussion. So, back

1 up about a minute or so, just right after you started
2 talking. You were gone for a while.

3

4 MR. WHITWORTH Oh, sorry. Yeah, this is
5 Kevin. I don't have much to say about the controlled use
6 area, that discussion, but I can share what folks are
7 seeing here, McGrath and what I've been hearing folks
8 talk about. And so, we have a transporter and a guide
9 that is based out of McGrath for the month of September.
10 They transport out to Innoko National Wildlife Refuge
11 for hunting moose and floaters and all that sort of
12 stuff. And we see a lot of what's come into town, you
13 know, the antlers are stacked up, the moose meat is
14 here. And we have a butcher here and this butcher, he
15 tries his hardest to try to get through the meat that
16 he gets. But this year there was so much meat that he
17 just could not keep up. He had to stack the meat during
18 the rainy weather. It was very moist and the temperatures
19 were warm, he was literally stacking meat on pallets
20 outside of -- outside. My neighbor, he shouldn't have
21 did this, but he said that, you know, he would take some
22 of those meat. I didn't get a moose this year, so he
23 wanted to take meat. And the stuff is just rotten, it's
24 green, it's terribly taken care of, it's shot up bloody.
25 He gave me some scraps for my dogs. I cooked it, it was
26 nasty. Anyways, and then you see it at the dump. They
27 end up throwing. Can you hear me? Okay, Mr. Chair?

28

29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I can still hear
30 you. Go ahead.

31

32 MR. WHITWORTH: Okay, I'm getting some
33 background. I hear somebody talking. Some guy.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: On the.....

36

37 MR. WHITWORTH: But anyways Can you hear
38 me okay, still?

39

40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I can, yes. Go
41 ahead, Kevin.

42

43 MR. WHITWORTH: Okay so, what's going on
44 here is just there's a lot of waste. There's the meat
45 that's not being taken care of by the hunters. It's not
46 being taken care of by the butcher, the outfitters, the
47 transporter, I meant and then a lot of that meat is
48 ending up in the dump, and the people are just so upset.
49 People can't even go down to the dump. They just can't
50 stomach what they're seeing. It's just very

1 disrespectful to the animal, to a National Wildlife
2 Refuge that they would allow this and to just flood that
3 place with so many people getting moose. And then we see
4 it here in McGrath when it comes back to town in the
5 waste. There's definitely they say, well, troopers can't
6 do anything. It's legal what they're doing. But what how
7 do you solve this solution or how do you solve this? I
8 don't know, you know, the controlled use area what Robert
9 mentioned is maybe the best way to do this, but I
10 definitely just want to share the concern from this
11 community and what they're seeing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Thank
14 you, Kevin. Yeah, really concerning information, the
15 controlled use area extension that would preclude
16 aircraft use that would possibly address some of this.
17 And that's quite an area in Unit 21A and that's the
18 state of Alaska, Board of Game would have to be involved
19 in this whole process, but the Federal Subsistence Board
20 should be aware, and we'll make this an Annual Report
21 topic that the Federal Subsistence Board should be made
22 aware of the massive amounts of wanton waste that's
23 occurring, but you need to get the statute also, Kevin.
24 The State statute for salvage and wanton waste is to
25 remove the edible, all of the edible meat from the back
26 of the head to the distal joints in a preserved State
27 that has to be in a preserved State for human consumption
28 for two weeks after removal from the field. So, you go
29 on the State website and find that the troopers said,
30 well, they brought it out from the field. It's all
31 rotten. Well, no, that's not what the statute says.
32 That's what the, you know, I got the statute book, the
33 Board support sent me a statute book. And that's what
34 the salvage requirement requires, is that it has to be
35 in a, in a palatable State for two weeks after removal
36 from the field. So, I would encourage you to get that
37 statute and take a look at it and start talking about
38 at the Advisory Committee level, what that actually
39 says. This whole thing that, oh, it's just all rotten.
40 They can just toss it, no. If it's not in a, in a
41 preserved State, you know, you let it spoil in the field
42 there's needs to be tickets being written. That's what
43 the Fish and Wildlife protection is actually derelict
44 and not enforcing the statute itself. That's not a Board
45 regulation, that's a State legislative statute, that
46 salvage requirement. So, you -- I would encourage you
47 to look at that statute. And we'll enter into further
48 discussion about this in the need for this controlled
49 use area is so -- that would be a point for our Annual
50 Report as a concern for wanton waste in the Innoko

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1 National Wildlife Refuge areas that are occurring in
2 Unit 21E and 21A. So, that's another topic. And we can
3 talk about that topic further, refine stuff later on in
4 the spring meeting.

5
6 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa for the
7 record. You can edit what is there, but you guys have
8 put quite a bit on the record as well as
9 conversations.....

10
11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

12
13 MS PILCHER:that I, yes. You have
14 put quite a bit on the record. And I'll run through this
15 list before you guys finalize it and you can add, I
16 don't need everything on the record. I just need.....

17
18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Alright, yea.

19
20 (Pause) (Distortion)

21
22 MR. GERVIAS: Jack, this is Tim. Can you
23 hear me?

24
25 (Pause)

26
27 MR. WALKER: (Indiscernible) yeah, we
28 will work with you on this. That would -- this would
29 give us a definite, you know, support to get it started.
30 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Tim Gervais.
33 Are you on the phone now? I got a message that you're
34 there. Tim, are you there?

35
36 (No response)

37
38 I'm not hearing you Tim, if you're still
39 there. I would like all Council members -- Darryl, are
40 you still there? Don Honea.

41
42 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Mr. Chair, could
43 you hear me?

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. I'm looking
46 for Annual Report topics. Do you have other Annual Report
47 topics? Nothing that we've already covered.

48
49 MR. HONEA: No, no, sir, I just mentioned
50 what was priority. Thank you.

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(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: There you are, Tim. Okay, you got [sic] any Annual Report topics?

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I would like -- I don't know if it's a report topic or request for training, but I would like a presentation on what the relationship of the Solicitor is to the Federal Subsistence Board and to the Regional Council. I don't understand that relationship, if it's all part of the same group or their own entity. And like I said earlier or clarified earlier for the March meeting minutes, I'm disagreeing with the Solicitor's interpretation of whether ANILCA has jurisdiction in the EEZ.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I -- use the correct term not -- no acronym. Our court recorder doesn't know that I and Council members don't know that acronym. Go ahead. Economic.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GERVAIS: Economic Exclusive Zone. The three miles, three nautical miles to 200 nautical miles from the shore of the United States.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, state it again, you sort of faded. Our current recorder is going to have to type that out.

MR. GERVAIS: Restate the topic or the exclusive.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No, the acronym. The acronym you were giving.

MR. GERVAIS: EEZ, echo, echo, zulu.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We need the term. We need what you're saying, not the acronym.

MR. GERVAIS: Exclusive Economic Zone.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, yeah, that's what I needed for the record. So, the record has to be clear. And so, I continue and so, we you want a legal

1 interpretation about -- you want a basically a report
2 is what you would like from OSM or how would we get this
3 kind of information. Brent, is this an Annual Report
4 topic?

5

6

(Simultaneous speech)

7

8 MR. GERVAIS: Let me add something to it,
9 right. And discuss it with the people in the room. But
10 the problem is, and it's been this way for a long time
11 is because salmon are migratory (indiscernible), we all
12 know that. But they're spending the majority of their
13 life out in the Exclusive Economic Zone. That's their
14 habitat for more than half of their life. And the
15 Solicitor is telling me that he doesn't have
16 jurisdiction over those salmon while they're in the
17 Exclusive Economic Zone, because that falls under the
18 Department of Commerce. But then when I talked to North
19 Pacific Management Council or Dr. Diana Stram with NOAA,
20 he says it doesn't have to be concerned with the numbers
21 in salmon and rivers, because the NOAA and North Pacific
22 Council is [sic] not concerned with things, they're only
23 concerned with things in the marine environment. And so,
24 I'm getting these people that could have some bearing
25 on what's happening with the salmon, whether they're in
26 the rivers or in the ocean. And they're always deferring
27 to say, well, that's because I work for Department of
28 Commerce or I work for Department of Interior, I'm not
29 responsible for dealing with the salmon because they're
30 not -- they don't spend their entire life in my
31 department's area of interest. So, we have -- somehow
32 we need to get, like, an overreaching thing. The most
33 important fact is we got [sic] to protect the salmon.
34 But I'm getting managers or the Solicitor telling me
35 they don't need to track the salmon in certain parts of
36 their life cycle because it falls outside of the purview
37 of Department of Commerce or Interior. But we need to
38 protect the salmon for their entire life and not just
39 half their life.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, you want an
42 analysis from OSM or some a legal interpretation of a
43 second opinion regarding that interpretation, is what
44 you're requesting?

45

46 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, that that's one that's
47 one thing. And probably a second thing is I would be
48 interested in some kind of memorandum of understanding
49 between the Department of Commerce and Department of
50 Interior, realizing that we're dealing with migratory

1 species, with the salmon, the chum and the king Salmon
2 or chinook, and there needs to be collaboration and
3 cooperation between those two agencies to ensure that
4 the salmon receive the proper protection for their
5 entire life cycle. Just right now, we're getting a
6 situation where they're saying, well, by regulation,
7 such and such department is not -- does not have
8 jurisdiction in that area. But that doesn't work. Have
9 the Federal -- have the NOAA say they're not -- they
10 don't have any interest in what happens in the river or
11 to have the Solicitor tell me he can't protect, he can't
12 enforce ANILCA because the salmon are swimming out in
13 the Exclusive Economic Zone.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, basically, the
16 Annual Report is requesting that the Federal Subsistence
17 Board working with the -- it would be the U.S. Fish and
18 Wildlife Region 7 should require a memorandum, of
19 agreement to protect the salmon and the marine and
20 freshwater environment. That's your request.

21
22 MR. GERVAIS: Right, and not have people
23 that work for Department of Commerce say they can't deal
24 with any salmon issues that's not in the marine
25 environment and not have people that work for Department
26 of Interior say they're not responsible for what happens
27 to the salmon when they're out in the ocean.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I completely
30 agree with you on that. I completely agree with you on
31 that issue, the -- they're passing the buck, and the
32 salmon are losing and so are the subsistence users. So,
33 our -- as a Subsistence Council were concerned with the
34 health of the stocks and the demise of the stocks. These
35 are not just they're not stocks of concern anymore, these
36 are threatened -- these are becoming threatened species,
37 salmon stocks. And so, we'll state that for the Annual
38 Report that we feel that these are threatened with --
39 in danger of extermination with current practices. So,
40 the Federal Subsistence Board is -- we work through the
41 Federal Subsistence Board. The Federal Subsistence Board
42 should be we were requesting under this Annual Report
43 topic that they enter in -- inform the U.S. -- through
44 the Federal -- their arm as the U.S. Fish and wildlife,
45 they need to work with the Interior Department and the
46 Department of Commerce to have a memorandum of agreement
47 to protect salmon in the marine and freshwater
48 environments. Period. They can't pass the buck, there's
49 no like you protect them inshore. Well, if we don't have
50 -- well any fish for spawning escapement, it has to be

1 protected across the Board. That's what we're
2 requesting, that's the Annual Report topic. Is that
3 clear for the record, Nissa?

4

5 MS. PILCHER: It sure is.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, okay.

8

9 MR. GERVAIS: So, I would just like to
10 add a couple more sentences here. It's not for the Annual
11 Report, but just for building the record when Amendment
12 91 was being deliberated in Anchorage by North Pacific
13 Council, I specifically heard Dr. Stram when she was
14 giving her NOAA staff testimony to the North Pacific
15 Management Council. She said, we did no analysis of the
16 salmon in the freshwater environment because that's not
17 part of NOAA's responsibility. And then in the March
18 24th meeting in Anchorage, I asked -- I was talking to
19 the Solicitor and I said, clearly ANCSA and ANILCA is
20 being violated here by allowing commercial fishing,
21 bycatch of salmon in the Exclusive Economic Zone, while
22 we're not meeting subsistence or spawning goals. And he
23 said, well, that's Department of Commerce and I don't
24 have any jurisdiction to engage Department of Commerce
25 to try to enforce ANILCA Title 8. And to me, that that
26 was a really inadequate interpretation of what needs to
27 happen.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. I think the
30 record is clear on that for that Annual Report. Do you
31 have any other Annual Report topics? I see that Kevin
32 Whitworth wants to speak also. Is it on this Annual
33 Report topic, Kevin?

34

35 MR. WHITWORTH: This is Kevin. Yes, it
36 is Jack, Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

39

40 MR. WHITWORTH: This is a really -- thank
41 you, Mr. Chair. Council member Gervais brings up a really
42 interesting topic. Something that I just wanted you all
43 to be aware and you guys may be already aware that the
44 Cook Inlet EEZ zone is being managed right now by NOAA
45 because they went through a lawsuit and they lost it.
46 And so, they -- I don't know if they lost it or win it,
47 but they now have to manage that EEZ zone for salmon.
48 NOAA has to do that, and they're doing it this last
49 year. It's a Federal NOAA managed salmon fishery. And
50 so, the precedent has been set. The lawsuit's been set.

1 So, how they are able to not do it in the Bering Sea or
2 Area M. Why isn't it being done there? That's the
3 question Tim brings up. And I think that lawsuit is
4 really important for folks to see it, look at it, and
5 then maybe build on this topic for your Annual Report,
6 because I think it -- the precedent has been set. So,
7 NOAA telling you all that they cannot do it is false.
8 They're doing it, and they look at the Cook Inlet salmon
9 fishery. They're managing that fishery. Thank you, Mr.
10 Chair.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Kevin.
13 We'll include that line of reasoning that the NOAA is
14 already managing in in an Economic -- Exclusive Economic
15 Zone, its already in the Cook Inlet fishery. So, that
16 covers that topic. Any other topics? Tim, we need to
17 clean this. We need to finish off this Annual Report,
18 and we're coming up with the various subjects. Any other
19 subjects?

20
21 MR. GERVAIS: Okay, yeah. Just one more
22 is the Federal Subsistence Board should ask
23 (indiscernible) Fisheries Service -- it's the genetic
24 information coming from like this bycatch that's gonna
25 [sic] to be sampled from that 2,000 chinook salmon caught
26 as bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska last week.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right.

29
30 MR. GERVAIS: When the state of Alaska
31 does genetic information like, say, the Port Moller test
32 fishery for fish coming into Bristol Bay, they're
33 getting information within 24 to 36 hours. And last time
34 we talked with Dr. Stram about the genetic information
35 for the Bering Sea trawl fleet, she said that the genetic
36 information takes somewhere between, I don't remember
37 exactly under the impression she said between 2 to 3
38 months to get that data back. So, I feel like genetic
39 information, genetic sampling of trawl bycatch and king
40 salmon catch that's caught in State water like
41 commercial directed salmon fisheries, whether it's
42 gillnet or seine, I think we really need to get that
43 information out to the public and not try to hold back
44 the information because it may be bearing bad news for
45 some stakeholder group or some sector. So, I would like
46 to try to get some kind of program or understanding
47 where the Federal people or State people or together
48 they do a better job of getting information on what's
49 the genetic makeup of these different king salmon
50 catches around the State, whether it's Bering Sea, Trawl

1 Fisheries, Gulf of Alaska Trawl Fisheries, or state of
2 Alaska commercial salmon fisheries.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's an
5 important topic and I would like that added. And I would
6 like -- that's something that our fisheries people at
7 OSM -- that genetic information is out there in our, our
8 fisheries people with OSM can compile that that
9 information. There's [sic] agencies that got it, we need
10 it. We need to have where those stocks in the Gulf of
11 Alaska, all genetic sampling done from salmon in the
12 north Gulf of Alaska for chinook, chum, coho salmon need
13 to be -- we need to get a report on what is the makeup
14 of the Gulf of Alaska, Area M, South Alaska Peninsula
15 and Bering Sea stocks that were actually taken on the
16 high seas or basically in the marine system. Where were
17 those stocks going to? What is their total -- we need
18 to have -- I don't want to hear this stuff that they're
19 all just little, little fingerlings. It's like no, no
20 they're not. They're most of them are feeder kings, that
21 doesn't that means they live to five and six years old,
22 they might be four-year-old fish. They're going to come
23 back as five. They might be 25-pound fish when they're
24 caught in -- I don't want to hear this stuff that they're
25 juvenile stocks, they're not all these little minnows.
26 So, we need to know what the age classes are, we need
27 to know the genetic makeup, and those are information
28 that our fisheries biologists at OSM can actually
29 compile that information for these Western Interior
30 Regional Advisory Council, Y-K Delta Regional Advisory
31 Council, Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council and
32 YK Delta Regional Council and Bristol Bay Regional
33 Council. They need, we -- and Seward Peninsula Regional
34 Council. We need to know where these fish came from,
35 what happened to those fish and what is the -- this
36 smoke and mirrors stuff. We don't, you know, the genetic
37 makeup of these stocks. The information is there. Each
38 agency's got the information. It's trying to be clouded
39 and in an obscure -- obscured in the, in the presentation
40 to the public. And so, you're exactly right. The -- that
41 information then can be disseminated from throughout the
42 Inter-Tribal Fish Commissions for the Yukon River and
43 the Kuskokwim River drainages. So, that's an Annual
44 Report topic that we need to have that genetic
45 information compiled for our -- all of these Councils
46 use because this this problem is not going away. This
47 is -- we're not going to stick our head in the sand.
48 This is going to continue to -- and it's going to be --
49 NOAA is going to be managing fisheries on the high seas
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1 if the state of Alaska doesn't get their act together
2 pretty soon. So, that's another Annual Report topic.

3

4 MR. GERVAIS: One addition to that, Mr.
5 Chair. So, yeah, we need the genetic information.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, this would be
8 Tim Gervais.

9

10 MR. GERVAIS: This is Tim Gervais. Other
11 than in addition to the genetic information we need age,
12 sex and length and weight. I mean, that's the kind of
13 information we have to have to figure out where the
14 salmon from each river system are at various points in
15 their life. And that will be somewhat established by
16 where they're being caught, by which commercial
17 fisheries. And that's all I have. Thanks for your
18 patience.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, that ASL, ASL
21 information is extremely important in this whole --
22 because we're going to need this. This problem is not
23 going to stop. And so, we -- this is information that
24 all the Councils need to this Council is putting this
25 forward as an Annual Report topic that should also be
26 transmitted to the other Regional Councils that were
27 identified, that need this information, that needs to
28 be passed on to the other Regional Councils at their at
29 -- EIRAC is going to meet next week or whatever. So, I
30 need other Annual Report topics. We need to finish off
31 this Annual Report topic issue. This is an action item.
32 We have -- any other Annual Report topics? Tommy.

33

34 (Simultaneous speech)

35

36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I got Tommy here.
37 Go ahead, Tommy.

38

39 MR. KRISKA: Thinking about the south of
40 the Galena, Nulato, Koyukuk, the controlled use area. I
41 put in a resolution two years ago to this Board, and I
42 just kind of want to update that. And because I was just
43 talking to the folks on the phone, and they still want
44 it. So, just wanted to see if we can have that to our
45 annual action item.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That would be
48 delineating the same -- that was a Board of Game
49 proposal. And so, they you could, you know, we could try
50 and resubmit that request again at our -- but I'm not

1 sure when they would call for proposal on that. Nissa,
2 do you have an idea about [sic] that would be?

3

4 MS. PILCHER: That's spring of 2026 for
5 the Interior Board of Game meeting.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That would be
8 another proposal. And so, what -- they would call for
9 proposal at some point. And so, but you would have to --
10 - we'd have to have the same or the compete -- your AC,
11 did they endorse that proposal? Your Advisory Committee
12 down there. So, that's not an actual an Annual Report
13 topic. That's a to do item and we need to have that --
14 that would be needs to be -- if you're your Advisory
15 Committee or tribal organization can transmit that for
16 our future meeting. We're going to be on Board of Game
17 meeting stuff or Game meeting, Wildlife meeting next
18 fall. So, that would be the time to actually discuss
19 that, Tommy.

20

21 MR. KRISKA: Okay (indiscernible).

22

23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, so bring the-
24 - have Nissa work with you and get that information for
25 the fall meeting next year. Any other Annual Report
26 topics? Robert.

27

28 MR. WALKER: Yes, Mr. Chair, thank you.
29 I think, Brent, I asked him a question and he got up to
30 speak, and he kind of, like, left him out. Brent,
31 remember I asked, would OSM support us on this 21A
32 control use area proposal?

33

34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, go ahead,
35 Brent.

36

37 MR. VICKERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
38 Council member Walker. I think your Chair pretty much
39 addressed everything that I had to say. We can find out
40 more information about how one goes about setting up
41 controlled use areas. I do know that we cannot -- from
42 what I've heard from the Solicitors, that we can no
43 longer -- we cannot do it through regulation. So, we
44 can't submit a proposal to set up a controlled use area
45 under Federal lands. I don't know exactly the reasons
46 why, but that's what I did hear recently from a Solicitor
47 when trying to discuss this as a possibility in other
48 areas. So, I think the best that we can do at OSM is try
49 to find out more information, cause I don't know offhand
50 how, how these become established.....

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Lisa Grediagin, go ahead.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Lisa Grediagin, for the record, to just -- I guess a more -- provide a little more information on controlled use areas. All the ones in Federal regulation are also in State regulation. They are kinda taken over, you know, or transferred over to Federal regs from the State, and currently there's a few cases where the boundaries don't align, like the Federal boundary of the Kanuti controlled use area is different than the boundary of the State Kanuti controlled use area, but basically, if there's a, a controlled use area in Federal regulations, it would only apply to Federal users. And so I doubt it's the Council's or anyone's intent to only restrict Federal users while, you know, State users could still use aircraft or ATVs or, you know, other equipment, and so it would make the most sense to me to put a proposal into the Board of Game to establish a controlled use area under State regulations, since that would restrict everyone hunting under State regs, and then you could put -- potentially submit one under Federal regs. The guidance we got from the Solicitor is, you know, that's just hasn't really been done. Before we've had proposals again to modify the boundaries of controlled use areas, but I don't think we've ever had one to establish a new one, but it's one of those things, you know, if it comes up, you know, we deal with it at that time. But again, if there's only a controlled use area and Federal regs and not State, that would only apply to Federal users, so State users could still use, you know, ATVs or aircraft or whatever other equipment.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Lisa, yes, there Kanuti controlled use areas is disparate because the State -- the old controlled use area, the State trimmed off a whole bunch of it, but under the Federal process, we maintain the old boundary because there's a moose closure in there, that's what that was about. So, that's -- but I've not known of an -- of making it's -- a new controlled use area without going through the State process. So, that's -- the proposal is to work with -- your idea is to work with the state of Alaska to get a controlled use area extension into 21A, is your intention to work with the Federal and State government to -- and we were telling the Federal Subsistence Board that there's a need for that because of the wanton waste

1 issues of coming off of the Innoko National Wildlife
2 Refuge. Is that clear, Robert? Go ahead, Robert.

3
4 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
5 Brent, first of all, I -- we were looking at kinda
6 [sic] like a -- us [sic] support letter stating that,
7 you know, we support this because of the past. What the
8 biologists have made reports on it, I'd like to find
9 those also, because I did mention earlier that the moose
10 did migrate from 21A down to 21E and then migrate back
11 so, we have that on record, Federal record in fact. It
12 was done by a biologist lady, I can't remember her name,
13 I read the report so, that is where I'm going to ask
14 for, or we could ask for support. And Lisa, you know
15 like, we're working with this through Tanana Chiefs.
16 We're working with them and we're working with a BLM
17 biologist by the name of Jeff Beyersdorf too, also who's
18 giving us information that we need to use to do this.
19 And we're not really -- I know the Federal Government
20 kinda [sic] like, laid back now on a lot of these issues,
21 and I can understand Lisa, your point of view, because
22 we have to live here and we want to try to protect some
23 of it, what we can because this is a resource what [sic]
24 the tribes do use. I know 21A there's no people living
25 there in 21A but, but there are people living in 21E
26 and, and also 22 and 21D, etc. But these resources are
27 very important to us, and there are records kept with
28 the Federal Government from the Refuge there. And if we
29 could have access to that too, and we're gonna work with
30 this and we're gonna present it hopefully by the Board
31 of -- the Federal Board of Game, and we will work with
32 the Board of Game also from the State, and we'll see
33 what they say, but we'll just work with that. And you
34 know, I don't wanna [sic] drag this on. Mr. Chairman, I
35 think we got it to where we needed, we need to be, and
36 so thank you very much. Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right, well, we
39 gave the Federal Subsistence Board a heads up on that
40 issue, you know, the identified need for an extension
41 of a controlled use area into the Innoko Refuge so the
42 Federals -- but that's premature to any kind of Board
43 action. There needs to be something happen with the State
44 or something happen in the future. So, we can discuss
45 this further at our -- this would be another Wildlife
46 issue that will happen in -- the next fall's meeting of
47 25. That's what that -- that's when that would mainly
48 be happening. And we're looking for identifying.....

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50 (Simultaneous speech)

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Oh, go ahead, Robert.

MR. WALKER: I think we can give you a report in the February meeting also just to update, okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I -- yes, I'd appreciate that. So, Annual Report topics. Darrell. Go ahead, Darrell.

MR. VENT: Yes, I just had some concerns and comments on our representation for our areas, you know, for instance was there a Central Arctic Herd, you know, and when you started talking about threatened or endangered species, how do we look at it? Our people lost their caribou, and there's no -- there has been no, you know, recognition for threatened or endangered. I mean -- and when you're talking about fish, you know, you're talking about, you know, the Yukon River. So, Canada, they're not getting any, you know, any amount of fishing up there. And they have the most threatened area right now. But to look at it, I see that the Kuskokwim area, we're not -- they're not being represented. I mean, maybe when this caribou migration pattern that just come down to Central Arctic. We didn't have representation at the time or we didn't have people that were concerned about it. But we have no caribou in our area, you know.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The Koyukuk River Advisory Committee made extensive comments on the proposal to the State Board of Game and so, we commented -- the State Koyukuk River Advisory commented extensively on that Central Arctic proposal, and that's when Michelle Quillan actually went before the State Board of Game in March of 2024 to talk about that. So, we were represented. I want to clarify the record, that we were represented through the AC. Advisory Committee is actually, are part of the regional Council process. So, that -- we did address that, but the State -- the problem is the State Board of Game didn't listen. They just passed the proposal as written. They don't pay any attention to the Advisory Committees, they didn't listen to the line of reasoning. So.....

MR. VENT: Okay, so how do we.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the -- we're trying to identify annual report top [sic] -- do you have an Annual Report topic?

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MR. VENT: Well, yeah, I just wanted to comment on this control use area. When you go into control use, are you able to still get priority -- rural priority from the subsistence users or is it -- does it change it? That's one of the quest [sic] I just wanted to ask that question on your -- when you were talking about the topics.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Now the and -- the land status maintains, you know, it's Federal lands that would have a rural subsistence priority. In the Innoko Refuge is all Federal lands, and there's BLM lands but I don't have a Federal book before me to delineate the Federal lands. But there's BLM lands associated to that Innoko Refuge, and that's what Robert was talking about with Jeff Beyersdorf actually going through the process with them delineating this and this controlled use area. But that's futuristic. That's something that can get -- we're going to get a report on that in February from Robert, and then that's futuristic as far as actually submitting a proposal on that. Any other Annual Report topics? Not delinea [sic] not belaboring this controlled use area. Do you have other issues for your area, Darrell, that you think we need to address in our Annual Report to the Federal Subsistence Board?

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MR. VENT: Yeah, I think I brought up last year, you know, that we're looking at fish species once that the salmon crash happened, we're going to start utilizing more of the other fishes, and they were supposed to do, you know, it look like the population of those fishes once that crash happened, I don't know if anything happened on that point there. I know I asked for information like that.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Koyukuk-Nowitna will give us a report on what their projects are, I see some water temperature projects and stuff. So, that will be in our briefings from the agencies. So, this is a report to the Federal Subsistence Board, the Annual Report. Anybody else have a specific subject to give to the Federal Subsistence Board that would -- that the Federal Subsistence Board needs to know from this regional Council? Jenny.

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MS. PELKOLA: Jenny Pelkola. I'm just thinking, you know, I've been on this Board for many years, and it seems like we request this and we request that request, request, and we don't hardly get any of

1 our requests met. And now that we're requesting stuff
2 from the Federal Subsistence Board, I think we need to
3 just continue to keep, keep on, even though it looks
4 like a losing battle, we just need to keep on bringing
5 it up, bringing it up. I remember years ago, an elder
6 spoke to me and he said the way you get things done is
7 you have to keep bringing it up, bringing it up. No
8 matter if you think you're losing or -- just keep
9 bringing it up. So, that's something, I don't know if
10 it's Annual Report thing that we should just continue
11 to hound these Boards and hound, keep hounding the people
12 to hear our requests, I don't know how you could do
13 that, but, you know, continue to do it. And that's,
14 that's just what I have to add.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Jenny. I
17 mean, sometimes we are hounding. It would seem like we're
18 hounding on this fishery stuff, but it's a -- it's so
19 important stuff we're trying to move from -- we tried
20 this angle, we're trying to -- it's like chopping down
21 a tree or cut -- we made this cut that didn't work,
22 we're gonna cut this way. We're gonna -- we're not going
23 to stop chopping this tree down. We're going to keep
24 working on that issue. This Council is to take comments
25 on any issue that's -- that affects subsistence, and
26 this extraterritorial issue of salmon out in the ocean
27 is an issue that's affecting the people of this region.
28 So, we're going to continue to hound them and hound them
29 and hound them until the Federal Subsistence Board, and
30 the Secretary of Interior, the Department of Commerce
31 (distortion), and the Agriculture Department
32 (indiscernible) -- of Secretaries will actually start
33 addressing this salmon issue. This is a multi-agency
34 problem. They need to step up to the plate. They can't
35 just keep passing the buck. And so, you had a comment,
36 Fred?

37
38 MR. HUNTINGTON: Yeah.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I got -- gotta go
41 to the mic and you got to state your name. Thank you.

42
43 MR. HUNTINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
44 I'm Fred Huntington from Galena and I was listening to
45 you guys talking about the genetics of salmon that's
46 been caught and where they come from and all that good
47 stuff, you know, I'd like you to add all other species
48 that comes in the Yukon. For one thing, you know, I've
49 been fishing most of my life, this time of the year we
50 fish for whitefish, and in the past, when I was a kid

1 growing up, we used to fish under the ice at Bishop
2 Mountain in the fall time, and to -- one weekend we'd
3 get 6 or 700 whitefish. Well, when I -- living here in
4 Galena in the 70s and 80s and 90s and three or four
5 days, we would have 5 or 600 whitefish on the beach
6 freezing for the fall time, and a couple of years ago
7 we had four fish nets and we were getting a lot of late
8 summer chum, but basically, we were targeting whitefish.
9 Out of four whitefish nets, we were getting about 30
10 whitefish a day in which only three or four in the
11 whitefish were females so, I noticed a large decline of
12 whitefish. Nobody ever mentions that, nobody ever talks
13 about it, but it's happening. I mean, I see it now, you
14 put a fishing it in out there, you, you'd be lucky to
15 get four or five fish a day. And so, I just wanted to
16 make the Federal Subsistence Board aware that there are
17 other species in the river that's being depleted, and
18 it's not only chinook, summer chum, fall chum or coho.
19 It's all species, that's about all I got to say.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I really
22 appreciate that information, Fred. That's important
23 information for this Council to know because nobody is,
24 you know, the number of freshwater fish is declined.
25 It's the perception is -- it's the effort is not there,
26 but if you're setting gear and you're seeing a decline
27 with the same per catch, per unit of effort has dropped
28 like 90%, you're talking about around 90% decline,
29 that's a significant problem. I'm concerned and I keep
30 saying, I'll say it again. I'm concerned that with the
31 reduced number of salmon coming back, that nutrient flow
32 to the in-river systems were -- that all of these fish,
33 these whitefish and everything are benefiting from
34 salmon and the nitrogens feed the waters. And if there's
35 not enough nitrogens, then the -- basically the
36 fertilizer declines, then the number of insects
37 declines, and I've seen a huge decline in the number of
38 insects this year. And I think it happens -- is happening
39 with water insects also, which would affect whitefish.
40 So, there's a phenomenal insect decline this year. And
41 people, nobody's gonna -- I see it in Kanuti's report
42 that there's a 10% of the bumblebees that they actually
43 saw previously, and I see that across the board. I think
44 it's happening with water insects also, and that can
45 affect whitefish dramatically, especially the broad
46 whitefish, humpback whitefish and the ciscoes, those
47 bearing ciscoes, those go down way downriver. So, those
48 -- that's showing some kind of -- that probably
49 attributed to this marine decline that we're seeing. You
50 have another comment, Fred?

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MR. HUNTINGTON: Yeah, you know, along the lines of the whitefish, I saw a video of the pollock trawlers running their fish through the conveyor belt. And these were not pollock, this was all whitefish going up the conveyor belt into the grinder and spit out in the ocean. And they were all whitefish, stacked about that high on a belt, about that wide, and that belt might have been 200ft long, but.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That was, that was wearing herring, herring looked a lot like.....

MR. HUNTINGTON: No, this is Whitefish. I watched this for a while, I watched it several times and there were large whitefish we would get right now, those were spit right back in the ocean after its grind up, seagulls were just having a party.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I've never heard of that before, so I would like to know more about that. What, what freshwater stocks are caught in the Bering Sea trawl fishery. What freshwater whitefish stocks are caught in the Bering Sea trawl fishery, so, make a note of that for our next meeting. Thanks for that one, Fred, I appreciate your comments. So, I don't know that we have any other Annual Report topics. I think that, Nissa you got comment.

MS. PILCHER: I just when -- I'd like to run through them.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, please go ahead.

MS. PILCHER: This was a pretty long conversation I want to make sure I didn't miss anything.

So, I tried to group them kind of by the salmon ones or the fish ones are all first. So, subsistence users are bearing the brunt of conservation issues. Was a -- one massive topic. There was a lot put on the record. The ask that you guys had last year was informational and encouraging the Federal Subsistence Board to take action. You did put a couple different options of actions they could take on the record. What we did lack on last year's was hatchery concerns. We did touch on enforcement concerns, but hatchery was not part of that. So, that will get included, and then also a request to expedite what is going on, I mean, this is

1 not a topic that you guys just came up with. This is an
2 ongoing concern, and we can definitely feel that you are
3 -- don't feel that things are -- yeah. I don't know how
4 to express that well. Let's just try to speed up the
5 process, I mean, Government moves slow, but fish are
6 supposed to come back every year. Another topic would
7 be look at how OSM could develop a fish commission. This
8 is an ask and not -- the ask is to how one could be
9 created. Another topic was requesting the Federal
10 Subsistence Board -- request MOU between -- Memorandum
11 of Understanding between the Department of Commerce and
12 the Department of the Interior. Another one was.....

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Actually
15 Department of Commerce, Department of Interior, and the
16 Department of Agriculture, because the Department of
17 Agriculture is part of the Federal Subsistence Board.
18 So, the Department of Interior and Department of
19 Agriculture are going to ask the Department of Commerce
20 to have a memorandum of agreement to protect salmon in
21 the marine and freshwater systems. That's what the
22 request is, for the Federal Subsistence Board, which
23 that's three of two of the entities.

24
25 MS. PILCHER: Yes, thank you for that.
26 This one, the -- and then the last fish ask perse is,
27 this one gets a little muddy. It's -- you guys requested
28 more information be given to you and be available on
29 genetics across, like in the Gulf of Alaska, in Bering
30 Sea. So, that was the ask.....

31
32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And the State
33 interception fisheries, which would be South Alaska
34 Peninsula, Shumagin, Area M and other -- there's other
35 fisheries that incidentally take, you know, outer
36 districts of the -- of Cook Inlet. There's outer
37 districts that are actually taking -- we need to know
38 where these -- all of this sampling that's being done.
39 We need to know where those genetics came from. I took
40 genetic samples off of king salmon and chum salmon in
41 the upper Koyukuk River for the Department of Fish and
42 Game for five years. I know they have a genetic catalog
43 for all of the portions of the Koyukuk -- of the Yukon
44 River system. I helped them work on that project. Go
45 ahead, Nissa.

46
47 MS. PILCHER: And that information would
48 also include the, the age, sex, length, weight and that
49 other information that member Gervais put on the record
50 if you guys chose to do so, one thing that member Vent

1 did just bring up is of course it's -- on your I believe
2 it was FY-22 Annual Report, you did have concern over
3 continued reliance on non-salmon species for subsistence
4 needs. That addressed your concern over the lack of
5 information on these non-salmon species and the
6 continued reliance on them since the salmon aren't in
7 the rivers anymore. We could certainly add that again.
8 I believe the reply was along the lines of, you know,
9 working through the Priority Needs Information and that
10 process. But we could certainly add that again. And you
11 do have Priority Need Information for the Yukon River
12 concerning non-salmon species information gathering. So,
13 that could definitely be added if you guys would like.
14 And then as for -- that would cover the fish. And then
15 as for the wildlife, we have sheep management, the
16 harvest management strategy document. Just continue to,
17 to hound to make sure that the Federal Subsistence Board
18 is aware that this is still a thing, that the Council
19 still wants to.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The manage -- the
22 sheep management strategy, that our intention is to move
23 it forward to final, before the Federal Subsistence
24 Board. That's what -- that's where that is going, it's
25 not going to let get bottled up if other -- if the other
26 Regional Councils don't want to deal with sheep
27 management strategies, that's fine with me. But this
28 Council needs to have a sheep management strategy, and
29 we have to work specifically with the North Slope
30 Regional Advisory Council. EIRAC, they don't actually
31 touch our sheep areas.

32
33 MS. PILCHER: All right, and then another
34 topic was the caribou in Unit 26B, the current harvest
35 limit is too high. This was an informational topic to
36 the Federal Subsistence Board letting them know about
37 recent Board of Game actions that will cause negative
38 impacts on those caribou.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The harvest rates
41 for the Central Arctic Herd, caribou were harvested and
42 sustainability at 1 to 3%. They were already harvesting
43 large numbers of the -- large bull component. And so,
44 there's parameters of the caribou harvest. But what you
45 cannot have that kind of cow caribou harvest, there's
46 no moose population that has cow moose harvest except
47 where there's really high numbers of cow moose and moose
48 have twins, caribou never have twins so, you can't give
49 the public thousands of hunters a five-cow caribou bag
50 limit, because that's what's going to come first in the

1 migration. So, that herd -- the Central Herd was only
2 by last census that we got here at 34,500. And so, it's
3 barely over its threshold. It will decline, and there
4 may -- were signaling to the Federal Subsistence Board
5 the Board of Game made a mistake that I will flat out
6 say they made a big mistake by doing that. There are
7 literally thousands of hunters participating and will
8 continue to participate all the way through the end of
9 April, so that herd will decline with that kind of a
10 harvest rate, and we are going to need to address this
11 issue in the future when we start to see numbers that
12 are basically gonna go right into the toilet. We're gonna
13 look at a Nelchina Caribou Herd debacle again. That's
14 what we're looking at. So, the Federal Subsistence Board
15 needs a head up, heads up. We need -- they're going --
16 we may need to do a Federal regul [sic] Federal actions
17 to protect this herd for subsistence use for State and
18 Federal users.

19
20 MS. PILCHER: And then the last one is
21 21A, concern over, not only wanton waste, but also too
22 many non-local hunters in 21A. The ask would be seeking
23 support from the Federal Subsistence Board in addressing
24 this concern in whatever their capacity is, and then
25 also being aware that there could be things moving
26 through the State regulatory system on these
27 actions.....

28
29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Basically, a heads
30 up that there's becoming a need to -- for more controlled
31 use in that area, with the escalating numbers of hunters
32 going into that area and our concerns about the salvage
33 of loss of resource due to poor salvage and the lack of
34 enforcement. We want to highlight to the Federal
35 Subsistence Board that we need additional enforcement,
36 and that would be Federal enforcement. Or, you know,
37 we're complexing everything, we're complexing
38 everything. Well, we're not have enough enforcement. And
39 so, Koyukuk-Nowitna they got dumped with Innoko, well
40 they didn't give a heck of a lot more money, and we were
41 promised that there was gonna be better enforcement. We
42 were promised all kinds of stuff with this complexing
43 issue. And so, that's not actually happening. And so,
44 we need to have -- it should be an annual topic. That's
45 the enforcement -- the Federal enforcement for Bureau
46 of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and National
47 Park Service has to step up to the plate because the
48 State can't keep up. The State just does not have the
49 capability to keep up with the amount of problems that
50 we have. So, we need additional Federal enforcement, has

1 to be -- there has to be additional funding by the
2 Secretary of Interior's Office to provide more
3 enforcement of the existing regulations. Regulations
4 mean nothing if you don't have enforcement. When you
5 only got one trooper on the entire Dalton Highway, and
6 he's got 3 and 4,000 hunters that show up there, and
7 there's -- he's got people getting a crash or something,
8 you got to respond to an accident, and gunners are
9 shooting caribou in the ditch with rifles illegally,
10 well, there's no enforcement there. We need Federal
11 enforcement, that's what we actually need. So, we have
12 a real problem with not a lack of enforcement. So, that's
13 an issue. That's -- we'll talk about that one again.
14 That's going on the Innoko, well we know it's going on
15 in the Innoko.

16
17 MS. PILCHER: All right, other than that
18 did I miss anything?

19
20 MR. VENT: This is Darrell.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: (Indiscernible),
23 Darrell.

24
25 MR. VENT: Yeah, I know in the Annual,
26 we spoke about Board stipends. I didn't hear anything
27 about that.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're going to
30 discuss that at a later time. Now, that's later on this
31 meeting. And Robert, you got one -- this is Annual Report
32 topics.

33
34 MR. WALKER: Yes, Mr. Chair, thank you.
35 You know, I did a study here about 20 years ago with the
36 McGrath Wildlife trooper, and in a meeting, I asked him,
37 how many square miles does he has to patrol, and he said
38 about 172,000 square miles for him. And you have to go
39 down to the Aniak trooper and I -- Wildlife trooper, and
40 I asked him and he said, it's about the same as the
41 McGrath Wildlife trooper. So, this is a lot of area for
42 one person. And I remember back in the day, we used to
43 have a Federal Fish and Wildlife officer come to our
44 meetings and listened to our concerns. Now we don't have
45 that anymore, I haven't seen this in -- well I just got
46 back on, and this is -- I was surprised when you brought
47 that up that we don't have somebody here just to sit
48 down and listen. Do we have Wildlife -- Federal Wildlife
49 trooper here?

50

1 UNIDENTIFIED: There was an enforcement
2 that called in.

3
4 MR. WALKER: Really? But back in the day,
5 you know, we used to have -- somebody used to come and
6 sit down and listen to what the Board, you know, the RAC
7 Board had to say. So, this was -- I think we may have
8 lost that, somebody who would directly hear these, all
9 these reports, not only from the Board, but also the
10 tribal people who come in and discuss their issues, their
11 concerns that come to us. But we should have a Wildlife
12 officer here from the Federal. Sit down and listen and
13 take notes. Thank you, Mr. Chair

14
15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, we got -- we
16 have transcripts. I would encourage OSM to -- these
17 discussions about enforcement problems. I mean, I would
18 like OSM to transmit those through to the enforcement
19 agencies of the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and
20 Wildlife and the Bureau of Land Management. So, we need
21 to move those -- there are various enforcement concerns.
22 The first, you know, they're enforcement, they got to
23 go do stuff, but we can compile those, you know, they're
24 -- you're going to run across, you know, during this
25 whole discussion, we've identified various issues. And
26 there's just not enough enforcement when you --
27 especially when you have a fire sale on caribou on the
28 North Slope, I'll go ahead say it's a fire sale. And you
29 got like -- let's just give the public five caribou bag
30 limit, let's give the non-residents two caribou bag
31 limit. We got hundreds of non-resident vehicles coming
32 this fall, hundreds. There's hundreds and hundreds of
33 hunters. Whether they got tags, I don't know. I have no
34 enforcement authority. So, we need to have the
35 enforcement officers for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
36 National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, has
37 to be aware that we're identifying issues, salvage
38 requirement issues, and we need to have them understand
39 that we have -- the agencies have to have the understand
40 they need to and step up. They have to step up, the
41 state of Alaska can't keep up. So, you got a comment
42 there Nissa. Go ahead.

43
44 MS. PILCHER: I do actually, Cody Smith
45 with Fish Wildlife Service is online.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Cody you're
48 online there?

49
50

1 MR. SMITH: Yes, good morning. Thank you
2 for letting me jump on real quick. I just did want to
3 clarify for the record that we do have multiple U.S.
4 Fish and Wildlife law enforcement on the meeting right
5 now and we are listening and taking notes. So, thank
6 you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, I was unaware
9 of that. So, there are various enforcement issues going
10 on. My reported enforcement issues to Bureau of Land
11 Management in the closed sheep closure area. There's
12 various things happen. The other aspect is we make
13 reports, we never hear anything back. We have no idea
14 what's going on. Nobody that makes reports, gets any
15 kind of information flow coming backwards. So, that's -
16 - enforcement should be aware of if somebody makes a
17 request for enforcement, we had a lady here, what was
18 her name? Stickman -- Ms. Stickman. She was making a
19 comments about an enforcement issue for the for trespass
20 on Native allotments and she's not getting anything back
21 from the Alaska State Troopers. So, it seems to be common
22 practice of enforcement and of all agencies, not to get
23 back to people who are making you know -- you want
24 enforcement, you want pictures, you want tail numbers
25 or license plate numbers and stuff. But we never hear
26 nothing back. Whatever happened, did anything happen?
27 That's the main question. Did anything -- was there any
28 follow up? Are you -- can you -- are you -- I'll just
29 ask you Cody, is -- when you get reports what is your,
30 number of -- if you get reports how many of the reports,
31 what would be a percentage are all looked at, 10%? How
32 many times do you get a report, do you actually respond
33 to the reports?

34
35 MR. SMITH: Yes, and I understand your
36 question, to be fair, I don't know that I could -- I
37 don't wanna [sic] make up a percentage. I don't know
38 that I could put a percentage on it, but I can say that
39 any reports that come in, if there is information to be
40 followed up on we're doing it, and things like photos,
41 tail numbers, dates, names, all that kind of stuff helps
42 us follow up on those reports quicker because the less
43 information we have, the longer it takes us to compile
44 that information to then follow up on it. But we are
45 doing our best with the amount of folks we have to follow
46 up on all the reports that we get.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, so but I do
49 -- and would you say that you're adequately staffed at
50 U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Forest Enforcement?

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MR. SMITH: I think ours and any other program with probably any of the agencies that are on here right now would say the same thing that we I think we all feel understaffed, there's -- and from the enforcement perspective, there's plenty of workload and not enough of us to go around.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, so we will use that as documentation for our Annual Report. Thank you very much, Cody. I appreciate that discussion with us, I appreciate you being on the phone. So, I think that completes our Annual Report topics. I don't know of any more. I haven't heard of any more from any Council members here, and we've covered a lot of different topics. And so, I think we got a full Annual Report and we'll review those topics, and for editing at our mar [sic], is it February meeting? Is it? Yeah, it's February. So, I think we're going to go to break now. Nissa, you got a comment?

MS. PILCHER: It's an action item.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, so, we're gonna to pass this. The Chair will entertain a motion to adopt the Annual Report topics that we discussed through this last several hours here. We need a motion. Moved by Robert.

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy. Further discussion, I think we discussed asked a lot. Questions called by Jenny, those in favor of the -- adopting the Annual Report topics to be reviewed at our February meeting to be transmitted to the Federal Subsistence Board signify by saying aye. Aye, we got four eyes in the room. Do we have anybody on the phone? Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Darrell?

MR. GERVAIS: This is Tim.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Tim, roger that. Darryl? Don?

MR. HONEA: Aye.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That was Darrell?

MR. HONEA: Aye, this is Don.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don, all right. Can you say your name, because we can't -- we have.....

MR. HONEA: This is Don, I said aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, roger and Darryl?

(No answer)

So, but Darrell is not talking right now. But maybe he can text his vote.

MS. PILCHER: Well, we got Tim. I can, I can text Darrell, but I'm -- I [sic] sure I heard his voice, but it would be good for the record to have him say.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Darrell?

MS. PILCHER: Darrell and aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Did you vote Darrell? Yeah, we got quorum, so the motion passes. So, now we're gonna go to break. We're got -- let's see what time we got here. So, it's 11:25. We can go to.....

MS. PILCHER: 35.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, 35, and so we can go till about a 15-minute break and then we'll go to 12:30. What's more -- we need to -- we have a lot of agenda. We spend a lot of time on that Annual Teport. But it was an action item. So, 15-minute break. I'll be back at 11:55.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're gonna start back up again. And who do we have on the phone, do we got Tommy? Or correction, do we have Don, Darryl or Tim on the phone?

1 Mr. GERVAIAS: Mr. Chair, this is Tim,
2 I'm here.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, you're a
5 little weak there, Tim. So, I roger you, roger that.
6 Darrell? Okay, Nissa can see people on the phone also,
7 but whether they're connected correctly that's the other
8 issue. So, I think we got quorum now. So, what is our
9 next, thing here, Nissa.

10
11 MS. PILCHER: Nissa Pilcher, for the
12 record, the next is future meeting dates and locations,
13 and I can walk you guys through that.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

16
17 MS. PILCHER: All right.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Page 108.

20
21 MS. PILCHER: Yes, so page 107 for the
22 winter 25 meeting. And that is the comb bound book.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 107?

25
26 MS. PILCHER: 107. So, you guys chose the
27 dates of February 25th and 26th. So, first let's look
28 at the dates, then let's look at the location. So, one
29 of the things that we ran into with this meeting is the
30 Council selected and voted on these dates a couple times,
31 but when it actually came time to hold the meeting,
32 there was a lot of subsistence activities going on, that
33 that could have kept people from attending. Are those
34 two dates good? And, also bear in mind, if you do move
35 it, you've got to move it somewhere where there's only
36 two coun [sic], like you can't have three Council
37 meetings in one week, and then there's also staff overlap
38 because not like Cory for example, doesn't just work
39 with the Western Interior, he works with other Councils.
40 So, there's a possibility that if you move it, that
41 might restrict the analysts that should be at that
42 meeting being able to be at that meeting due to they're
43 already set to work somewhere else.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the main
46 question I want to have, since we keep getting Council
47 members dropping out because of work and stuff, are these
48 gonna work out for people who are at work? Does this
49 work out for you, Tommy.....

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1 MR. KRISKA: Yeah.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF:with your work
4 schedule? And so that's fine with me. Tim, is February
5 25 and 26 good for you on the schedule? You still there,
6 Tim?

7

8 MS. GERVAIS: Yeah.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

11

12 MS. GERVAIS: This is Tim.

13

14 (Simultaneous speech)

15

16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Those dates work
17 for you. And Darrell? I would like to get all the
18 Council members that I can to, to commit or, you know,
19 say they're gonna come to the meeting at least. Don
20 Honea.

21

22 MR. HONEA: Yeah, could you hear me now?
23 Yeah, could you hear me?

24

25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I can hear you now,
26 Don. Yeah, you're, you opened up so February 25 and 26,
27 good for you?

28

29 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Yes, it is.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay so, -- and
32 then.

33

34 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF Yes, go ahead.

37

38 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Oh, okay. I'm
39 sorry. Just checking to see if I'm -- see if I wasn't
40 muted. Okay, thank you.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, for some
43 reason, you're not hearing me. I'm recognizing that
44 those are good for you, Don. So, I'm good with that.

45

46 MR. HONEA: Yes.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And then Daryl, are
49 you there, Daryl? So, Daryl is not there, but -- okay.
50 That's Daryl? Oh, Daryl's texting, yes. Okay, so, that's

1 a that's an affirmative. So, the other aspect of that
2 meeting is in McGrath. And so, there was -- I was talking
3 to Nissa about some of these charter rates have gotten,
4 like extremely high. And what did you get an analysis,
5 Nissa?

6
7 MS. PILCHER: I did not have time to do
8 that. And not saying that we couldn't afford to do a
9 charter or so, if McGrath is on a different -- is on the
10 Kuskokwim. So, in order to get there and get home again,
11 it's going to be 5- or 6-days travel if you guys do
12 regular fare. My plan was to request a charter to get
13 you guys to McGrath. That's not a guarantee. I don't --
14 that's not a guarantee it would be improved -- approved
15 but that was my intention. But that does definitely
16 increase the cost. Seat fares can be cancelled up to 24
17 hours, and we generally get our money back. Charters are
18 a set fee no matter what. So, if I did go the charter
19 route, we would need to make sure that we had Council
20 members physically getting on that plane or as best as
21 we could.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, is there's --
24 what size aircraft? We're just talking about basically
25 it would be our northern members would be Darrell, Tommy,
26 Jenny and I. Pollock is not traveling anymore.

27
28 MS. PILCHER: I wouldn't say not, but
29 it's a possibility.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, like a 206
32 would actually do that. Have you looked into like 206,
33 Cessna 206, which is -- that's a pretty fast airplane.

34
35 MS. PILCHER: It is. The part of the
36 issue with how the Federal -- how we have to do charters
37 is I don't know how much it's going to cost for a couple
38 months because I have to submit the request in order to
39 get the cost. So, it's not an immediate resolving [sic]
40 and I -- like I said, I can look at both and see which
41 option we think was going to be best.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: But so, what would
44 entail if we went with a charter, is for everybody to
45 jump on a fair flight to Fairbanks. Then we me take one
46 airplane with us over to McGrath, which is -- that's
47 about a two hours and 45 minutes or something like that.
48 So, that that would be I think that's a, you know,
49 chartering a Navajo or a Caravan is like, that's a big
50 airplane, very expensive. Charter rates are like,

1 unbelievable that expensive. So, I think that it's --
2 and then for Robert you got -- is there a fair flight
3 now going from Anvik over to McGrath? I thought there
4 was going to be. Go ahead, Robert.

5
6 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes,
7 there is a Wright aircraft that comes out of Fairbanks,
8 goes to McGrath and goes to the Yukon. A -- the GASH
9 villages, I'll say that and return back to McGrath and
10 then go back to Fairbanks. And then it does a three-week
11 during wintertime. So, you can call the office, and you
12 can get a definite answer for that. So, they.....

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: They now have fair
15 flight over from Fairbanks to McGrath. Okay so, I don't
16 even have to charge them. Really? So, we just get fair
17 flights for the northern members coming into McGrath or
18 to Fairbanks. Then we get on that fair flight plan that's
19 whatever -- what's important to know what day that is?

20
21 MS. PILCHER: If it's three times a week,
22 I would assume Monday, Wednesday, Friday, but then the
23 next -- we need to make sure that the flight that's
24 going there is big enough to fit all the Council members,
25 which it should be.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I mean, they're if
28 they're flying a Caravan over there, right?

29
30 MR. WALKER: Yes, it's a Caravan. But you
31 have to remember, like I have to go back on the schedule
32 unless you want to charter me back if it's a weekend.
33 They don't fly on a weekend either. Right there. So.....

34
35 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, how it would
36 currently look is we would be meeting a Tuesday and a
37 Wednesday. So, if they flew Monday, Wednesday, Friday,
38 we'd have to get you in on Monday, but then we wouldn't
39 be able to get you home again until Friday.

40
41 (Pause)

42
43 And Tommy just asked if that would be
44 for everyone. And yes, yeah, that would be for everyone
45 if we were to fly seat fare.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, would it be
48 advantageous for us to move these two dates? Oh, no, we
49 wouldn't. We would fly on Monday. We would do the

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1 meeting, and then we'd have to spend an additional day
2 in McGrath to fly back on Friday.

3

4 MR. KRISK: I think you could ask RideAir
5 if they could bring us over there on a Tuesday. They do
6 that.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, you talk into
9 your mic there Tommy, please speak into your mic.

10

11 MR. KRISKA: I think if you ask them,
12 they'll make a what they call -- a flag stop.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, flag stops.

15

16 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, that's technically
17 considered a charter. And I would have to double -- I
18 could do that on the State side, and I know they do it.
19 I'm not positive how it would work on this side of the
20 curtain.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, if they -- what
23 time do they? Robert, you know more about this Anvik
24 flight. So, on Wednesday they would fly down. And what
25 time do they go over to Anvik, do they show up over
26 there?

27

28 MR. WALKER: You would have to call
29 RideAir on that. It's always weather permitting, two for
30 one, and.....

31

32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Is that how you
33 came up to Fairbanks?

34

35 MR. WALKER: Yes, I had to fly from Anvik
36 to Fairbanks and Fairbanks to here. And then when I go
37 home, I got to go to Fairbanks and then I got to go from
38 Fairbanks to Anvik.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. So, as the
41 Council still wanting to go to McGrath, we could go to
42 McGrath or change our destination. That's the
43 other.....

44

45 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this
46 is Don.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

49

1 MR. HONEA: Yeah, I am all for going to
2 McGrath. I really think that we you know, maybe we could
3 get the word out for representation while we're over
4 there or people from Nikolai or something like that. I
5 think -- I really deem it important. And their sound
6 system, everything points to -- I enjoy going over there
7 because of all the place [sic] where they put us up. And
8 right across the road is -- I just find it ideal, so I'm
9 glad that someone mentioned meeting there. Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Don. And
12 Kevin Whitworth was on here earlier. Do you show him --
13 are you there, Kevin?

14
15 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is Kevin.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, we're
18 discussing this next meeting date in McGrath. Do you
19 think we would get good participation? Would you be in
20 McGrath during those dates? The 25th.....

21
22 MR. WHITWORTH: I missed the date. Say
23 date again.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 25th and 26th of
26 February.

27
28 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, I think you'll get
29 participation. Hard to say how many people, but there's
30 this moose concern. It's fresh on people's mind now.
31 It'll come up then, though, because it's such a concern,
32 and people want to express their concerns for salmon and
33 whitefish as well. So, I think you'll get -- and that -
34 - and there are two airlines that are coming to McGrath
35 Reeve and Alaska Air Transit. And there's, you know,
36 there's commercial transporters or whatever coming out
37 in and out of here and enough space, bed space and stuff
38 like that so, we can accommodate.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, then our
41 court recorder could probably come out of Anchorage,
42 coming over to McGrath and back to Anchorage on another
43 carrier, most likely. So, your company will have to
44 figure that out, Tanya. So, I think that the Council
45 probably would like to meet in McGrath. I'm just -- and
46 that's okay with you, Robert. Tim, you're good with
47 McGrath? Timothy Gervais.

48
49 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, this is Tim. Yes,
50 okay.

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(Simultaneous speech - distortion)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Roger that, Tim. You're really weak, Tim. Can you speak? You said something else. I couldn't hear it.

MR. GERVAIS: Yes, McGrath is good.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. All right, we're good on that. So, I would -- I think that we can do this with some fair flight and possibly some kind of a flagstop thing, or Robert has to leave on one eight or something to meet (distortion) Anvik. You know, they're going to McGrath and then the Anvik. I heard that RideAir was going to -- was negotiating with the GASH communities to travel air service over there. So, I -- I'm realizing that's what's actually going on. So, I think that those same dates and in McGrath is probably the best choice for our next meeting that -- this quote spring meeting. So, we need to have a motion to add. Robert and Nissa are talking right now. So, we're going to come before -- you have a final comment there, Nissa? Nothing. Okay I need a -- we need a motion to -- for this referred to as winter meeting, but we call it the spring meeting of 2025. We're still holding to McGrath on February 25 and 26 using available fair flights and so forth with the air carriers. And so, I think that this meeting can work out more economically than previously I thought. So, we have a motion to -- for this meeting. We need a motion to adopt these meeting dates and those -- and at that time.
And.....

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, this is Don. That would be my motion.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Motion by Don. We have a second.

MR. GERVAIS: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Second by Tommy. Those in favor of meeting in McGrath on February 25th and 26 of 2025 for the winter meeting signify by saying aye. Aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

MR. HONEA: Aye.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don.

MR. GERVAIS: Aye. This is Tim.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Tim.

MR. HONEA: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MR. HONEA: This is Don.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Roger, Don. And we have Darrell. Did Darrell show back up? Okay, not. So, then we're going to the fall meeting of 25.

MS. PILCHER: Correct, yes. So, on page 108, you guys are -- so flip the page. This is the fall 2025 meeting. You guys chose October 7th and October 8th with Fairbanks with alternate and Huslia. There's not a lot of wiggle room to move that later. It did seem like this -- we're meeting the 2nd and the 3rd of October, and it seems like that might have -- some felt that that was a little too early to meet. It does look like you guys may be able to move it to the week of October 20th. But I don't know if that's a good week or if you're interested in.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: What's your work schedule, Tommy? You're good with the 7th and 8th. And Don, are you good with that date?

MR. HONEA: Yeah, I am, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Tim, are you good with the 7-8 of October?

MR. GERVAIS: Yes, that seems like that'll work out.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. And I'm good with that date. Are you good with that date Jenny and Robert? No, no.

MR. WALKER: Yes, Mr. Chair, I would agree with that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 7 and 8 of October. And then Fairbanks is my preference because we get better

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1 agency participation and we're going to be moving into
2 Game, Wildlife stuff. And so, I would prefer to be where
3 Fish and Game's going to be for discussion about this
4 controlled use area and stuff. And so, is that acceptable
5 to the Council? Fairbanks for that fall meeting of 25.
6 Jenny, Fairbanks? Tim, Fairbanks?

7

8 MR. GERVAIS: Yes.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tim. Roger that,
11 Tim. And then Don.

12

13 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Mr. Chair, you
14 bring up a good point. That's what the agencies are and
15 that we're approaching some vital subjects so, yes.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, roger that.
18 And then Tommy, Fairbanks? Robert? Okay, all Council
19 members have our affirmative on that. We need a motion
20 to adopt the fall 2025 meeting in Fairbanks on October
21 7th and 8ht.

22

23 MS. PELKOLA: I'll move.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Moved by Jenny. Do
26 we have a second?

27

28 MR. GERVAIS: Second.

29

30 CHAIRPERON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy.
31 Those are in favor of that location and Fairbanks and
32 those dates of October 7th and 8ht, 2025 signify by
33 saying aye. Aye.

34

35 MR. HONEA: Aye.

36

37 MR. GERVAIS: Aye, this is Tim.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, roger that.
40 We got both you and Don on there, so we're good.

41

42 MR. HONEA: Yes.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, that covers
45 those two issues. Those were action items.

46

47 MS. PILCHER: We're good. I was just
48 going to say the last one -- last action item is
49 (indiscernible), move forward?

50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Nissa.

2
3 MS. PILCHER: All right. So, the last
4 action item on your guys' agenda right now is to review
5 -- it's a lot of words. It's a draft correspondence on
6 OSM correspondence. So, at the All Council meeting, you
7 saw -- this Council signed on to send a joint Council
8 letter concerning correspondence issues. And at your
9 meeting, you requested that included in that letter be
10 additional language involving how OSM routes comments
11 to the Board of Fish and the Board of Game. You wanted
12 to add routing it through Councils or Council Chairs in
13 order for them to review and add comments. This was
14 unable to be added to that letter just due to the nature
15 of the All Council meeting because it couldn't go before
16 all of the Councils that signed on at that time. So, I
17 did draft a letter to see if he wanted to review it, to
18 see if this was still an issue and that you wanted to
19 send it. But if you did want to review it, edit it and
20 send it, that would be an action item. But you do not
21 have to take action on it if you do not want.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This address --
24 this letter addresses a sort of a vital issue that's
25 been across thread with OSM for several years. Is the
26 delayed progress of -- the Council correspondence review
27 occurred because one Regional Council tried to lobby
28 Federal representatives which violated the Hatch Act,
29 which started the Council correspondence review and the
30 Council correspondence review process was strictly not
31 an editing process, was strictly a process to make sure
32 that the Councils were not violating our legal
33 parameters as Regional Councils. That's what the
34 correspondence review where occurred a long time ago.
35 I've been here for 31 years ago [sic]. This was like
36 over 20 something years ago, 25 years ago, a long time
37 ago. This got balled into this gobbledygook, picking up
38 all kinds of sand and hairballs along the way, bouncing
39 from desk to desk and these delays got to the point
40 where we weren't even meeting our dates of vital letters
41 to the Board of Fish or Board of Game or agencies on
42 time certain things were not being met. So, all Councils
43 were having the same problem. So, there's been a
44 restructuring of the Council review -- correspondence
45 review process. But we -- I feel that this letter would
46 also -- to OSM again would like reiterate that this is
47 a these are vital letters and it's my opinion that
48 drastic editing should not be actually necessary or
49 really did not have to occur, you know, yeah typos and
50 stuff like that but not just change the whole meaning

1 of the -- there's some things that actually get changed.
2 Which brings me to the other thing, the OSM makes
3 comments to the Board of Game and Board of Fish that are
4 never reviewed by the Federal -- by the Regional
5 Councils. So, this of course, on its review process is
6 a double-edged sword. And so, these Councils, if you're
7 going to comment on proposals before the Board of Fish
8 and Federal Subsistence Board, the Councils need to know
9 what, not after the fact, not after the fact. If you're
10 if you're going to transmit comments, the Council Chairs
11 at least need to be apprised of what those comments are
12 going to be. So, I'm stating that on the record. And so,
13 that should actually be an included paragraph at the end
14 of this. Is that this -- that any kind of transmissions
15 from the Federal Subsistence Board to other agencies
16 outside of what's occurred in Federal-Regional Council
17 meetings. Sometimes the recommendations by OSM regarding
18 salvage of ptarmigan were completely disparate to what
19 the Regional Councils actually had opposed proposals,
20 but they were supporting proposals that were opposed by
21 the Council. So, OSM really has to have its own review
22 process also. And I've stated this before and again and
23 I'm saying it again, the Councils need to be able to
24 look at what is OSM's correspondents doing. Is it
25 actually meeting the needs of subsistence? Is it
26 actually within the parameters of the Federal program?
27 And why does OSM even feel a need to transmit
28 recommendations to these State Board of Fish and Board
29 of Game that actually don't support what Regional
30 Councils are actually saying, that has actually
31 occurred. So, this is -- this has been an ongoing thing.
32 That's why I'm talking, maybe our staff here, Brent and
33 it was an unaware of these issues before, but it's that
34 actually has happened. And I feel that this should be
35 part of this letter, that the Council should be apprised
36 of what the comments are that OSM is making to other
37 agencies. It's a double-edged, it's just a fair and fair.
38 So, that's a paragraph that should be added. So, that
39 could be cleaned up the language and so forth. But that's
40 the intent of that paragraph. So, any Council comments
41 on this on this letter to OSM regarding our
42 correspondence review. None from Robert, Tommy, Jenny,
43 Tim or Don?

44

45 MR. GERVAIS: No, Mr. chair. This is Tim.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Tim. Still
48 there, Don?

49

50

1 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, this is Don. No
2 comment.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, so, the
5 addition of that last paragraph is -- should be included
6 into this, as discussed on the record. The Chair will
7 entertain a motion to adopt this letter for transmission
8 to the Office of Subsistence Management and in Anchorage
9 regarding our correspondence review process and our
10 review process. So, I need a motion.

11
12 MS. PELKOLA: I'll move.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Moved by Jenny. Do
15 I have a second? Second by Robert. Further discussion?
16 None. Those in -- call for question. Question by Robert.
17 Those in favor of the -- of transmitting this letter to
18 the Office of Subsistence Management regarding
19 correspondence review processes signify by saying aye.
20 Aye.

21
22 MR. HONEA: Aye. This is Don, aye.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don. Roger that,
25 Don.

26
27 MR. GERVAIS: This is Tim, aye.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, roger that
30 Tim. So, okay. So, we're finished with that. So, we're
31 going to go into reports now, Nissa. And was there
32 something we skipped? Council training.

33
34 MS. PILCHER: You guys did actually move
35 it to past reports, at least on my notes.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

38
39 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair, this is Tim. I
40 didn't -- I got cut off last night. Did you get a vote?
41 A quorum vote on the Kuskokwim Priority Information
42 Needs?

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, we did, and
45 we registered your vote. Since you texted it in, we did
46 register that. So, that Kuskokwim PIN, Priority
47 Information Needs was actually passed this morning when
48 we reviewed that.

49
50

1 MS. PILCHER: The Council is -- has had
2 a lot of really good conversations and a lot of good
3 things were put on the record. But you guys are moving
4 a little slower than you normally do, and we did move
5 the reports. It may be a good idea to break for lunch
6 at this time, so I can email all the people that were
7 going to be giving reports and make sure that they are
8 ready to go at 1:30, unless you guys want to not sit
9 through -- unless you guys want to hear Cory's
10 presentation on delegation of authority before you
11 break.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: How long would this
14 -- would that be approximately. So, it would probably
15 be best to do that right now for ten minutes before
16 lunch. Then we'll go to lunch. Then we'll be right into
17 reports.

18
19 (Pause)

20
21 MR. GRAHAM: So, Mr. chair, members of
22 the Council. Cory Graham, Fisheries Biologist at OSM.
23 This presentation can be found starting on page one of
24 your -- one with this, page one. So, I'm here to present
25 the Delegation of Authority Training moving forward. OSM
26 plans to hold one training session at each Council
27 meeting. We feel this will help new council members
28 become more familiar with the Federal Subsistence
29 Management Program, and also serve as a refresher for
30 the more seasoned members. Today, we're going to go over
31 the basics of the delegation of authority. This training
32 is meant to be informational, it's not an action item.
33 And we'll get started. So, starting on the slide with
34 the bear. The objectives of this training are to provide
35 information about delegated authority. Show the Councils
36 where to find information about delegated authority and
37 discuss the Council's role in delegated authority. This
38 training is meant to be a broad overview, but there will
39 be time for Q&A at the end. So, next slide. So, here's
40 the regulation that allows the Board to delegate their
41 authority to agents -- field agency officials. The
42 regulation describes what kind of actions can be
43 delegated, for example setting harvest and possession
44 limits, open or closing seasons, etc. but we'll try and
45 use plain language in the next few slides to define and
46 describe delegation of authority training. Next slide.
47 So, what is delegation of authority? In the broadest
48 sense, delegation of authority is the transfer of
49 limited decision-making power from the Board to Federal
50 managers. Delegated authority is what gives Federal

1 managers the legal authority to make in-season decisions
2 to manage fish and wildlife populations.

3
4 Next slide. So, as mentioned previously,
5 the Board transfers the decision-making authority to
6 Federal managers. For example, these may be National
7 Park Service superintendents, Forest Service district
8 rangers, or Fish and Wildlife Refuge managers and local
9 Federal managers often have a greater connection to and
10 understanding of the resource than anyone in Anchorage.
11 So, beyond giving decision making authority to Federal
12 managers who have boots on the ground, why is delegation
13 of authority important? Next slide. Delegation of
14 authority is important for multiple reasons. It allows
15 Federal managers to make quick management decisions as
16 data and local knowledge become available in-season. So,
17 for example, maybe the preseason forecast for a fish
18 population is strong, but in-season data and local
19 observations indicate the run is really weak and will
20 not meet escapement goals. The Federal managers
21 delegated authority allows quick action to either close
22 the fishery to all users to protect the populations or
23 close the fishery to non-federally qualified users to
24 protect and continue subsistence uses. It also allows
25 for input from locals when there is a close relationship
26 between managers and subsistence users. The next slide.
27 Authority can be delegated to managers in two places.
28 One is in unit specific regulations or what's found in
29 the handy dandy. Currently, only Wildlife regulations
30 have delegated authority in unit specific regulations,
31 and this is mainly because Wildlife has a lot of routine
32 management actions that happen every year. For example,
33 a Federal manager may be delegated authority to announce
34 the harvest quota for a moose hunt. Authority may also
35 be delegated through delegation of authority letters,
36 and these letters allow Federal managers to issue
37 special actions, and we'll discuss these more in a little
38 bit.

39
40 Next slide. So, how the Board delegates
41 authority depends on if the authority is delegated in a
42 letter or unit specific regulations. For the letters,
43 the Board may delegate authority at any time, and this
44 is done through administrative actions, and these
45 actions require the Board to vote either by email, poll
46 or during a Board meeting. But they don't have to go
47 through the full regulatory process, and this allows for
48 quick action by the Board and for the Board to be
49 responsive to changing conditions. This method does not
50 require public input. However, the Board understands

1 public feedback is a critical component of the Federal
2 Subsistence Management program and will often ask for
3 feedback from the Councils before creating or modifying
4 delegation of authority letters. So, delegation of
5 authority in unit specific regulations, this may only
6 happen through the public regulatory process. In other
7 words, it requires a proposal to change existing Fish
8 and Wildlife regulations during the regulatory cycle and
9 public input is required during the public regulatory
10 process. So, next slide. Here's an example of authority
11 that's delegated to a manager in unit specific
12 regulations. Again, these only occur in Wildlife
13 regulations and are for routine annual management
14 decisions. The authority is more limited in scope than
15 delegation of authority letters. In this example, the
16 authority only pertains to setting permit conditions and
17 announcing closures for a winter hunt. If anyone, the
18 Councils, the public want to change or modify this
19 authority, they would need to submit a regulatory
20 proposal.

21
22 Moving on to the next slide. So, in
23 contrast, the authority outlined in regulation, managers
24 again may be also delegated authority through delegation
25 of authority letters. Again, these letters give managers
26 authority to issue special actions. The special actions
27 issued by Federal managers are subject to regulatory
28 requirements. For example, public hearings are required
29 for temporary special actions, which are special actions
30 that exceed 60 days but may not extend past the end of
31 the current regulatory cycle. Public hearings are not
32 required for emergency special actions, but they are
33 they are encouraged. And the managers must also seek
34 council recommendations when the timing of Council
35 meetings allow. So again, these delegation letters can
36 be issued or rescinded by the Board at any time. Issuing
37 or rescinding the letters does not need to take place
38 at a Board meeting or during the regulatory cycle. And
39 this gives the Board flexibility to adapt to changing
40 conditions and make sure managers have the tools they
41 need to manage and protect populations, as well as
42 optimize subsistence opportunity. So, if anyone wants
43 to change the delegation of authority letters this may
44 be requested by the Council or the public by letter or
45 during a Board meeting. These delegation letters aren't
46 currently published online. If the council or the public
47 ever wants a copy, please reach out to your in-season
48 manager or to OSM. Next slide. So, even though the
49 delegation letters are issued for specific areas and
50 species, the -- all delegation of authority letters

1 contain the same general language and requirements. For
2 example, all letters require communication with affected
3 parties such as the Council Chairs and ADF&G, tribal
4 consultations must be conducted if practical, and
5 managers may defer decisions to the Board with very
6 controversial issues if immediate action is not needed.
7 Next slide.

8
9 The Federal program has Fisheries
10 regulations and Wildlife regulations, and Fisheries and
11 Wildlife delegated authority are issued in separate
12 letters for fisheries. The scope is broad and consistent
13 across letters, and they cover all species. Fish species
14 in an area. A list of these can be found on page 98 of
15 the Fisheries Regulation Book, I can show you that later
16 if you can't find it now. And this contrasts with
17 Wildlife delegations, which tend to cover specific
18 hunts, species and management actions. Most wildlife
19 actions are routine and occur every year, and the unit
20 specific regulations for Federal wildlife harvest
21 regulations. In the booklet, there's a white exclamation
22 mark inside of a red triangle, and this indicates that
23 additional management actions may be taken by the
24 Federal in-season manager. And you should consult the
25 delegation authority table listed on page 152. Again,
26 if you can't find these, just -- I'll find them for you
27 later. So, next slide. So, in summary we have delegation
28 of authority which again means the Board may transfer
29 limited decision-making ability to Federal managers.
30 This authority can be found in unit specific regulations
31 or in delegation of authority letters. And the unit
32 specific regulations delegated authority can only be
33 added or modified during the public regulatory process.
34 The delegation tends to be for routine and annual
35 management actions. They are currently only in Wildlife
36 regulations because they tend to have more routine
37 management actions. Next slide.

38
39 So, the Council's role in delegation of
40 authority, delegated authority in unit specific
41 regulations would be submitting proposals to change it
42 in regulation, making recommendations to the Board on
43 the associated regulatory proposals and consulting with
44 managers before they take action. Next slide. The
45 delegation of authority letters are easier for the Board
46 to change or resend. Giving the board more flexibility
47 to act quickly and respond to changing conditions.
48 Changes to the letters can happen outside the regulatory
49 cycle, and delegation of authority letters give Federal
50 managers the ability to issue special actions. Next

1 slide. The Council also has a role in delegation of
2 authority letters. As you may request to add or modify
3 them through letters or at Board meetings. The Board
4 often asks Councils for feedback on proposed changes to
5 delegated delegation of authority letters when time
6 allows, and the letters also require that the managers
7 consult with Council Chairs before issuing special
8 actions, and the Chair is encouraged to seek feedback
9 from other Council members. Next slide. So again,
10 delegation of authority allows for quick in-season
11 management actions. This allows Federal managers to
12 protect fish and wildlife populations and continue
13 subsistence uses. Managers are required to consult with
14 affected parties before taking action, so Councils,
15 ADF&G, tribes, OSM. Council Chairs are encouraged to
16 bring in other Council members when consulting with
17 managers. And if you have any, you know, if you ever
18 have questions, please contact in-season managers or
19 OSM. And that's the end of my presentation. I can answer
20 any questions if you may have them.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you,
23 Cory. And I've worked with this delegated authority
24 consultations as the Chair on various moose hunt, and
25 various aspects of this delegated authority process. So,
26 is this presentation -- any questions on the
27 presentation from the Council members?

28
29 MR. HONEA: Yeah, Mr. Chair.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

32
33 MR. HONEA: Well, this is Don. Yeah, this
34 is Don. Just a quick question. I don't know who is
35 speaking, but just for clarification, is this delegated
36 to the Federal managers of each, down from the
37 Subsistence Board itself.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Corey.

40
41 MR. GRAHAM: This is Cory with OSM. Yeah,
42 delegated authority is transferred -- limited decision-
43 making authority is transferred from the Federal
44 Subsistence Board to Federal managers. And there are
45 various Fisheries and Wildlife managers that have
46 different delegated authority depending on where they're
47 at and where they're managing.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, it's usually
50 the area, the Game management unit or the units or

1 districts for fisheries. Those are delegated to the to
2 the in-season -- on Caribou in Mulchatna they were --
3 the Togiak Refuge is actually managing for the Mulchatna
4 Caribou Herd as the in-season manager to -- regarding
5 opening and closings and basically protection of the
6 resource. So, it's basically the local wildlife refuge
7 or down in Southeast Alaska would be the regional
8 forester, etc., etc. The managers -- land managers that
9 are associated to that unit are actually doing the
10 biological analysis too -- and discussing that when
11 those openings are going to be or if there is going to
12 be openings. Is [sic] that clarify that Don?
13

14 MR. HONEA: Oh yeah. It does. So, thank
15 you, Mr. Chair. I guess just one other question to Cory.
16 All of these mandates that's coming down, have they
17 always been in effect the -- this procedure or is there
18 anything new on there. Because I believe like even in,
19 I guess it's up to the Federal managers of each -- well
20 like the Nowitna or the Innoko or something, I guess
21 depending on the numbers for say, a winter hunt or
22 something. I believe they've always had that -- they're
23 depending I mean, the power to do that, depending on,
24 on the numbers. So, it's -- I was just wondering is
25 there anything specifically new on this to that or is
26 just. Is this just like, a refresher? Thank you.
27

28 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Those regulations,
29 these delegated authorities, were Regional Council
30 proposals that were passed by the Federal Subsistence
31 Board, like for winter Moose hunt around Huslia, down
32 by in the inovi [sic], I mean in the Innoko. The Council
33 was involved in those having flexibility. You know, we
34 used to have hard regulation of winter hunts, except it
35 was 50 below and nobody could go out. So, that gives the
36 manager the leeway to have openings that's conducive to
37 the -- protecting the resource, but also helping the
38 subsistence users have the opportunity when the when
39 it's appropriate. And so, those delegated authorities
40 always have Council consultation. So, I usually get a
41 call if the whoever the Chairperson is gets a call. I
42 need to talk about this moose hunt. We are in deep snow,
43 there's not enough moose here, we can't have the hands.
44 It's so, the Chair will agree or disagree with the in-
45 season manager and have discussions about it. So,
46 there's been additions, you know there's other areas in
47 Alaska where they've delegated authority on deer and
48 caribou and other areas. But in our region, these
49 delegated authorities have not significantly changed in
50 the last ten years or so. There's -- they're pretty much

1 pretty similar to what they've been. And that's your
2 experience. What they're it's not that they've always
3 been there. It's that they've happened over time with
4 various proposals that this Western Interior Council has
5 actually submitted and had the Federal Subsistence Board
6 deliberated and pass. So, does that clarify that for
7 you, Don?

8
9 MR. HONEA: Yes, Mr. Chair, that and
10 thank Cory and yourself for explaining that. That's
11 pretty self-explanatory. Other than that, thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you,
14 Don. Any other questions? So, thank you very much for
15 the presentation, Cory. I think it's time for lunch. And
16 so, let's see what time we got here. It's about a quarter
17 to 1 so we can break for a one hour and come back at a
18 sharp at quarter to 2, which would be 1:45.

19
20 MR. HONEA: Okay. Thanks, this is Don
21 signing out.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Don.
24 Appreciate that. And hope you're, hope you're up back
25 on here again.

26
27 (Off record)

28
29 (On record)

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, it's 1:45 and
32 Robert's here. Jenny and I are here, and I can't -- I
33 don't know who's on the phone. Is anybody on the phone?

34
35 MR. GERVAIS: Hi, Jack. This is Tim.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, good to hear
38 you there, Tim. Are you there, Don? And Brian Ubelaker,
39 are you there? Nissa says we skipped over your
40 presentation.

41
42 MR. UBELAKER: Oh, it wasn't an entire
43 presentation. It's a brief update, but yes, I am here.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, so we're
46 going to bring the meeting back to order after lunch
47 break here. Tim is on the phone, and so, we're going to
48 -- and Don, did you come back or Darrell? So, we're
49 going to get a quick update from Brian here. Go ahead,
50 Brian.

1

2 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
3 the record, my name is Brian Ubelaker. I'm a Wildlife
4 Biologist with the Office of Subsistence management. And
5 right now, I'd like to provide you a brief overview of
6 proposed changes to the Wildlife side of delegated
7 authority. And this is just meant to be a brief
8 introduction to this effort. And you all on the Councils
9 will have additional opportunity at future meetings to
10 review further and to comment on this subject. So, the
11 Office of Subsistence Management is proposing to move
12 the authority and the existing delegation of authority
13 letters back into the Wildlife unit specific
14 regulations. While we staff have not thoroughly reviewed
15 every single Wildlife delegation of authority letter,
16 the vast majority of them are for routine management
17 actions, as Cory was discussing earlier. And these
18 happen every year pretty much right as rain. Things like
19 announcing harvest quotas and closing seasons and having
20 the delegated authority for these routine decisions in
21 unit specific regulations is more appropriate than
22 issuing a special action year after year after year. And
23 this would also provide a clear public process for
24 changing this delegated authority through the regulatory
25 proposals, and it would decrease the administrative
26 burden on Federal managers by limiting -- eliminating
27 all the regulatory requirements associated with special
28 actions and the delegation of authority letters. The
29 timeline for these proposed changes is as follows. In
30 March of 2025, during the next open window to submit
31 Wildlife regulatory proposals, OSM will submit a
32 proposal to move Wildlife delegated authority into unit
33 specific regulations and to rescind many of the existing
34 letters. Then, in the fall of 2025, at the fall meetings,
35 Councils will consider and make recommendations on this
36 proposal. Then, in April 2026, the Board will take final
37 action on the proposal at the next Wildlife regulatory
38 meeting. As I said, I'd keep it brief. So, thank you,
39 Mr. Chair. This is the end of my brief overview to the
40 proposed changes to Wildlife delegated authority. I
41 would be happy to answer any questions or receive
42 feedback on this topic. Although once again, this is
43 just meant to be an introduction to this idea and the
44 Councils will have additional opportunity to consider
45 this at future meetings. Thank you.

46

47

48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay thanks,
49 Brian. My question offhand is the proposal that's going
50 to be promulgated that will review. Is it going to lay

50

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1 out which letters would be rescinded or repealed as OSM
2 got preferences?

3

4 MR. UBELAKER: Yes, sir. We'll us
5 Wildlife staff are going to be tasked with reading
6 through all the 68 letters that we have right now,
7 determining which ones are like what we call the regular
8 in-season management actions. Those making a list of
9 them out of the letters, units, everything associated
10 with it, and then we'll present those which ones we're
11 going to move back into unit specific regulation to the
12 Councils in the fall meeting.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, understood.
15 Any questions from the council? Tim? Are you still there,
16 Tim? Are you on there Don?

17

18 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I don't have any
19 questions, Jack.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I just want to give
22 Council members opportunity to question that. So, we'll
23 it's just a heads up on that. Appreciate that Brian. So,
24 we'll move on now.

25

26 MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, sir.

27

28

29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, wait a second
30 Robert's come in with a question.

31

32 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead. Don, go
35 ahead.

36

37 MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Okay. No, I don't
38 want to cut anybody off. Robert is next. No. I just
39 wanted to let you know I'm online. Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, I appreciate
42 that, Don. Go ahead, Robert.

43

44 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank
45 you, Don. I just had a question. What's going to happen
46 2025 if we have a new President elected, will that change
47 anything that we have to do here?

48

49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I can answer the
50 question, but the question -- the answer would be it

1 will be business as usual. Under what the OSM and the
2 Regional Councils will proceed, it was the appointments
3 made process might change. That's my perception of what
4 could happen with the appointment processes. Could be
5 bottled up so to speak. So, that's -- this issue will
6 continue forward and one way or another. So, it's who's
7 going to be on the Council. That's what the question
8 with elections has usually been. So, thanks so much,
9 Brian. I don't think that there's -- this is just
10 informational. We're going to be moving forward. And so,
11 Charlie is here. Oh, there he is. Is he going to speak
12 to us?

13
14 MS. PILCHER: I don't know. I just wanted
15 to point him out.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right. We got
18 the Chief, Charlie Green, is here. And if Charlie wanted
19 to say anything to us, he's in the back of the room
20 there. Anyways, recognize that the Chief is here so, of
21 Galena. So, we're going to continue on here. So, we're
22 into reports. So, we got a tribal governments. So, we
23 got Charlie. So, if I can get the public's attention.
24 Hello, hello? Hey, hey. So, rather recognized that the
25 Chief is here, and we're at a serendipitously, you're
26 at a point in the in our agenda for tribal government
27 and Native organization comments or so if you want to
28 have anything to say to the Council, step up to the mic
29 there, Charlie. And you can turn on the mic. Thank you,
30 guys.

31
32 MR. GREEN: My name is Chief Charlie
33 Green. I'm the Chief here of Loudon. And good to see all
34 you guys. How you doing, Mr. Kriska and Mr. Robert? I
35 guess I could turn to Mr. Jack. We're just on my way
36 with our work here, tearing downtown said, hey, we'd
37 better stop by and see you guys. And so how is, you
38 know, I mean we're actually running a fishwheel right
39 now trying to catch a few whitefish here. We had a good
40 hunting season here this year. I think a lot of people
41 got their moose a little bit rough weather, but we were
42 pretty good here you know. Report here, I mean, what do
43 you guys want to hear from our report here? And what --
44 is there any specific thing you want me to talk about?
45 You know, just that we had a good hunting season. We
46 worked real hard on, you know, putting signs up, making
47 sure we got our land -- is you know that no -- had not
48 too many trespassers. Worked real good with the state
49 Fish and Game guy here. Trent was real vocal with us,
50 stopped making sure that we were cutting our horns, you

1 know, in the last some years, we got pretty slack about
2 not following the rules because we had no Game wardens.
3 So, you know we were not -- a lot of people weren't
4 following the rules, but he was real good. He caught a
5 lot of us not cutting horns and just reminding us that,
6 hey, we got to start doing that, you know, making sure
7 we're doing that. So, our hunting, like I said, I think
8 went pretty good. I didn't see an overabundance of
9 hunters. I'm real glad that Robert and Walker and them
10 are taking most of our hunters. That's really -- thank
11 you, Mr. you know Walker, that was very nice of you to
12 do stuff like that. We have a less hunters around here,
13 and we're just very glad that there's lots of moose down
14 in the Lower Yukon. A lot of the guys are going down
15 that areas to hunt. And we're just glad to see it, you
16 know. So, thank you again.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You put up signs
19 that says Anvik that way?

20

21 MR. GREEN: Yes, lots of moose that way,
22 you know. But I mean, you know, so I think it was pretty
23 good for us here. You know, obviously fishing, we're --
24 we, you know, we got to see a few more fish. You know,
25 I actually went up in the latter river because that's
26 probably the most fish I've seen. Probably about a not
27 quite half of what usually goes up there, but at least
28 we're seeing more fish a little bit. You know so, that's
29 a -- I think that's a whatever we're doing is helping
30 somewhat, you know, without the trawlers in the Area M,
31 and everybody else, at least something is happening a
32 little bit. So, we're glad to see any kind of improvement
33 here in Galena. So, that's really good you know. We got
34 to use our fishwheel this summer a little bit. Got some
35 elders, some chum salmon, you know, but so, that was
36 good. We got to eat a little bit of few Yukon chum fish
37 this year, summer chum. So, that's pretty awesome. We're
38 pretty happy with that. So, you know, I would say in our
39 meetings, not too much complaints. You know, we really
40 had trespassing here in the last some years. But we as
41 a Council and as you know, we've really been working
42 hard with trying to partner with whoever we could, Doyon,
43 Gana-A'Yoo, anybody to help us with signs. Anybody to
44 you know, help us with our, you know, the trespassing
45 and so.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We had Colleen
48 Stickman tell us about these trespassers were on
49 allotment, and they were actually blocking off the
50 access on this trail going back. Did you have -- and she

1 reported that to the troopers and they didn't respond
2 to that. Did you have that kind of response out of
3 troopers for your trespass issues up here?

4
5 MR. GREEN: Well, I don't think we had
6 much here. We kind of take care of our, you know, some
7 of the -- like you know, some of the people in Bear
8 Creek called me and, you know, said, hey, there's hunters
9 up here. You know, we can't -- we don't want them up,
10 you know. But I don't know if they understand, that's,
11 you know, when these guys are here, they're on Federal
12 land, you know, and we can only make sure that they're
13 not trespassing. Like I said, if she's seen a land
14 allotment, that should have been an easy case to just
15 take a picture on a land allotment. You know, with the
16 coordinates right there, it's what the Game wardens tell
17 us to do. And, you know, just walk up, take the picture,
18 take the coordinates right where they're -- right where
19 you're standing next to the boat. Take a picture and
20 then the Game wardens can prosecute, but you can't --
21 you know, it's really hard to prosecute anybody if you're
22 not given coordinates they can -- you know, you can't
23 stop them guys from going up to Kaiyuh. There's no way
24 unless, you know, there's just a -- the -- you obviously
25 know the State makes a lot of money off them people.
26 And, you know, I've had native guys even in Bear Creek,
27 why are they giving permits right in our backyard? But,
28 you know, according to the Fish and Game, it's -- there's
29 enough moose to do that. So, you know, we can't you
30 know, contradict what the State is doing. They're making
31 their money doing whatever. And I guess they give a
32 couple of permits to out of State and then some in State.
33 You know, I drew a Bear Creek permit this year. I just
34 put in for all of them and never even attempted to hunt
35 in Bear Creek or anywhere in this area. But I just did
36 it to, you know, take a permit. And I think that's all
37 we can do, you know, I mean, there's no way to -- we're
38 not biologists that tell them that there's not enough
39 moose here or whatever. We just we just try to, you
40 know, make sure they're not on Gana-A'Yoo land or on
41 private, you know, on people's land allotments, you
42 know.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. Well, we were
45 concerned about -- hearing about trespass on native
46 allotment lands.

47
48 MR. GREEN: Tommy probably knows -- what
49 do you say, Tommy? I don't want to talk on something I
50 really don't know. What did you guys come up with

1 Colleen? I seen it all over Facebook. Where were they,
2 were they on private land?

3

4 MR. KRISKA: Yeah, from a lot of the --
5 some of the guys, they actually went over there. You
6 know, some of the boys were going to kind of enforced
7 that they're not supposed to -- they did go over there,
8 but all they did was get laughed at, and they were right
9 on the camp. Right on the native allotment. Right on it.

10

11 MR. GREEN: That should be easy. Easy.

12

13 MR. KRISKA: So, they -- there was two
14 different groups that went there. One for four days and
15 one for seven days. They, the first group, enticed the
16 second group to go to moose. And there, they went right
17 back there, camped out. I was too busy to even...

18

19 MR. GREEN: Yeah, but you know, -- The
20 only way to, to get that is you got to show, you know,
21 they got to be educated on what they do because that
22 should be an easy bust, just easy. You know, if you just
23 go there with any kind of a you know, a, you know, a lot
24 of guys have their little Garmin, you know, their little
25 things. You know, whatever you call them, the little,
26 not GPS, but what you -- InReach. Yeah. And, you know,
27 it just takes a second to just hit the button right
28 there and, you know, next to the boat right there. And
29 you just bring that back to the trooper. That trooper
30 stops us all the time. You know, when I'm on the river
31 and says, Charlie, anybody on the land or you guys have
32 any complaints? No, you know, we --

33

34 MR. KRISKA: Yeah, he stopped me and
35 asked me that same -- asked me if I know anything out
36 there and need help anywhere. So, he was okay, you know.

37

38 MR. GREEN: Yeah.

39

40 MR. KRISKA: But then one of the things
41 I was going to ask you is, you know, that a lot of the
42 Natives in Nulato, Kaltag, even in Galena, they want
43 that South Bank there no controlled used area.

44

45 MR. GREEN: Yeah.

46

47 MR. KRISKA: And they -- I was just
48 wondering how you feel about that. And one more question
49 that came up. They were thinking to have a check station
50 in the upper Kaiyuh -- where you enter Kaiyuh and then

1 one at 22-mile. I don't know. I think that would be a
2 better thing because right now, the way it is, if you
3 look at the numbers that a lot of people, like you said,
4 not only in Galena, but Nulato, I think Koyukuk is pretty
5 well covered because they have to go to the check
6 station. But below there a lot of people don't check
7 their moose. And that year before on record there was
8 five moose out in Nulato, four moose out of Kaltag. So,
9 between those two villages there was only nine moose
10 killed. But then the abundance of moose and permits went
11 up because of the lack of harvest reports.

12

13 MR. GREEN: Yeah.

14

15 MR. KRISKA: So, I don't know. I'm
16 thinking that it might be a -- it might help the
17 controlled use area to get, you know, in place if we had
18 a check stations in there.

19

20 MR. GREEN: Yeap.

21

22 MR. KRISKA: I don't know.

23

24 MR. GREEN: I totally agree with you. I
25 mean, I more than anybody I scream about that being a
26 controlled use area because the problem I see over there
27 is there's so many lakes in Kaiyuh that there's too many
28 airplanes, you know. Even though you guys are seeing the
29 Road hunters. But lots of times we see guys come here
30 and they go, I've been hunting in Kaiyuh for 15 years,
31 you know, and they, you know, and -- cause I have a camp
32 down here and until you really stay time, there's just
33 planes flying back, float planes that I don't never see,
34 you know, 180s, 185s going over to Kaiyuh and they're
35 going back to where you guys don't go. But -- and they
36 say we hunt where you don't hunt. But that's -- them
37 moose walk across, you know, they're all from the same
38 area. So, you know, myself, I would really like to see
39 it be a controlled use area, you know, and I totally
40 agree with that. You know, having a check station there
41 in both ends and just so we kind of know, you know, the
42 exact count that comes out. So, we're making sure we do
43 the airplane, you know, to make sure that, you know,
44 they're being checked to, you know, and so I would
45 totally you know, we're talking about our moose
46 management plan by the -- by our own, you know, our
47 subregion here. You know where -- Jenny Bryant, who is
48 a biologist here can help us with, you know, working
49 with the feds down there trying to figure out, you know,
50 ways that we can, you know, stop. I mean, just, you

1 know, try to keep this stuff local, and but I totally
2 agree with that. You know, with making that a controlled
3 use area, that's the only way we could maybe you know,
4 slow them down. Our -- but, you know, I think, like we
5 say, educating all of us and figuring out how to --
6 because Facebook is not going to help us, you know, with
7 these guys, they're not going to, you know, doing stuff
8 out that, that people are putting this stuff out. We got
9 to -- we have to just do it legally and work. And you
10 know, we got to build these relationships with these
11 State Fish and Game guys. So, they -- we know what they
12 expect and what we expect out of them, you know, and the
13 more you work with them the better. Whether it's fed,
14 State, whatever, you know, whoever and getting out on
15 these meetings and talking about it is the only way
16 we're going to we're going to solve any kind of problems,
17 you know.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I would
20 encourage the Middle Koyukon Advisory Committee to work
21 with -- locally to redefine that controlled use area.
22 And then this Regional Council can endorse that on the
23 Federal side. But it has to be -- it should be a joint
24 control -- it has to be, you know, on the Federal and
25 State lands, it has to be predominantly State
26 regulation. The state-controlled use area, otherwise the
27 feds, they can either close it to non-subsistence users,
28 which causes a phenomenal amount of trouble when you can
29 own it, when you have the highest one -- of the highest
30 moose populations in Alaska right now. That's not going
31 to work. They can't do that under federal regulations.
32 So, it has to be predominantly driven by the by the
33 Middle Yukon Advisory Committee. And this Council can
34 help or endorse that at our February meeting, February
35 25 and 26, we're going to be in McGrath. We can talk
36 about that if you get it more defined by that time.

37
38 MR. GREEN: I think if we work with the
39 subregion here and try and start trying to refine this,
40 this plan that we think that can work maybe we can, you
41 know, at least -- I wish Jenny or, you know, Boomer was
42 here to -- she's out somewhere flying, you know, surveys
43 or something. But she knows a lot more about this, that
44 kind of stuff. But you know, with other villages like
45 Nulato, Kaltag especially that you know, are having
46 these problems with these out of town hunters and I feel
47 even bad, you know, Robert and stuff. I know I joke
48 about that, but it's -- I think it's starting to be a
49 problem down in Anvik and Grayling and Holy Cross and
50 Shageluk, all you know, they're starting to have an

1 abundance of hunters. And, you know, I've seen pictures
2 on the internet of them guys around Russian Mission with
3 15 bull moose all skinned out, all, I mean, all the
4 horns, all you know, just. I mean, and I see the big
5 boats going by and coming back up, you know, that's
6 going down river. So, there must be.....

7
8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: A lot of guys going
9 out of, out of the Innoko country going over to McGrath.
10 And Kevin Whitworth was on the phone with us this morning
11 talking about the amazing amounts of rotten meat in the
12 dump in McGrath. The meat cutter there -- the butcher,
13 he can't keep up with it. The meat's coming in all
14 rotten. It has to be thrown to the dump. And people in
15 McGrath are just super pissed about this thing.

16
17 MR. GREEN: Yeah.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And that's coming
20 predominantly off the Innoko Refuge.

21
22 MR. GREEN: Yeah.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so that's the
25 -- there's other avenues, the refuges can require, you
26 know, specifics on the permits and when the permitting
27 is processed for these air taxis going on these refuges,
28 there's got to be more you -- not only that can that --
29 you can define a controlled use area, but there needs
30 to be -- we have meat on bone regulations. There's all
31 kinds of stuff. And the state statute actually says that
32 the meat has to be removed from the field and be in a
33 condition for human consumption for two weeks after
34 removal from the field. And the troopers have just been
35 going well, it's rotten. They threw it in the dump in
36 Galena or McGrath. That's not what it's supposed --
37 that's not what the -- it's a legislative statute and
38 they're not actually enforcing the statute. So, I
39 encourage ...

40
41 MR. GREEN: Okay. Well, we'll for
42 sure.....

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Galena tribe and
45 the various tribal organizations to look at the statute,
46 what the salvage requirement actually says, and start
47 holding the Department of Public Safety's feet to the
48 fire on this, salvaging this meat in a palatable
49 condition. That's what the statutes actually says. And
50 so, if it's rotten, it's prima facie, you're getting a

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1 ticket, you're from -- you come from Anchorage or
2 something, and you rotted your moose for ten days out
3 there in the Innoko Flats before you got flown out.
4 You're getting a ticket.

5

6

MR. GREEN: Yeah.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This has got to
9 stop. This will -- it'll just take a few tickets, and
10 they'll stop doing it. The word will get out in their
11 little circle. They got their own little circles, you
12 know.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tanana Chiefs,
Navy CP, and all of the tribes need to get a legal
interpretation of the state statute that's requiring the
meat to be, if in a condition for two weeks in a
preserved and in a condition for two weeks after removal
from the field. That's what the statute says, unless the
legislature has changed it on me. But I had a statutory
regulation book that Kristy Tibbles sent me probably 4
or 5 years ago, and that's -- I read that statutory. I
was like, two weeks? I didn't know that part. So, the

1 troopers have not been enforcing that part, and the
2 tribes need to start holding their feet to the fire. If
3 you have this meat is coming in rotten, that's an instant
4 ticket. Those guys, these guys come in here and think
5 they're going to rot meat and throw it directly into the
6 Galena dump or somewhere. That's got to stop. That's
7 happening in McGrath, and they know it's going to happen.
8 They go, oh we got it from the field, we got it flown
9 out. We're just going to toss it. Then we don't have to
10 pay all that shipping all the way back into Anchorage
11 or down to Wisconsin. There's -- a lot of these guys are
12 non-resident hunters. They can hunt on their own. I would
13 encourage the tribes to actually have a legal
14 interpretation and then approach the Department of
15 Public Safety and the Commissioner of Fish and Game's
16 office and say, hey, this is not -- this is the statute.
17 You're not -- you're violating the statute by letting
18 them go, bringing in -- I hear about this in Kotzebue.
19 I don't care where it's at. It all happens all over the
20 place. This has got to stop.

21
22 MR. GREEN: Yes, that's.....

23
24 CHAIRPERSON REAKFOFF: That's a very
25 valuable.....

26
27 MR. GREEN: Information, yeah.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: -- and so then the
30 meat comes back in a palatable condition, and then they
31 can give it away to Jenny, who didn't even get a moose
32 this year. And then she can get a good piece of meat out
33 of it. No, but Jenny doesn't want to take a piece of
34 green meat.

35
36 MR. GREEN: Yep. Can we make sure I -
37 Diloola where-- Diloola, can you make sure to you know,
38 relay this for us at the EI Board, and then we can do
39 it in our subregion too, to make sure that we get these
40 -- yeah, we'll make sure we get -- to make sure to get
41 the State and the feds, we know, you know, we know the
42 guys in town there to make sure their law enforcement
43 knows -- you know and figure out which way we're going
44 to do. You know, like, I think that people like Craig
45 Hill that come out of the Melosi with 6-7 moose or
46 whatever, they should be able to have a you know, that
47 meat checked in before he gives it away or brings it
48 back to town. We want to make sure that the -- inspect,
49 the guide meat that people are guiding around these
50 areas, that they're bringing all the meat out, all what

1 they're required to, and that it's in good condition.
2 And if it's not, then, like you say, I -- myself, I
3 think a good way is to have Craig send it to the homeless
4 in Anchorage. He could pay -- have the guides pay their
5 way. Pay the meat out of here. The dirty meat to a
6 processor where they can process the rotten meat, give
7 it away or throw it in the dump or assess what it is.
8 And that could be a penalty or -- because I don't know
9 what's the penalty for rotten meat or I don't know if
10 there's.....

11
12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: There's statutory
13 those are -- if the troopers wrote the tickets, then the
14 judges would assess penalties. And there's statutory
15 requirements for salvage, the amount of meat. But it's
16 also the statute there -- what they've not been there -
17 - you know, it's the amounts that they're actually
18 accomplishing. Probably not even that I've gotten
19 trooper meat. They got a piece of moose neck that big
20 and two pieces of meat off the outside. That's the neck
21 meat. These troopers don't know what any volume -- they
22 don't know anything about this meat. I've had troopers
23 throw out a whole bunch of bags of meat on the ground
24 and are like, what is this? Oh, this is the hindquarter
25 of a sheep. And you piece it all together what it
26 actually is. It's like they have no idea that -- that's
27 why bone on meat is a very valuable thing. Because then
28 you know that you've got ribs in the four quarters. At
29 least you've got the main part. But the palatable
30 condition, that's where your attorneys need to enforce,
31 you know, the statute says it has to be in a preserved
32 state for human consumption for two weeks after removal.
33 So, that's the part that needs to start being enforced,
34 because we're just going to keep hearing about rotten
35 meat the rest of our lives.

36
37 MR. GREEN: Yeah.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: There's tons of
40 rotten meat coming off the Haul Road. I live on the Haul
41 Road. There's coming down out of the Arctic Slope at a
42 75, 85°F, and they're pulling into Coldfoot with caribou
43 stacked on the back of trucks whole, not even dressed
44 out, rotting on the back of the truck, covered in flies.
45 It's happening this summer because they opened on July
46 1st. And so.....

47
48 MR. GREEN: That's crazy.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF:you know,
2 our troopers like -- well, they got the whole animal
3 there. It's like, no, there's -- nobody's going to eat
4 this thing. It's going directly to the Fairbanks dump.
5 It's where it's going.

6

7 MR. GREEN: Yeah.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, that's kind of
10 -- that's good on that. So, we got a lot of agenda, and
11 I appreciate you coming before us.

12

13 MR. GREEN: Okay thanks. If any more
14 questions I mean if I -- go ahead Robert.

15

16 MR. WALKER: Mr. Chair, thank - Mr.
17 Chair. Thank you, Charlie. I mean yes, we have issues
18 down in our area too, but we did two put -- we have two
19 control use areas in our area, the State and the Federal.
20 So, we do have -- we did cut a lot of the airplane
21 traffic out now. But we still have transporters that do
22 come in. But none of them, a lot of them don't stop in
23 our area. They go down to Unit 18 because I think the
24 moose countdown there was a lot higher than what we
25 have. And plus, we have a lot of Doyon land too in our
26 area. So, this we do put up and we do ask Doyon for
27 signs to put it up. So, you know, private property can't
28 trespass. And the corporation have signs too to take.
29 And so, a lot of times we just discourage just the
30 hunters who come through. They see all that and they'd
31 rather go someplace where they don't see that. So, it's
32 sometimes just do help when you do put signs up, you
33 know. Doyon land, corporation land, etc. Thank you, Mr.
34 Chair.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Robert. I
37 appreciate it. Good to see you again.

38

39 MR. GREEN: Thank you, guys. Thanks

40

41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're looking
42 for tribal governments and Native organization comments.
43 So, come on up to the mic there.

44

45 MS. ERICKSON: Comments or my report
46 report?

47

48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Report. You can
49 give your report. I don't see -- you know got Charlie
50 here. And so, I don't know of anybody else. Is there

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1 anybody on the -- I should have asked on the phone but
2 I -- let's just take this TCC report.

3

4 MS. ERICKSON: Okay For the record,
5 Diloola Erickson, Tribal Resource Stewardship Division
6 director with Tanana Chiefs Conference.

7

8 (In Native) Diloola Ericson (In Native).

9

10 My name is Diloola Ann. I just wanted
11 to introduce myself real quick. It's important to me
12 when I give my reports to do that. My family comes from
13 Kaltag or Ggaał Doh. That's where I'm an enrolled tribal
14 member. I also have family ties here in Galena. My
15 daughter is enrolled with Louden. And I was raised
16 predominantly on Tlingit Aani in the village of Hoonah
17 in southeast Alaska. I joined...

18

19 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You were speaking
20 Tlingit?

21

22 MS. ERICKSON: No. Denaakk'e, Koyukon
23 Athabaskan.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, all right.

26

27 MS. ERICKSON: I have been with TCC since
28 April 22nd of this year. So, my report is kind of brief.
29 We've done a lot in the last five months since I've been
30 with Tanana Chiefs. Our tribal Resource Stewardship
31 division was just upgraded from a program to division
32 status, and we've been building out our team over the
33 last five months. Two months ago, I just fully staffed
34 the team. So, I have a coordinator, an outreach
35 coordinator, a policy analyst, and an admin to support
36 with our advocate travel. We attended and supported the
37 Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. They hosted
38 their spring preseason meeting in May, and I want to
39 correct the record, I misspoke earlier. There are 55
40 total tribes within the Yukon River watershed, 42 of the
41 tribes have resolutions to be a part of the Yukon River
42 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. They filed for 501-C3
43 status about a month and a half ago, and they're in
44 process of hiring an executive director and an admin for
45 their support staff. I checked in briefly with Chief
46 Ulvi earlier, who is the Chair of the Fish Commission,
47 and she said that she will make sure that she's on the
48 agenda for the winter meeting, and she'll give you a
49 fuller Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission report
50 out at that time. Our staff and our contractor, who

1 represents us for the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-
2 Management Council, we held our fall meeting at the
3 beginning of August and then our subregional meeting
4 that had our six regional reps from the TCC region. Don
5 Honea was one of the reps at that meeting and Randy Mayo
6 is our representative on the State Council. And then he
7 went, and he attended the State regional meeting a couple
8 of weeks ago in Kodiak. And is pushing forward our
9 priorities there. We're also actively engaging as a
10 cooperating agency with NOAA NMFS for their chum salmon
11 bycatch, EIS that will be released -- it's projected to
12 be released early December, and then they'll be holding
13 a special meeting in February 3rd through the 9th in
14 Anchorage. They'll have a special meeting to go over
15 that EIS, take public comment and then make a decision
16 on what actions or alternatives they'll take from that
17 EIS. We've submitted -- we co-authored four sections,
18 along with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish
19 Commission of the tribal importance of chum salmon to
20 our region and our people, our spiritual connection with
21 chum salmon and our long standing history with them as
22 well as harvest data that was pulled from ADF&Gs website
23 to show what portion of subsistence -- what portion of
24 subsistence harvest is chum salmon and it showed that
25 it was like over 50% of the people who reside on the
26 Koyukuk River, which is territory 5 for the Fish
27 Commission, 50% of their diet, their subsistence diet
28 is dependent on chum salmon.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: One question if I
31 can stop you. Are you -- is TCC involved with this State
32 Bycatch Advisory Council stuff? I just got an email
33 yesterday about that. Are you -- is TCC involved with
34 that process also?

35
36 MS. ERICKSON: Our staff, we have four
37 staff right now, and we're trying to make sure that
38 we're at every meeting we can be at. And we did miss
39 that recent meeting they just had not a few weeks ago.
40 But it is on our radar going forward.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This notice was for
43 a meeting on November 5 and by zoom. And so that's what
44 this notice is about. And I just received this from Fish
45 and Game. I've got some auto serve thing as Advisory
46 Committee member. So, I -- you're going to be involved
47 with that?

48
49
50

1 MS. ERICKSON: Yes. Yeah, it is. It
2 popped up on our radar. We missed the last meeting, but
3 we're tracking it now.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I appreciate that.
6

7 MS. ERICKSON: We're also a part of a
8 lawsuit against NOAA NMFS, AVCP and Tanana Chiefs
9 together are the -- not defendants, the other word.

10
11 MS. PILCHER: Plaintiffs.
12

13 MS. ERICKSON: Plaintiffs! On the lawsuit
14 against NOAA NMFS for their pollock TAC, the Total
15 Allowable Catch. And the argument there is that they're
16 using outdated environmental impact statements to set
17 their TAC for their pollock harvests. They just heard
18 oral arguments, I think, a week ago down in Anchorage.
19 And that lawsuit is continuing to unfold.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's before the
22 Federal judge? Lisa?

23
24 MS. ERICKSON: Mhm and I'll provide the
25 WIRAC if there is interest of the sections that we co-
26 authored for that EIS once they're published, if you
27 guys want to have that in your supplemental material for
28 your winter meeting.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I would like to
31 look at that.

32
33 MS. ERICKSON: Yeah. I'll make a note of
34 that. Tanana Chiefs is also involved in the AYK
35 Sustainable Salmon initiative. And we just started
36 engaging in that. And so, I'm learning about that space
37 as well. And we're about to put out our call for
38 proposals for that pot of funding for tribes or
39 independent researchers that want to do salmon research
40 that is within that scope of the AYKSSI. I know I put
41 this on my report just because it was mentioned a lot
42 earlier. But Tanana Chiefs Conference has a relator
43 department that does support tribal members who have
44 native allotments with trespass issues. That's April
45 Monroe with Tanana Chiefs Conference. So, I just wanted
46 to put that on the record too. If there's tribal members
47 within the TCC region that need support in prosecuting
48 a trespass, April can be the liaison for that.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can you put her in
2 touch with Colleen Stickman on that issue?

3
4 MS. ERICKSON: Yeah, I talked to Colleen
5 right after she testified and gave her her contact. We
6 will be holding a fall special convention in November.
7 November 13th through the 15th. And the first day of
8 that convention will be focused on hunting and fishing.
9 So, I just also wanted to put that on the record. If
10 there was interest from any of the members to attend
11 that convention. And we'll be giving out another TRS
12 more in-depth report. The Fish Commission will also be
13 giving the report. Eva Burk, who is contracted with the
14 Fish Commission, will be sharing her Salmon Situation
15 Report, which is like a comprehensive overview of the
16 last year of where the salmon on the Yukon are at. And
17 then we'll be having a number of different panels. The
18 AMBCC representatives will be hosting a panel to talk
19 about the work that they've been doing there. We'll have
20 a panel of tribal members who have been pursuing
21 alternative food sources. It'll be an adapting to the
22 Salmon Crisis panel. And we'll also be having a tribal
23 sciences panel. And so, I just wanted to put that invite
24 out to folks who wanted to join that meeting. It'll be
25 at the West Mark on November 13th in Fairbanks.

26
27 And then there's just a few other
28 things that I have been mentioning, as I've been giving
29 out my reports at the various subregions and other
30 meetings, just to put on people's radar that I think
31 might be of interest here. And I'm sure you guys are
32 aware of the Chinook Endangered Species Act process that
33 is going on right now in the Gulf of Alaska. We're not
34 actively commenting on it, but we're watching the
35 process. The interest there for Tanana chiefs is the
36 process through which NOAA NMFS is executing that EIS
37 or ESA. It totally circumvented tribal consultation, and
38 they are using faulty science in their reasoning for
39 that ESA. And the reason we're interested in keeping
40 tabs on that is if that gets put through, then that
41 process will likely be used if they want to, if any of
42 our tribes want to pursue an ESA for our chinook on the
43 Yukon, and that's not a process that we want to be
44 setting a precedent for. And similarly, we're also
45 monitoring and engaging in the Yukon River panel,
46 watching the seven-year moratorium process that went on,
47 which also circumvented tribal consultation. And the
48 other thing that we're also paying attention to is the
49 USDA buyouts for the pollock industry. They have been
50 supplementing the pollock industry for the last couple

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1 of years to the tune of about 66 million for this year.
2 And that was pushed through from our representatives,
3 Lisa Murkowski, Senator Sullivan and Representative
4 Peltola wrote to USDA and asked for them to push through
5 those buyouts. So, they're supplementing the pollock
6 industry through that which, as we all know, is a huge
7 factor in our salmon declines.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The buyouts are
10 buying up quota or are just --

11
12 MS. ERICKSON: They're buying filets and
13 fish sticks.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, they're
16 actually purchasing.

17
18 MS. ERICKSON: They're purchasing and
19 they're using it for like low-income food programs.
20 Yeah.

21
22 MS. PILCHER: Can you clarify what ESA
23 is? For the record.

24
25 MS. ERICKSON: Endangered Species Act.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, I would like
28 no acronyms for Tanya here so that she -- when they
29 transcribe, they can -- so, it's easy to get into the
30 acronym thing. But we need to have it clear for the
31 record.

32
33 MS. ERICKSON: I did say yes, Endangered
34 Species Act and then ESA previously. But I'm talking
35 fast too, and I apologize. That's my speed.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's fine. Yeah.

38
39 MS. ERICKSON: But that concludes my
40 Tribal Resource Stewardship Division report. We also
41 have a fisheries report. The TRS team, Tribal Resource
42 Stewardship team has a fisheries program.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, at this point
45 does the Council, have any questions for Diloolala about
46 that portion of her report? It was real.....

47
48 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

49
50 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

1

2

MR. HONEA: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Diloolala, I'm actually glad TCC is online here. Because well, I mean the things that you got into there are pretty vast. You have among the migratory bird committee and fisheries and everything. But I had -- the reason I'm glad you're on here is because we had a discussion yesterday, and I'm sure you heard about it, about the Native allotments and gee, I don't know. So, many years ago, there was some kind of measure to try to make that where it'd be recognized, like private property. And so, I'm just hoping that whether yourself, somebody in the hunting and fishing or whether this is -- know I mentioned Doyon, I don't know if they have a hunting and fishing thing, but this is almost like legal stuff that they -- that we could be asking them for help too. So, anyway, I'm glad to -- you're in this and I know it -- you have a full plate there, so maybe it's -- maybe something will become of it. It seems like a little too late for this, but like I mentioned yesterday, that, hey, it's always -- we could always start somewhere and if we were at least to recognize it is a huge problem. And you know, whether it's on the Kaiyuh, whether it's on the Nowitna, I mean, this is -- this affects a lot of a lot of people and, you know, and enforcement of those things. I mean, I, you know, I've seen places where, you know, our own cabin on the Novi was occupied by people. And, you know, we had to kind of forcibly take them out. I mean with threats of having the troopers, like, they just filled up our cabin and so things like that. I'm glad you're here, and I'm -- I hope TCC could maybe help us addressing that. There's a lot of these concerns. I said, are not just the RAC business or YRDLFA or something. It's a concerted effort. Okay, I will let you go on with your presentation. Thank you.

37

38

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Don.

39

40

41

MS. ERICKSON: Thank you. Can I respond to that comment real quick?

42

43

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, go ahead.

44

45

46

47

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50

MS. ERICKSON: Thank you, Don, for that. I just made a note in my notebook here to have April Monroe invited to the next WIRAC meeting so that she can give a more in-depth report out on her trespass program and the work that she's been doing there. I know she has been in collaboration with Doyon lands on that work, and

1 they're in development of an app that should help
2 document trespass and create those reports so that you
3 can expedite that process. So, I'll make sure that she
4 gets invited to the winter meeting so she can provide
5 that to you all.

6

7 MR. HONEA: Thank you.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Appreciate that.
10 Nissa.

11

12 MS. PILCHER: For the record, this is
13 Nissa. Could you just say her name one more time again?

14

15 MS. ERICKSON: Yeah. April Monroe and I
16 can get you her contact info after this.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, so, gonna
19 give your fishery report. Go right ahead.

20

21 MS. ERICKSON: Okay, so we have a
22 fisheries program that staffs three full time
23 biologists, fisheries biologists. And this year we
24 staffed one seasonal field tech. We have three major
25 projects that we're working on. And you can find more
26 detailed reporting on those in the supplemental material
27 packet on page 97. I think our biggest one that most of
28 our tribes are -- it's the high priority for us is a
29 mid-river sonar feasibility study. Our biologists went
30 out this summer to Tanana and tested two sites near
31 Tanana, 113 miles upriver from the Tanana village and
32 one 7 miles downriver. And that was above and below the
33 Tanana and Yukon, where those two rivers come together.
34 They're currently in the process of analyzing that those
35 sonar sweep data that they have. They also ran a test
36 fishery at both test sites this summer. All of the
37 chinook that...

38

39 MS. WESSELS: I think they lost internet
40 there.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, somebody
43 talking over.

44

45 UNIDENTIFIED: I think the meeting had
46 left going on overnight and may have gotten to be like
47 24 hours long.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're getting some
50 kind of crossover.

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MS. PILCHER: Can you hear us?

MS. WESSELS: Maybe we used all of the allowed minutes.

MS. PILCHER: That's Katya.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Katya. Katya.

MS. PILCHER: Are you guys there? Are you guys there?

MS. WESSELS: Yeah. We're here.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You're talking over us.

MS. PILCHER: We can hear you. Can you hear us now?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I heard them click out. Okay, continue.

MS. ERICKSON: All of the chinook that were caught in that test fishery were released alive and well. So, there was no incidental takes from that. And the site that was upriver from Tanana was near their spirit camp. And so, they involved a number of their youth from Tanana in that test fishery. And then at the winter meeting, I'll give a report out of the data that was analyzed there. We also conducted a coho spawning study this summer that used traditional knowledge from the late Reverend Chief David Salmon. He had identified in one of their Gwich'in publications that was their place name, Atlas, an area where coho salmon spawn that is not cataloged in the Anadromous Waters Catalog. And so, our biologists have been ground truthing and capturing the data needed to log that site in the Anadromous Waters Catalog. And they're currently about -- they're getting ready to go out on their last field session and hopefully we'll be able to capture the images of those spawning salmon up there. And then the last study that we have is a whitefish humpback study, humpback whitefish study up near Allakaket and Alatna, and they're testing two fish -- Whitefish stocks up there, one that is traditionally harvested by the community members up there, and then one that is not to test the different -- difference in composition of those two stocks of whitefish, to see if the like, increased

1 levels of harvesting are affecting those stocks or not.
2 And they're testing fish in the Alatna River and then
3 in the South Fork Koyukuk River. They just completed
4 their second round of testing up there. The goal for
5 2024 was 180 fish to sample. However, they were only
6 able to sample 30. And they're also still analyzing that
7 data. And we should have some results from those studies
8 at the winter meeting.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're the fish
11 present? They were having a hard time catching fish?

12
13 MS. ERICKSON: I'm not sure. They just
14 came back a week ago, and the only update I got was that
15 they only sampled 30.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We would like to
18 know what the reason -- why they could only get that.
19 Because there -- I mean, I know people that fish up on
20 the Alatna. They can catch a lot of fish in one set. And
21 Fred's telling us about, you know, the decline here of,
22 of Bering cisco. So, that's what they're -- that's what
23 the fish would be. But there's other stocks that are,
24 you know, the whitefish, -- the sheefish stocks are
25 coming out of the Lower Yukon, they're going into the
26 Alatna River. I would like to know your fishery
27 biologists at our next meeting. Why they're -- why they
28 were having a low success rate? And the waters dropped
29 back now, and they should be actually be able to catch
30 them because I live in the upper Koyukuk. So, I would
31 like to know that that's an important thing that we need
32 to know. Thank you.

33
34 MS. ERICKSON: Thank you. I made a note
35 of that, and I'll ask my biologists.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any questions on
38 those fishery reports. No? Tim, are you still there,
39 Tim?

40
41 MS. PILCHER: We actually currently don't
42 have anyone on. I was going to wait until we were done
43 with this and then maybe ask you to stand down to see
44 if we can restart some things.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, we need -- I
47 think Kevin's supposed to come up here, so I will just
48 state for the record, Diloola you're doing an excellent
49 job. We had virtually no presence of TCC at meetings at
50 times, and I was asking for TCC presence. And so, it's

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1 like Star Wars blasting forward. I mean, it's like all
2 this stuff is happening, and I'm really excited about
3 the progress that TCC is making on your division.

4
5 MS. WESSELS: Did everyone drop from the
6 Meeting.

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, thank you.

8
9 MS. PILCHER: We did just hear someone
10 online.

11 MS. WESSELS: Yes.

12
13 MS. PILCHER: Are we back?

14
15 MS. WESSELS: Even the meeting went on
16 for too long. Because I think some people didn't hang
17 up yesterday and it was going on for 24 hours and more.
18 Or it's also possible that they lost internet there.

19
20 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay.

21
22 MS. WESSELS: They say they can hear us
23 in the room. But we cannot hear them. I say we all hang
24 up and let them restart the meeting and would try to
25 call in.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we'll stand
28 down for -- how long Nissa, Five minutes?

29
30 MS. PILCHER: Let's try five.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. We'll stand
33 down for five minutes.

34
35 MS. ERICKSON: I just want to say thanks.
36 To the Chair and to the Council.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you.

39
40 MR. WALKER: Thank you for that report,
41 April.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're back on
44 record again. And are you on online here, Kevin
45 Whitworth? Kevin Whitworth, are you here? So, Kuskokwim
46 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Kevin Whitworth was on
47 earlier, but we're on at this point in this agenda.
48 Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association supplement -
49 Huh? Oh, Kevin, are you here? I'm not hearing you, Kevin.
50

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1 If you're talking, you're muted. Nissa says that he she
2 sees you on.....

3

4 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is --

5

6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh. You're there
7 and you're gone.

8

9 MR. WHITWORTH: Mr. Chair, this is
10 Kevin.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. There you
13 are. Okay, go ahead with your Kuskokwim River Inter-
14 Tribal Fish Commission update. Thank you.

15

16 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, thanks. I can hear
17 you from the get-go there. I don't know what was muted,
18 but somebody unmuted me anyhow. Kevin Whitworth, I'm a
19 tribal member and McGrath Native village. I'm in McGrath
20 right now, home. Former member of the Western Interior
21 RAC. As you all know, I resigned. I just want to touch
22 on that a little bit. You know, I really enjoyed working
23 with you all and the Council, Jack, you as the Chair,
24 our OSM staff. And I believe in the process, I like it
25 but, I mean, I'm running -- at noon I ran to my fishwheel
26 and grabbed all the fish I got out of there. It was ten
27 or so fish variety of things and I just want to focus
28 on my life, you know, subsistence lifestyle. And it's
29 hard. This is a time of year where I really hit hard,
30 trying to put away some fish for me and the whitefish
31 that I do get, I distribute throughout the community.
32 This time of year, and this is one of those crunch time
33 of year. You're getting firewood, you're getting fish,
34 you're getting things put away. And so, it's just really
35 was hard for me to balance going to these meetings.
36 October is really crazy. Springtime is the same thing.
37 You know, it's just anyways, it's just a personal balance
38 that I felt like I just needed to step aside and leave
39 Western Interior RAC, but I do -- I'll be involved
40 through my work with you know, Kuskokwim River Inter-
41 Tribal Fish Commission. But I do appreciate you guys
42 understanding that move by myself. So, anyhow before I
43 get into my report for the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal
44 Fish Commission, this has been a -- this topic has come
45 up a lot. You know, the waste that we're seeing coming
46 out of Yukon or - the Innoko River, Innoko National
47 Wildlife Refuge. And this isn't not new. It's not like
48 this is something new that we've seen here in McGrath.
49 Just this last year, we have a new transporter. He's not
50 that -- he hasn't been around for all that long. Willow

1 Air was the transporter guide, he had to guide these
2 areas. But as far as the transporter, part of what they
3 were doing, he sold that off to a new transporter. And
4 this new transporter is very aggressive. We hear all the
5 time, you know, they were at 50 to 60 transport people.
6 They're moving 50 to 60 people. A few years ago, when
7 they first started, they were up to 100 people now. And
8 so, if you can imagine 100 people going out to the
9 Refuge, you got guided use on top of that with Willow
10 Air and all that meat. Not saying 100 Moose were shot.
11 There's enough moose shot. And if you have any window
12 where there's bad weather, and in this year we have --
13 we had bad weather. And McGrath sits in between, you
14 know, it's only 40 miles west of McGrath is the Innoko
15 Refuge boundary, the eastern boundary. But you have the
16 Kuskokwim mountains in between. And any little weather
17 event will slow the transportation of moose meat out of
18 the area. And there's no conditions in there where the
19 guy has to check in with his hunters, you know, every 2
20 or 3 days to get a moose out of there. So, he can go ten
21 days on a float trip and that moose is sitting in his
22 boat as he they float through the Refuge, waiting to get
23 picked up. So, that moose meat gets to McGrath already
24 tainted. And then the guy at the butcher shop was so
25 overwhelmed that he had -- there's this store, there's
26 a very long place where they store and hang the meat.
27 But that thing was plumb full, so they had to stack the
28 meat on pallets outside. It was raining, and everybody
29 in town looked at this moose meat, people who were
30 hunting all fall trying to get meat, and they're seeing
31 this meat spoil, and it just pissed people off. So, then
32 you get meat going to the dump, you get people who need
33 meat, they get -- they say, yeah, I'll take a leg, and
34 they take it, but they end up throwing it to dump
35 themselves. My neighbor did this. He said, Kevin, that
36 you wouldn't believe what the condition of those ribs,
37 it was green. And I said, don't give it to me. My dogs
38 are -- I don't want to. I don't want any part of that
39 meat, in the way it's been treated. And even feeding it
40 to my dogs, I did not want to do that and support
41 anything that they're doing. And so, when I -- this
42 afternoon at 12:30, when we went on the break, I picked
43 up my friend to go check the wheel, and I told him about
44 this meeting and he's livid. This is an elder, he's seen
45 hard times where he's not getting any fish or not getting
46 moose, and he's just livid with the situation that that
47 this is a -- and it's both Federal and State. They need
48 to get a handle of this. Transporter has a permit within
49 to operate there within the Refuge. And there's
50 conditions within that permit that the Refuge should

1 look at. We should look at that as citizens of this area
2 and say, look, you guys are not living up to these
3 conditions. And if they are living up to those
4 conditions, then those conditions are weak. They
5 shouldn't be to the point where they are able to do what
6 they're doing. Those conditions in that permit should
7 be robust enough, where there's time periods where those
8 transporters have to get that meat out of the field, and
9 then into the communities and out to Anchorage like Mr.
10 Green had mentioned. That's a great thing. Get this meat
11 out to Anchorage and out of this community because it's
12 a mess. I'll stop there. But it's you know, when I
13 grabbed my elder friend to go check the wheel and I tell
14 him about this, he just -- I had to open my -- I had to
15 make comments more about this situation. It's a mess.
16 And I hope the Refuge will get -- look at this permit,
17 work with the local people and consider building this
18 permit so that it's more robust or if he's not living
19 up to the conditions, then pull the permit from that
20 transporter. Anyhow, I will move on to our Kuskokwim
21 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission report, which I think
22 you guys have. Thank you, Nissa for getting that to
23 everybody. It's an additional material in your packet.
24 I'm not going to go through it all that thoroughly. You
25 have it. But just to check in. Jack, can you hear me
26 okay?

27
28 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Five by five,
29 Kevin. Go ahead.

30
31 MR. WHITWORTH: Okay. The Kuskokwim River
32 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, we have 28 appointed
33 tribal commissioners, 28 tribes that are now part of the
34 commission just this summer. The Native village of Kwig
35 joined the commission. We have seven executive Council
36 members, five season managers and two elder advisors. I
37 think we have up to five permanent staff now. We have
38 Justin Leon, he's our Research Director. I am the
39 Executive Director. Avery Hoffman, a local guy from
40 Bethel, he's our Fisheries Biologist. Andrew Magel, he's
41 another fisheries biologist with Terese Vicente, tribal
42 -- she's a program's director, and we have a couple
43 other staff who volunteer. And then we do have
44 contractors that we work with, biometricians and other
45 folks. In the summer we do have a ramp up of projects
46 that we employ over 25 local seasonal staff and interns
47 through the summer months. But our main task at the Fish
48 Commission is kind of three pillars: We have co-
49 management, research and monitoring, and advocacy. The
50 number one thing that we work on in co-management is our

1 MOU that we have with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife
2 Refuge. Our co-management agreement, Spencer Reardon,
3 he's the Yukon Delta Refuge Manager. He's our delegated
4 authority for this fisheries management system that we
5 have working with Fish Commission. He's great, he's got
6 a good staff that he works with, Aaron Moses and Chris
7 Tulik and others there. Awesome people to work with, you
8 know, Boyd was great to work with, but there's a
9 transition there. He left, and we have Spencer now as
10 Refuge Manager. I congratulate him. And this last summer
11 was it was seamless as far as the transition goes from
12 Boyd to Spencer. Spencer has been part of the team there
13 for a while, throughout the summer. So, I did feel like
14 the relationship there is good. MOU was upheld through
15 the summer with Yukon Delta Refuge. Our five in-season
16 managers, two elder advisors, were at in-season
17 management meetings with Spencer and his staff making
18 management decisions. Not always that easy, not always
19 -- especially when you are in times of conservation for
20 chinook, chum and coho it's not easy to make management
21 decisions where you're closing the fishery to, you know,
22 your relatives and your family and your neighbors. But
23 our in-season managers and other advisors and Spencer
24 and his team worked real hard to try to bring the best
25 information to our joint assessment packages that we put
26 together every -- before every meeting, which is Western
27 science. We don't have a lot of data on the Kuskokwim
28 in-season we have harvest data that's collected from
29 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission part.....

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Did he drop? Kevin,
32 if you can hear me, I lost you. Does anybody hear me on
33 the phone? Can you hear me, Tim?

34
35 MR. WHITWORTH: I think we started June
36 1st with the Federal management, and we went through
37 August 16th.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Kevin. Kevin.
40 Kevin. Kevin. Kevin.

41
42 (Simultaneous speech)

43
44 MR. WHITWORTH: This is one of the
45 longest seasons we've had with management.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Kevin. Kevin.

48
49 MR. WHITWORTH: Yeah, go ahead.

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1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You dropped there
2 for a while.

3
4 MR. WHITWORTH: Yep.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You dropped for
7 about, maybe like 3 -- 70 --, 45 seconds or so. I'm not
8 sure what's going on.

9
10 MR. WHITWORTH: I was getting into in-
11 season management, and we were.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We were in the in-
14 season management.

15
16 MR. WHITWORTH: That's too bad I dropped.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And then continue
19 from.

20
21 MR. WHITWORTH: Did you hear the in-
22 season management?

23
24 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Now, continue.

25
26 MR. WHITWORTH: Okay, all right. So, the
27 Teams people can hear me. So, anyhow one of our main
28 jobs through the summer is working with Yukon Delta
29 National Wildlife Refuge with their co-management
30 agreement. We have in our MOU that we have our five in-
31 season managers, two elder advisors who represent our
32 tribe's river-wide work with Yukon Delta Refuge staff.
33 This year was the first year that Spencer Reardon was
34 the Refuge Manager there. We transitioned from Boyd to
35 seamless transition. Spencer has been involved in the
36 years past. Spencer did an excellent job and his staff
37 there Aaron Moses, Chris Tulik, Evan Nikolai and just
38 those guys and their vision of working with tribes in
39 this MOU and uplifting the MOU is excellent. We did --
40 it's not easy making these decisions. Because you're
41 making decisions on the people, your neighbors, your
42 family, your friends. But it's not -- when we have low
43 numbers and chinook, chum and coho salmon, you got to
44 balance conservation for these species and try provide
45 some opportunity. So, this this year was one of our
46 longest years, we had co-management from June 1 through
47 August 16. We provided somewhere near 15 gillnet
48 opportunities. Some of these were driftnet
49 opportunities, some of them were set net opportunities.
50 Some of them -- but at the end of the year, we, you

1 know, we run harvest estimation program. We have a
2 harvest estimation in-season management, our project
3 that we run in the summer. And so, we -- in real time
4 during the summer, every time there's an opener about 2
5 or 3 days after that opener, the Fish Commission produces
6 a harvest estimate. So, we know in-season what the
7 harvest estimate was from that opportunity. So, in
8 total, right around 22,000 chinook salmon were harvested
9 for the entire summer, chum salmon about almost 14,000,
10 sockeye salmon almost 15,000. None of these -- coho
11 salmon, you know, like 3,000. But that's because we
12 stopped you know, up to August 18th, I think, or
13 something like that, 19. These numbers, this is way below
14 ANS amount necessary for subsistence. Way below, you
15 know, chinook salmon, for example, this river, usually
16 85,000, is usually ANS, you know, the bottom end. And
17 so, when you're catching, you know, 20, 25,000, that's
18 nowhere near the needs being met. So, we are definitely
19 in a time period of low productivity for chinook, chum
20 coho still here on the Kuskokwim, sockeye. And I'll just
21 get into the chinook numbers a little bit. Right about
22 143,000 fish passed for escapement this year. That's
23 based on only one weir. All our weirs were flooded out
24 this year. We did not get a chinook salmon estimate from
25 most of the weirs. And so, it was based off of George
26 River Weirs (indiscernible) reconstruction. And so, the
27 error bars for that number is huge. It's like 90,000 to
28 200 something thousand. So, not a lot of confidence in
29 exactly what we ended up at. But we did meet our
30 escapement goal, our robust Federal-Tribal escapement
31 goal of 110,000. We're trying to manage the upper end
32 of the state of Alaska escapement goal range, which we
33 met this year.

34
35 Chum salmon, this year was a little bit
36 better, you know, just like Charlie Green was saying.
37 He saw a little bit better on the Yukon. We saw a little
38 bit better this year too. But we were just coming off
39 of some of the most historic lows seen in 2021 through
40 23 were the lowest we've ever seen on this river. And
41 so, you know, we're coming off the bottom and we're just
42 seeing a little bit of an uptick. There's not -- we are
43 nowhere near one year a little bit better than the last,
44 historic low numbers is not a recovery. Sockeye salmon,
45 they're doing okay. They're doing just fine. I think we
46 might have got even less than last. Very strong again
47 this year. Coho salmon, it's hard to manage coho. By the
48 time coho come into the river, there's almost no data.
49 There's the Bethel tester is getting shut down. The sonar
50 is getting close to shut down, so we -- but we have to

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1 manage with what we have and harvest information we do
2 try to collect in-season. So, we're catching -- catch
3 green effort. And we can see that over the years with
4 how coho are doing. And this year we manage up to near
5 the 50% mark. We didn't see a lot of effort up to the
6 50% mark of the run, and people were starting to focus
7 in on berries, getting ready for moose hunting. And so,
8 we felt like that -- at that point, we felt that we
9 could relinquish management. I think it happened August
10 16th, and I don't want to get into all the projects
11 we're involved with. Community-based harvest monitoring,
12 the harvest estimate programs, Takotna River weir,
13 Kwethluk River weir, Kwethluk River Smolt outmigration
14 project, eDNA, we're trying to use - research the idea
15 of using eDNA to try to come up with at least abundance,
16 or maybe not individual run sizes of chinook, chum and
17 coho salmon with the use of eDNA. We have water
18 temperature monitoring network. We're trying to build a
19 river wide network for water temperature monitoring.
20 We're using drones. This year we have hired Dr. Danny
21 Auerbach. He's out of -- I can't remember Eastern
22 Washington University. He's got a great team. We have a
23 champion, Danny researching the use of drones. And
24 there's some really neat research coming out of our
25 program that we have working with him. We have another
26 project with documented knowledge of Kuskokwim salmon
27 and people. This is something that our Executive Council
28 has wanted for a long time, and we're finally -- found
29 some funding to do some research and monitoring and
30 recording of our elder's knowledge before -- that they
31 want to pass down. We also, like Diloolo had mentioned,
32 we're involved as a cooperating agency in a Chum EIS,
33 this Bycatch Chum Draft EIS as cooperating agency. Our
34 input is due tomorrow. So, right after this call, I got
35 to do some review of that. Another big project -- just
36 a heads up -- project that we're involved with. A lot
37 of people are involved. There's a Gravel-to-Gravel MOU
38 that tribes and Department of Interior are working on.
39 The AVCP, (In Native), Tanana Chiefs, Yukon Kuskokwim
40 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Nome, Eagle, these
41 villages, Bureau of Indian Affairs, USGS, BLM, U.S Fish
42 and Wildlife, Park Service all involved in this Gravel-
43 to-Gravel MOU. And we have a sign-in ceremony, October
44 16th for this huge MOU. It's going to be a huge deal to
45 come together, working together on this MOU. We try to
46 get NOAA involved. It's really hard to get them involved
47 with anything like this, but we tried to get them
48 involved because the real vision of Gravel-to-Gravel co-
49 management and rebuilding of the runs is really getting
50 everybody at the table. But at least the Department of

1 Interior is showing that they are willing and wanting
2 to work with tribes and this Gravel-to-Gravel MOU. And
3 so, about to come out, more to come on that for you all.
4 We'll be able to share that here soon. Probably in a few
5 weeks-- we can -- we'll have something signed; I'm
6 hoping. I'll stop there, we're working on our end of
7 season situation report right now. I was hoping to get
8 it done before this meeting, but we had other obligations
9 so, that'll come out here real soon. I'll share that
10 with you all. That's all. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so
13 much, Kevin. I appreciate all those various projects and
14 your impassioned testimony regarding this air taxi and
15 the pathetic condition the meat and this particular air
16 carrier was instrumental in the demise of the Mulchatna
17 Caribou Herd back in the day, 97 through 2007. So, this
18 is not going to stop. This will just continue to expand.
19 There were 5,500 hunters flown onto the Mulchatna River
20 Caribou Herd with a five-bull caribou bag limit. So, I
21 feel that the Koyukuk, Nowitna, Innoko Refuge should
22 review the permit that's been issued, and this
23 particular carrier should be put on a hold until further
24 review of the condition of the meat that's coming in.
25 There needs to be additional aspects of their permit
26 they need to have -- each hunter should have an InReach.
27 They should be reporting their harvest. And then that
28 meat's flown out and that should be disseminated in a
29 timely manner. It can't be like floating around for ten
30 days and rotting through the ribs as green. That just
31 has to stop. And so, this permit needs to be put in stay
32 position right now. And for further review for any
33 additional there needs to be limits. This particular
34 carrier will take unlimited numbers of hunters. They
35 have the capacity to do that. So, I'm really concerned
36 about that. And this Council is to address anything that
37 affects subsistence users. And that's why the need for
38 this controlled use area in the Innoko side. So, I
39 appreciate those comments, Kevin, and all the projects.
40 But I have a huge agenda still to go. And so, any -- you
41 have one comment there, Nissa.

42
43 MS. PILCHER: I don't -- I do, but I can
44 let you finish up.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I, I think that
47 you're a thorough coverage of your presentation. Thank
48 you, Kevin. And no worries about you dropping off the
49 Council. We fully understand life in general and then
50 family life. Thank you.

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MR. WHITWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
This is Kevin.

MS. PILCHER: For the record, this is Nissa. Kevin, I was asked to say on the record or to provide on the record if you could think about or provide names or other individuals from your region that may be a good fit for the Council. I know we've had conversations off the record about it, but just so it's on the record. Thanks.

MR. WHITWORTH: Very good. Just off the record, I'll try my best.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thanks so much. So, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. Serena, are you on the phone?

MS. FITKA: Yes, I am.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead.

MS. FITKA: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and Council members, thank you for the opportunity for me to present to the Western Interior RAC. I am pleased to represent the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. My name is Serena Fitka. My Yup'ik name is Cuucitcuar. I'm originally from Saint Mary's. YRDFA, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association is a virtual office, so I have -- I currently reside in Valdez and my staff are scattered throughout the State. I'd like to provide some really brief updates on some of the activities that we're doing and the accomplishments we made this year. I'll first start with our harvest survey program. This project is currently being funded under the National Park Service. We used to get funded with FRMP. However, with the funding situation we had to scramble around for some funds for this project. We have ten communities along the Yukon River with locally hired surveyors starting in June, running through the last week of August, surveyors interviewed local households about their experience fishing that week. Households are kept anonymous and the same survey questions are asked every week. Interviews are sent to us at the beginning of the week. The data is collected and then analyzed and put into a report that is sent out to partners and management agencies. The purpose of this report is to show fish capture data caught by effort and create a space where individuals can leave comments for managers.

1 This year we have created a digital app for surveyors
2 to use and will be putting that forth for next season.
3 The Yukon River In-season Teleconference Program, this
4 year we got funding by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
5 Service. Because again, the delay in funding with FRMP
6 we did get funding for this last season. We were not
7 able to mail out our posters to all of the communities
8 on the Yukon and First Nations in Canada. So, we put out
9 a mass email to all the communities and partners and
10 people on our lists about our teleconference. Our
11 communication coordinator, Mike McIntyre, has been very
12 diligent in getting the word out to the communities. We
13 also switched our teleconference carrier, and it
14 provided better services for us. We were -- we have been
15 getting good attendance over many are participants
16 online were -- have not been providing community reports
17 or observations they are seeing on the river. And it was
18 a pretty quiet season. We have been scheduling special
19 reporting on various topics such as reports from Area
20 M, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, Fishery
21 Disaster updates, Gravel-to-Gravel initiatives and
22 anything that we hear on the teleconference, or we hear
23 at meetings on what the public's interested about or
24 questions that they have. So, we try to make sure that
25 we provide the information that's wanted. Let's see the
26 Yukon River Watershed Ecosystem Action Plan, in 2023 we
27 got funded by the Gravel-to-Gravel Initiative. A
28 steering committee was developed, and our next meeting
29 is coming up on October 22nd in Anchorage. And this --
30 the purpose of this steering committee is to create a
31 publicly accessible story map tool, a resource that
32 prioritizes assessing threats to salmon habitat and
33 identifying the highest priority restoration actions.
34 This tool will be open to all, fostering a sense of
35 community and shared responsibility for the Yukon
36 Watershed. With the overall commitment to assist Yukon
37 River Drainage Fisheries Association in creating a first
38 river eco -- the first Yukon River Ecosystem Action Plan.
39 During July and August of this year our environmental
40 specialist, James, and our field technician Matthew
41 conducted their first -- complete their first field data
42 collection. They went out and did some water quality
43 sampling and culvert surveys in the middle Yukon River
44 and Tanana River watersheds using the U.S. Fish and
45 Wildlife Service GIS database. They collected a total
46 of 64 culvert surveys and 50 water quality samples.
47 Fieldwork locations this season consisted of the area
48 surrounding Nulato, Road system, accessible areas around
49 Minto, Manley Hot Springs, Eureka, and off the Tanana
50 Road. The field crew identified multiple additional

1 culverts of potential concern for the Yukon Salmon Fish
2 Passage, which are not previously listed in the U.S.
3 Fish and Wildlife Service database. Culvert survey data
4 was entered into the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish
5 Barrier Hunter app, and water quality data was entered
6 into a new Survey 123 app designed by YR DFA contractor
7 instructor Michael Baker and associates.

8
9 I'll move on to the Yukon River
10 Clearinghouse Project. The purpose of this project is
11 to identify data gaps along the Yukon River, and act as
12 a clearinghouse for social and economical changes along
13 the Yukon River, using both physical biological data and
14 traditional ecological knowledge. We have hired a
15 traditional ecological knowledge technician, Jadon
16 Nashoanak, and he will be conducting interviews to learn
17 about engineering a historical timeline of observed
18 changes that may affect salmon on the Yukon River.
19 Additionally, we have a physical-biological science
20 technician, which is Matthew who's helping with the
21 culvert assessments, stream assessments, and collecting
22 water quality samples. With all of this data, we'll be
23 creating a platform that will be shared holistically.
24 We'll provide - we'll share a holistic overview of the
25 Yukon River historic timeline. This platform will allow
26 observers and agencies to submit their data to be added
27 to the Clearinghouse project.

28
29 Another project that we do have is
30 engaging fishers and chinook salmon research on the
31 Yukon River. This project is funded by the North Pacific
32 Research Board and began in January of 2023. We are
33 partnering with the communities of Alakanuk and Emmonak
34 to conduct interviews about the health of chinook as
35 they enter the river. We are gathering this information
36 to help inform our companion project, led by Dr Katie
37 Howard and Vanessa von Biela, which is seeking to
38 understand the drivers of chinook salmon decline, and
39 they theorize that one driver is what they are eating
40 in the Bering Sea, and which is strongly related to the
41 health when they enter the river. We have completed our
42 interviews in both Emmonak and Alakanuk and provided a
43 summary and feedback to Emmonak. We are working on
44 summarizing the interviews from Alakanuk to gather their
45 feedback. We also are working with the communities of
46 Saint Mary's and Huslia to monitor water quality
47 temperature or water temperature and develop a community
48 action plan if there is another heat event that causes
49 a salmon die off in the future. Those are just the major
50 projects we have. We've been advocating a lot -- we just

1 hired a new policy coordinator, Olivia Irwin, from
2 Nenana, and she's already out there at the North Pacific
3 Fisheries Management Council meeting that's already
4 happening in Anchorage this week. And we also have a
5 list of other things that we're going to be working on.
6 And our upcoming Board meeting that's happening in
7 Anchorage on October 21st at Hilton Downtown. We're
8 staffing up, the only position we have open right now
9 is a fisheries biologist position which we got funding
10 through EOS for three years, potentially four. So,
11 hopefully we'll find a fisheries biologist soon and they
12 can help us out with all our projects. Just some dates
13 to keep in mind. Like I said, the North Pacific Fisheries
14 Management Council is taking place right now. Our YRDFA
15 Board meeting is scheduled October 21st, along with our
16 steering committee on the 22nd, both in Anchorage. The
17 Yukon River Panel Joint Technical Committee and
18 Traditional Ecological Knowledge Committee will be
19 meeting on the Chinook Rebuilding Plan in Fairbanks,
20 November 18th and 19th which I sit on the Traditional
21 ecological knowledge committee. So, I'll be attending
22 that. Further down the road, Yukon River science
23 Symposium that we sponsor will be in person this year,
24 and we've selected February 12th as the set tentative
25 date. We did lock dates in for our annual YRDFA Board
26 meeting and our pre-season meeting that will be
27 happening in Fairbanks April 22nd through the 25th. And
28 that concludes my report. Sorry for talking fast, but
29 I'll take any questions.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks so much,
32 Serena. Those are a lot of projects. And of course,
33 YRDFA is doing a great job. And I'm really -- you're
34 really coming up to speed with staff. I'm really excited
35 to see the quality of your staff also. So, just like
36 TCC, it's like a -- it's almost like Star Wars
37 accelerating forward, so I appreciate that. Any
38 questions for Serena on the YRDFA for presentation?
39 Seeing none. You were very thorough. Appreciate that.
40 So, and so, we're moving on to our agenda -- further on
41 our agenda here. So, do we need to do this?

42
43 MS. PILCHER: That was actually just
44 informational. I just wanted to -- this is Nissa for the
45 record -- the NOAA part, it's a flyer that's in your
46 supplemental material. I thought you might want to read
47 up on it. It doesn't concern this region, but it might
48 be of interest to you since it deals with the petition
49 to list chinook salmon in the Gulf as endangered. And I
50 know I've heard that comment about the Yukon before, so

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1 it is just informational. We have no one to present on
2 it.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
5 that. So, we're going to go into agency reports now.
6 This would be U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Yukon River
7 Subsistence fishing update, Holly Carroll are you on
8 online there?

9

10 MS. CARROLL: Yep. Jack, this is Holly
11 Carroll with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm online
12 and I can give the report for both seasons of the Yukon
13 River, and I'll definitely give the report for the Fish
14 and Game managers as well. But they're online I believe.
15 And so, when I finish, I'll give them an opportunity to
16 add anything. But we did compile a pretty thorough report
17 that we sent to you guys. It may not have made it into
18 the online materials, but I presume Nissa, you could
19 confirm that they would have gotten our RAC summary
20 handout.

21

22 MS. PILCHER: Yes, it would have been on
23 your guys' desk when you came in yesterday so, it might
24 take some flipping to find it.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. Right here,
27 I found it.

28

29 MS. CARROLL: Okay, yeah. Great. So, I
30 can't assume that everyone's read that because we didn't
31 meet the deadline to get that in your packet. That
32 deadline is almost a month ago, and we were still in the
33 throes and still are, to some extent, of collecting our
34 in-season data. But I can give a brief overview of the
35 season. I know a lot of you live it and know it, but for
36 the benefit of those online. Our season as far as salmon
37 was you know, not super outside of what we predicted.
38 We knew that we would need salmon closures because of
39 our pretty poor projections. So, this year, we had a
40 total chinook salmon passed the sonar at Pilot Station
41 of around 65,000 chinooks. We had about the right amount
42 of Canadian fish of a run that small passed the Eagle
43 Sonar. So, we had about 24,000. When I say the right
44 amount, what I mean is that we did not see a large
45 discrepancy in that Canadian component that we counted
46 at Pilot. We saw about what we would expect at the
47 border, given that we had complete closures for chinook.
48 But 24,000 chinooks at the border is still a very
49 terrible escapement, considering that our new escapement
50 goal it's a rebuilding escapement goal of 71,000.

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1 chinook. So, as Jackie mentioned earlier in the meeting,
2 you know, these are scary low escapements. But it was
3 an improvement over the last couple of years for the
4 chinook.

5
6 For the summer chum. That's the one
7 bright spot in our returns. We had a drainage wide run
8 of about 760,000. That run did meet our drainage wide
9 goal. And we were able to allow some fishing on that.
10 However, because the summer chum overlap with the
11 chinook, we could not allow gillnet fish fishing for
12 those. And of course, that's the proper, efficient gear
13 to use. I know a lot of people were really hoping we
14 could give them gillnet opportunities for their chums,
15 but unfortunately, we couldn't afford to have any
16 incidental harvest of chinook. But we did allow the
17 selective gears, which are the dip nets, the manned fish
18 wheels and beach seines. And so, some people in the
19 lower river really were able to get some summer chum put
20 away, and we're pretty grateful for that. But again, we
21 came nowhere near meeting anyone's subsistence needs for
22 salmon, even when we were able to allow some of those
23 summer chum. The fall season was also not great. Our
24 fall chum run ended up around 200,000 fall chum, that
25 that's not large enough to meet the drainage wide
26 escapement goal. The Canadian component of that run
27 continues to be weak. It should be about a quarter of
28 the run should be Canadian. And what we saw was about
29 15%. And so, we've only projected to see about 12,000
30 fall Chum at the border. Again, that is an abysmal
31 escapement, as Jack had mentioned earlier. That run
32 should be a minimum of 70,000. So, this is a pretty
33 bleak state of affairs that our that our Canadian fall
34 chum are not recovering as much. The drainage wide fall
35 chum run is getting a little closer to meeting drainage
36 wide goals, but this year was pretty weak. We are seeing
37 some weakness in the age classes that may indicate some
38 poor survival of even previous good spawning returns.
39 It's the third lowest run size we've had for fall chum.
40 The coho aren't faring a ton better. We have a projected
41 run size of about 85,000, and that's about half the run
42 size it should be. Should be closer to 140,000. So, as
43 many of you know, we've had closures in place nearly all
44 season for all species except for the summer chum and a
45 lot of those closures are actually still in effect. They
46 will all be lifted, you know, based on the migration of
47 the fall chum. We want to make sure that we don't lift
48 any of those closures until the fall chum have completely
49 moved through some areas, and in some areas fall chum
50 our main stem spawners are -- they do continue to spawn,

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1 you know, even as the water is freezing up. So, there
2 are some closures that will stay in place through
3 December but most folks on the main stem will see a lot
4 of their closures lifting in the month of October, based
5 on migration. We took Federal action all season So, that
6 meant that when we did go fishing for the summer chum,
7 that was limited to federally qualified users. And yeah,
8 we just -- we did do something new this year. It was
9 because the runs are so poor we've been really torn. We
10 want to provide liberal opportunity for fishing the non-
11 standard and the whitefish and other species during the
12 summer season so that people can put some food away, and
13 some people have explained that they're using maybe
14 sheefish or other whitefish to still get their kids in
15 camp and show some traditional storing techniques and
16 have that time and tradition. And so, we really are
17 trying to provide liberal opportunity with that. And so,
18 in previous seasons we've allowed four-inch gear all
19 season long, 24/7. We do limit it to 60ft so that it's
20 very close to shore and better at targeting those
21 resident species. But this year, we added during -- the
22 king season -- we added a little two-week closure in
23 each area based on when the height of the king run would
24 be there, where we made all folks pull out their four-
25 inch nets. We think that might have helped reduce the
26 incidental harvest of chinook salmon. And then for fall
27 season, we didn't really feel the need to do that too
28 much until kind of partway through. And then we did end
29 up reducing the four-inch gear to just sort of a weekend
30 fishing schedule.

31
32 We figured if we make most fish, go and
33 check those nets and pull them out during, you know,
34 Monday to Thursday, they could fish on the weekends. And
35 we were probably going to reduce any incidental harvest
36 of fall chum and coho doing that. So, we're trying to
37 split the difference between providing opportunity for
38 people to get those non-salmon, which might be the only
39 fish kind of ticking some families over when it comes
40 to food security. But then we're also trying to kind of
41 institute these new conservation measures. And I will
42 say that we held a public hearing. I, as a Federal
43 Manager, when I take temporary special actions, I need
44 to offer a public hearing, and we had excellent
45 discussion during that. And quite honestly, we're
46 getting a lot of people, particularly from the upper
47 river areas, wanting us to have the four-inch closures
48 in place for longer. Maybe most of the season to protect
49 the incidental harvest of the salmon that we need to
50 protect. So, I think that's going to come up in future

1 meetings. And I'm certainly going to ask you guys, as
2 RAC members, to give us your advice on this matter.
3 There are some fishermen in the lower river that
4 absolutely, you know, rely on that four-inch. And there
5 are some people who are saying, take it all away, make
6 it completely closed, make it all or nothing. Because
7 it's easier for fishermen to know and then that way no
8 one is targeting those salmon. So, that's quite a request
9 to actually ask us to take that opportunity away. And I
10 think we're going to be really at odds for how to go
11 about that. So, keep that in mind and when you go to the
12 preseason planning meetings or when you have your, you
13 know, comments you know, consider those things and
14 consider giving your State and your Federal Manager some
15 feedback on those things, because that's the stuff we'll
16 be asking for. I also wanted to touch a little bit on
17 some research stuff. You know, I mentioned that the
18 summer chum run did -- met the drainage wide goal. And
19 while we're really happy about that, it's not to say
20 that there aren't some concerns about that run. We have
21 not been meeting the Anvik escapement goal, nor the
22 Andreafsky escapement goal for chum. And there's a lot
23 of people that have concerns about that as well. Well,
24 you know, how can you manage to do this drainage wide
25 goal when you're failing to meet these small stock goals?
26 And that's also going to be a question that's going to
27 come up going forward. We do think that the chum are
28 redistributing a bit in the drainage, but unfortunately,
29 we only have a few assessment projects and so we don't
30 know where they go. And so, us at Fish and Wildlife
31 Service we're trying to partner and do some explorations
32 for summer chum specifically. And one of the things that
33 we want to look into is getting a better estimate of
34 passage into the Koyukuk Drainage, which is a hugely
35 important drainage for the chum salmon. We used to have
36 a weir at Gisasa, Tanana Chiefs runs a weir at Henshaw
37 and is going to take over the Gisasa Weir if they are
38 funded by OSM. But we've been having problems with weirs
39 in that in our current climate situation, these rivers
40 are becoming incredibly flash floody [sic] or dealing
41 with floods so often that these data sets, getting these
42 weirs in and getting these escapement counts aren't
43 always effective. And we aren't even getting sometimes
44 50% -- 50% of the years are we getting data from those
45 systems. And so, one thing that we at Fish and Wildlife
46 Service would like to explore is could we use a sonar
47 in the Koyukuk Drainage? Pretty low in the drainage
48 because we'd want to see how many salmon are passing in
49 there. And so, we might look at doing some sonar
50 feasibility in the area. My assessment biologist, Shane

1 Ransbury has been working with some of the Refuge staff
2 from Galena, and we might look at just doing some
3 bathymetric surveys in that area. We've got plans to
4 meet with Native corporation landholders to see if it
5 would be okay if we set some sonar in the water this
6 coming season, just to kind of explore some options.

7
8 Related to that, the Andrafsky Weir
9 is a project we've run for decades, and we are really
10 having a hard time running it successfully because of
11 the flooding issue. Many years we do not get the weir
12 in time, we don't get the weir installed in time to
13 estimate passage. And it's a very expensive project and
14 has always relied on OSM funding, which is now sort of
15 more of a questionable source of money as far as you
16 know, there's so many good projects going into it, and
17 it may not be worth us competing with some of those
18 other projects if we can't successfully get counts
19 there. So, next season, the 2025, that's going to be our
20 last year at Andrafsky, for now, we plan to decommission
21 the weir site. And, you know, we're -- our hope there
22 is that we could then change our focus and still answer
23 some of these really important questions about where
24 chum are going or monitoring other really important
25 chum streams. But one of the other things we're being
26 responsive to is that, you know, we have had various
27 elders at meetings, Benedict Jones most recently was at
28 the YRFA meeting, and many people have expressed
29 concerns about having weirs that cross these rivers when
30 we have such low run abundance. Concerns about handling
31 the fish are impeding their migrations. And you know,
32 we hear those concerns loud and clear.

33
34 And there's just a lot of reasons to
35 pursue other research. Not to say that sonar is non-
36 invasive. It becomes invasive when you need a fishing
37 program associated with sonar. But that part of any sonar
38 feasibility would be a few years out. So, those are some
39 of the kind of research changes we're kind of dealing
40 with and looking at, on another research note, we just
41 completed our third year, and it's a very collaborative
42 we, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Fish and Game, many other
43 University partners have been studying ichthyophonus on
44 the Yukon. We've been taking samples at three sites a
45 lower river site at Pilot Station, site at Rapids and
46 then a site at Fort Yukon. We've been trying to do a lot
47 of things with that information that tell us about
48 chinook health. But one of the main goals of that is to
49 see if enroute mortality is occurring. And then if it
50 is, what can we -- what is actionable information that

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1 we can use about that for management. So, for instance,
2 you know, when we're managing a run and there's lots of
3 fish, we usually just say okay what is the escapement
4 goal? What is the harvest? Is there enough fish to go
5 harvest? And we have not often accounted for mortality
6 in that math, you know, do we think 10% are dying, do
7 we think 20% are dying? That's not usually part of the
8 math and it may need to become part of the management
9 equation in future. And we're hoping that this study
10 will help lend some, you know, concrete information
11 about how we should be accounting for any loss that
12 might be occurring for ichthyophonus. So, that that data
13 collection so, the collecting of the samples of fish
14 that ended this season, it will take us about an entire
15 calendar year to analyze the research, coordinate across
16 all our partners, and start to publish those results so
17 people will have to hang tight. We're probably not going
18 to have updates this winter, but we really hope to be
19 able to do some really good job at going back into
20 communities, going back to all of you, and kind of
21 explaining what we've learned and how we should change
22 things going forward, and hopefully even plan more
23 community-based monitoring program for this disease. I
24 guess that's kind of the bulk of the management and
25 research stuff that I wanted to bring. I know you guys
26 still have a big agenda ahead of you, so I guess I wanted
27 to just see if any of the Fish and Game managers wanted
28 to add anything that I might have forgot. I know they're
29 doing lots of great research, including a chinook radio
30 telemetry project. All kinds of really good research
31 going on, but I want to kick it over to you guys to see
32 if there's anything you want to add before we take any
33 questions.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. Go ahead,
36 Deena.

37
38 MS. JALLEN: Oh yeah. Thanks, Holly.
39 Thanks, Jack. Can you hear me okay?

40
41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Five by five. Go
42 ahead.

43
44 MS. JALLEN: Thanks. Yeah, I don't have
45 a whole lot to add at this time. We're still working on
46 putting together our summer season summary. That will
47 be published hopefully a little bit later this month.
48 Thankfully, Serena already mentioned most of the big
49 meetings that are coming up this season. We will be
50 presenting more of the results from the season. Holly

1 gave an excellent summary of the assessment and the run
2 sizes we had this year. The chinook salmon radio tagging
3 project did operate out of Emmonak and they had pretty
4 good success. I think they got last year they only got
5 about 50 kings, and then this year they got closer to,
6 I think, 180 or 200 kings tagged and had really good
7 success with seeing where those tags went up throughout
8 the drainage. So, I'm sure there'll be more
9 presentations about that later on in the season,
10 particularly to JTC and to the panel once all those all
11 the information from all the towers comes back in. Some
12 of the flights were conducted pretty recently. So,
13 that's still kind of a little bit ongoing research. But
14 we did have pretty good success getting more kings and
15 tagging them in Emmonak. It helped that the run this
16 year was a little bit bigger, and also fishing conditions
17 were better because we didn't have a lot of the really
18 super high water that was kind of impacting us more last
19 year. But yeah, with that, I don't have a whole lot more
20 to add for summer season. Thanks, Holly, for a very
21 comprehensive report. And I'll turn it over to Christy
22 because I know she has some more pertinent and more
23 timely fall season information to share.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thanks a lot.
26 Go ahead, Christie.

27
28 MS. GLEASON: Good afternoon, Jack. Can
29 you hear me?

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Five by five.

32
33 MS. GLEASON: Okay, great. Hi everyone,
34 I'm Christie Gleason. I'm the Yukon area fall season
35 manager with Alaska Department of Fish and Game here in
36 Fairbanks. And I just want to let you guys know that
37 I've been listening to your comments and your concerns
38 regarding Yukon River salmon yesterday and today, and
39 we've been listening to your concerns for the past five
40 years during the Yukon salmon decline and we've been
41 right here with you. I wish that we could open up salmon
42 fishing for subsistence and get people back at Fish Camp,
43 but unfortunately, the runs are too low. And Holly gave
44 a really good overview of where we are with fall chum
45 and coho. I just want to let folks know that the
46 subsistence fishing closures are beginning to relax and
47 so, District 2 reopened this morning with 7.5in or
48 smaller mesh gillnets. District 3 is going to be up in
49 a couple of days, and then we're moving that relaxation
50 up-river. And something on the State side, I want to let

1 Yukon fishermen know there's an out of cycle State
2 proposal, ACR #1, that was put forward by a fisherman.
3 And that request to open up larger mesh gillnets for
4 subsistence fishing in non-flowing waters for non-salmon
5 throughout the Yukon River drainage. And if you have
6 interest reading this proposal, you can find it on the
7 ADF&G website. Nissa is really good at navigating
8 because she used to do that job. And you can submit
9 public comments on this proposal October 15th online.
10 And this proposal is going to be discussed at the Board
11 of Fish work session here at the end of October.
12

13 And the other thing I wanted to let you
14 guys know, you guys had questions about Area M harvest
15 and genetics data. And while Deena and I can't answer
16 questions regarding that fishery because it's outside
17 the Yukon, I can give you the phone number for the two
18 people to call. So, for the genetic data, you can get
19 ahold of Bill Templin. And his phone number is (907)
20 267-2234. And then Matt Keys is the Fishery manager for
21 Area M. And he gave the updates this summer on the
22 teleconference. And his phone number is (907) 486-1874.
23 And so that's all I have for today. I'll be standing by
24 if you guys have any questions.
25

26 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
27 all that -- all those reports. That was all very
28 pertinent information. My main question is -- was the
29 overall size of the fish -- each species is declining
30 in size, was there a was there a noticeable decline in
31 chinook, summer chum and fall chum, coho almon this year
32 versus last year? And compared to historical levels, and
33 as a calculation of egg capacity being made as you would
34 with ichthyophonous, is there a indice to being developed
35 to calculate the actual spawning capacity of the of the
36 escapements that we're making? We're getting more
37 chinook across the border, but are we actually losing
38 in size? That's the that would be my question for the
39 whole presentation.
40

41 MS. CARROLL: I can take a stab at that,
42 Jack. This is Holly Carroll with U.S. Fish and Wildlife
43 Service again. The short answer is yes. A lot of our
44 fish were smaller. Especially we're dealing that with
45 that with the chums. I think we're still seeing pretty
46 poor nutrition in the ocean and so, they're coming back
47 smaller. We also -- the issue that you're talking about,
48 the border is definitely true in the sense that when we
49 see less five- and six-year-olds, for instance, you
50 know, we're not getting as many females. And so, yes,

1 you're definitely not getting as many eggs as you used
2 to, and our fish are smaller. And that is one of the
3 reasons, that's one of the biological sort-of rationale
4 that went into raising the border goal. I know a lot of
5 people are frustrated with the process for how that goal
6 was come to, you know, tribes weren't involved in
7 consultation with that, the goal was increased, and not
8 a lot has been discussed about why that goal was
9 increased. But for myself, one of the reasons I'm glad
10 it was increased is that exactly what you're addressing,
11 Jack. For many years, we've known that the number of
12 fish we're putting at the border, even when we sometimes
13 meet the goal, is not equivalent to the kind of quality
14 of fish we would have seen a decade, or even 20 years
15 ago.

16
17 So, by having more fish, in theory,
18 you're going to increase the eggs in gravel. Of course
19 you have to achieve those goals. But yeah, I - if you're
20 also asking are we constantly creating an egg index.
21 That's definitely not happening because you do have to
22 kill fish to do that. But I will say that part of the
23 ichthyophonous study, and I believe I'll let Fish and
24 Game hop in if they can. But one of the studies is
25 looking -- I believe it's Dr. Howard with Fish and Game.
26 We've been sending her eggs from the ichthyophonous
27 study. And some folks are working on egg health, timing
28 and stuff like that, but we haven't been necessarily
29 measuring egg densities in our current runs to try to
30 calculate the sort of -- the fecundity, because we know
31 it's poor. So, that's the that's the shorter answer
32 there. I guess I would stand down to let any Fish and
33 Game staff add, if we've got some other egg studies
34 going on that I maybe forgot about.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Yeah, that
37 answered my primary question. Does ADF&G have any
38 additional information on that?

39
40 MS. GLEASON: Hi Jack, this is Christie.
41 Just quickly on the fall chum and the coho, I looked at
42 the data for this year. And both the fall chum and the
43 coho adults returning to the Yukon were half an inch
44 smaller than historical average. So, that is a little
45 better than what we saw a couple years ago, when in 2020
46 and 2021, when we first started to see the salmon
47 decline, those fish were coming back as adults, about
48 an inch and a quarter smaller for body length. So, that's
49 all I have.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, I appreciate
2 that. That's good information, thank you. So, I
3 appreciate this report. This is a Fisheries oriented
4 meeting. So, that I wanted to be thorough on that aspect.
5 And so, I appreciate all of the -- I'm very satisfied
6 with all you're doing to try to get these runs to return,
7 your contemplation of the subsistence needs. And so, I
8 -- you're stuck on the -- you're stuck against the wall
9 there. So, I appreciate both State and Federal
10 management on the Yukon River. That's just my
11 perspective as a Council member. So, I know that's hard
12 on the subsistence users, but we're never going to get
13 these fish back if we don't have a fish on the on the
14 spawning grounds, they will never come back then. So,
15 appreciate that. I did ask for -- basically I wanted to
16 ask Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Game Northeast
17 Region, Jordan. Did they get a Central Arctic Caribou
18 Herd -- I had combined that in the agenda. Did they get
19 a survey for the Central Arctic Herd? That's basically
20 what I wanted to know. And a real and a real quick answer
21 if you're there, Jordan.

22
23 MS. PRUSZENSKI: Hello, Mr. Chairman. And
24 just for the record, this is Jordan Pruszenski area
25 assistant area biologist for the Northeast. This year
26 we did not get a photo census for the Central Arctic
27 Caribou Herd. Yeah, we went up multiple times to just
28 check to see if that herd really grouped up, and they
29 just never really got super grouped up. So, yeah. So,
30 we'll try again next year. Really quick, I can just let
31 you know that the partition rates, survival rates are
32 all still indicating that that herd is increasing. And
33 so, we still feel confident that 35,000 population
34 estimate that we got in 2022 is still very accurate. So,
35 yeah, yeah, happy to answer any other questions I also
36 have. I know you guys are running out of time, but I do
37 have a little report on how just an update on how the
38 harvest was going, I've heard a lot of concerns.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, briefly on the
41 on the harvest. I was -- I saw a lot, a lot of
42 participation this year. So, go ahead real quick on that
43 one.

44
45 MS. PRUSZENSKI: Yep, yeah. So, just to
46 give you a breakdown of what the harvest has been so far
47 just know that this is preliminary. The harvest is still
48 -- the season is still open for residents until April.
49 But so far, there have been 794 caribou harvested. And
50 of that, there were 97 caribou -- 97 cow caribou that

1 were harvested. So, that equates to less than a 2%
2 harvest overall and a less and a 0.3% harvest of cows.
3 Now we feel that this caribou herd we'd actually like
4 to see this caribou herd passed up to a 4% overall, and
5 we feel that the population wouldn't be impacted by up
6 to 1% harvest of cows. So, we feel pretty good about
7 that harvest and feel that that's allowing these
8 Alaskans, Alaskan residents and others to go and use
9 this caribou herd, especially during this time where
10 other herds aren't doing as well. Just to give you a
11 number breakdown of the number of participants in these
12 hunts. As of right now, there were 548 non-residents who
13 participated, and that's up a little from the long-term
14 average of 403. And then as of right now, sorry, the
15 non-residents, that number is solid, that season's over.
16 But as far as residents go, as of now, there have been
17 246 Alaska residents who have participated. And over the
18 season, we expect that to keep -- we expect more Alaskan
19 residents to go up, but it seems to be right on track
20 to hit the average of about 600 participants and overall
21 over the sort of long term average for hunter
22 participation. It's about 1,000 hunters per year, go up
23 and use the Central Arctic Caribou Herd. And we feel
24 like that seems to be about where it's on track. My boss
25 and I did drive up the Road multiple times this winter.
26 I actually drove up the Road four times this winter, and
27 I was able actually to see some sheep from the Road. So,
28 that kind of harkens back to an earlier concern. So,
29 that is kind of exciting to report. But we did go
30 specifically to talk to Central Arctic Herd caribou
31 hunters just to see how it's going, why people were up
32 there. And we did hear a lot from Alaskan residents who
33 we went up that said they would have normally hunt the
34 Nelchina or 40-mile, but because of those populations
35 not doing well and restrictions on the on-seasons that
36 they decided to give driving up the Road a try. So, it
37 did allow for Alaskans to use that harvestable surplus.
38 Yeah, thank you. And happy to answer any other questions.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, I'll just --
41 well, I'm going to comment the number of hunters that
42 actually reported are actually finished hunting. That's
43 the 246 harvest for resident hunters and -- that
44 participant. But there were actually hundreds and
45 hundreds, thousands of hunters that drove up during
46 periods when the caribou came in two main bursts. And
47 you got telemetry on that, it came in two pushes, they
48 got beat back both times. So, many hunters that went
49 there, they're not done hunting. They may intend to come
50 in the springtime. What I would like you to do is what

1 I would like to see is that all of the cow caribou need
2 an age composition. What hunters will do will kill the
3 largest cows that they encounter, whether because they
4 have the largest antlers. Those are the highest
5 fecundity cows. So, this herd has climbed to where it's
6 at right now because of cow harvest restrictions that
7 were on from 2016 to July 1 of 2024. You should be taking
8 require -- requesting you know, the front jaw for from
9 the from these cow caribou. And what's going to happen
10 this spring is there's going to be a lot of participants
11 coming for the for the march through late April and they
12 will kill -- they will almost kill majority of the
13 harvest is going to be cows because those have antlers
14 and hunters will kill caribou with antlers. I don't care
15 what the perception is, they will kill caribou, and they
16 kill the largest antlered caribou because they do have
17 hard antlers. And pregnant cows are going to have antlers
18 all the way to the end of the season and the April 30th.

19
20 So, I would like to see the Department
21 of Fish and Game start thinking about -- this is not
22 just going to be a little bit of cow harvest, and that's
23 all over now. No, this is going to be the main on --
24 this is going to be the main event. Is this with dog
25 teams and skiing out and so forth. And they're going to
26 kill larger cow caribou. And so, the harvest rates could
27 easily exceed your 1% harvest rate. And I think you
28 vastly underestimate how many hunters, the troopers have
29 -- probably if they had a trooper province -- the
30 presence there would have documented we had 2,000
31 hunters and in 2000 and 2001 crossed the Yukon River
32 bridge when we had a checkpoint. If you had a checkpoint
33 at Coldfoot and if you -- they ran Coldfoot out of fuel.
34 There was so many vehicles going up there, they literally
35 ran them out of fuel multiple times. They couldn't keep
36 up with the with the number of hunters going up the
37 Road. So, you need to talk to what happened in Coldfoot
38 there. You may have hit blanks when there -- but internet
39 now they will respond as soon as the caribou showed up.
40 Boom, they show up there again. So, the main cow harvest
41 is going to occur this spring. That's what's going to
42 happen. I think you should actually request that the
43 public submit jaws so that you know what you're actually
44 -- they're going to take our largest fecundity cows. So,
45 that's that would be my comment. But I.....

46
47 MS. PRUSZEKNSI: Absolutely, absolutely.
48 Oh, and I appreciate that. I really actually, I really
49 appreciate your comments because Mark Nelson, the area
50 biologist, and I have actually been drafting a citizen

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1 science, trying to get that that exact type of
2 information. Understand age, ask people how what are the
3 body conditions looking like? Try to get that
4 information. So, really appreciate that support for
5 that. So, I really appreciate that. And then yeah, we'll
6 definitely be continuing to look. And we closely monitor
7 the cow harvest and we're prepared to close that with
8 an EO if that is necessary. But as of right now we feel
9 like this this the hunt is so far on track as far as
10 that goes. But definitely appreciate your comments and
11 we'll definitely be monitoring. So, thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The Caribou
14 presence was.....

15
16 (Simultaneous speech)

17
18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Darell, go ahead.

19
20 MR. VENT: Yeah, I just wanted to get
21 some numbers. She was talking about the number of cows
22 shot. How many bulls were shot during that time? Were
23 there percentage numbers that we could get from that?

24
25 MS. PRUSZENSKI: Yeah, yeah. The number
26 of bulls that were harvested were about 700. Oh, wait,
27 did I just say that right? Just went up. Oh, nope. I'm
28 sorry, I just did the wrong math. Let's see. 548 minus
29 97, there we go 451. There we go, quick math.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, yes, it was --
32 so, there was significant bull harvest. Most of that
33 is.....

34
35 MS. PRUSZENSKI: Yeah and that's.....

36
37 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF:most of that
38 is the large bull component, is because they killed the
39 largest antlered bulls.

40
41 (Simultaneous speech)

42
43 MS. PRUSZENSKI: That's right around 2%.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We can't spend a
46 lot of time on this, I just wanted those preliminary
47 numbers. We are going to be talking about this, this
48 issue again in February. So, I'd appreciate further
49 discussion on this in February. And so, we'll have -- I
50 do feel that you could easily.....

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(Simultaneous speech)

.....easily exceed the cow capacity of this population. So, I'm concerned about that aspect. It's the cow harvest is what I'm super concerned about. So, and the incidental harvest mortality factor, there's no calculation of incidental harvest mortality factor on aggregating species that that typically live in open terrain. So, a lot of hunters will walk off or go out with dog teams this spring. There's going to be large numbers of hunters because they didn't get opportunity in the fall hunt. They will use the snow to access this herd further. So, depends on where the herd goes. Yeah so, right now the herd is afraid of the Road. So, that's what's happened because of cow harvest during migration. So, okay. We've covered that. I appreciate that information, Jordan. We need to move on. So, we're moving down to Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge, and we have Clayton here -- is here for them. And you're going to give us -- I have your, your update, but go right ahead. And so that is in our -- is that in our packet here also?

MR. MERRILL: It should be in your packet, page 111.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Page 111. Oh yeah, there it is.

MS. PILCHER: In the comb bound book.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, there it is. Go ahead, Clayton.

MR. MERRILL: Thank you, Chair -- Mr. Chair, Council members. In the interest of time, I suggest.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'd like you to introduce yourself for the record.

MR. MERRILL: Yeah, Clayton Merrill, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic Kanuti and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges. In the interests of time, I suggest that I don't re summarize everything that's available in the book and instead use this time to introduce myself formally to the Council. Yes, my name is Clayton Merrill. I'm the new Subsistence coordinator for Arctic Kanuti and Yukon

1 Flats National Wildlife Refuges. I hope to work closely
2 with this Council as well as the EIRAC and North Slope
3 RAC in the future. This is Vince Mathews' old position,
4 if you were familiar with him. I'm from rural Maine
5 originally. I grew up as a hunter, a fisherman and a
6 trapper. I've -- during my life, I've been a biologist,
7 a marine, a truck driver. I've done a lot of things. I'm
8 very honored to be here and to try and help with
9 coordinating subsistence and working as a direct contact
10 between these Councils and the refuges that I represent.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I appreciate your
13 background and bat biologists and a lot of other stuff.
14 So, this this guy is a real asset to the U.S. Fish and
15 Wildlife and this, this program in general. And so, I'm
16 really happy that you're onboard with -- and going to
17 be interacting with this Council. And Vince was our
18 Coordinator for this Council, he was also in your
19 previous -- your predecessor to your position. I read
20 through, I looked through this and I encourage the
21 Council to look through the Kanuti's report here. One
22 of the issues that I've been talking about is that the
23 pollinating insect, you know, you're doing a lot of great
24 projects, but the pollinating insect reduction is
25 graphic as to what I've been seeing, and this is
26 affecting a lot of other species. It's affecting the
27 number of insects, it's affecting the bird species,
28 especially because they didn't have -- and the fish
29 species, they rely on these arthropods for food, for
30 protein sources. So, I'm really happy to see that. I
31 would like to see this continue with Koyukuk-Nowitna. I
32 would like to see that same kind of -- because I'm
33 getting really concerned about this insect thing. I have
34 no idea why it's happening, but thanks for your
35 introduction and all the good work that Kanuti is doing.
36 I want to do -- so Arctic Refuge any information you can
37 convey from them on sheep inventories and so forth for
38 our next meeting. I would appreciate that.

39
40 MR. MERRILL: Yes, if -- is Tim Knudson,
41 did he make it back online? If not, I have a statement
42 from them.

43
44 MS. PILCHER: Let's take a look.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tim Knudson, are
47 you there?

48
49 MR. MERRILL: Alright so, earlier today,
50 Tim Knudson sent this to me. He's been on the call since

1 yesterday, and he had other conflicting issues just
2 recently. But he did intend to be here. So, I'm going
3 to.....

4
5 MR. KNUDSON: I am here. Sorry, I had a
6 trouble unmuting, but, Clayton, you go ahead and read
7 the statement, and I'm here if there are any questions.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead,
10 Clayton.

11
12 MR. MERRILL: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair
13 and Council members for allowing me to speak. Conducting
14 a sheep survey was identified by Arctic Refuge
15 management as the highest priority biological survey for
16 the Arctic Refuge in 2024, following the conclusion of
17 the 2023 sheep survey. In early August, Arctic Refuge
18 staff began internal discussions on how to accomplish
19 the survey in 2024. The first official meeting involving
20 the Refuge supervisory biologist, mammal biologist and
21 logistics coordinator took place in early October. A
22 contracting request for two aircrafts to conduct the
23 survey was submitted on October 11th. Throughout the
24 remainder of the year, we communicated with the DOI
25 Aviation Contracting Office, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
26 Service Regional Aviation Office and the NPS
27 to emphasize the importance of the survey and the need for
28 aviation resources. From January to March, a Refuge
29 biologist worked with the DOI Aviation Contracting
30 Office to identify vendors for the Sheep survey, but
31 efforts to secure a vendor were unsuccessful. By the end
32 of March, we shifted our focus to finding DOI pilots to
33 conduct the survey. Two pilots volunteered, and the
34 survey was scheduled for late July in the Western Arctic
35 Survey Area.

36
37 However, both pilots withdrew in early
38 June. In the following month, Arctic biologists
39 contacted vendors again to see if they could accommodate
40 the survey, but these efforts did not yield results. In
41 mid-July, we adjusted our approach from the NPS survey
42 protocol to a minimum count survey in big Game Units 9
43 and 10. We reached out to DOI pilots once more, and one
44 pilot volunteered for a survey scheduled in early
45 August. Unfortunately, this effort was cancelled due to
46 poor weather conditions. I share these details to
47 highlight the ongoing efforts by Arctic Refuge staff to
48 conduct sheep surveys. We recognize that this remains a
49 challenge and are committed to finding a solution to
50 ensure annual sheep surveys are completed. We intend to

1 collaborate with our interagency partners to establish
2 a successful approach for conducting sheep surveys in
3 the Brooks Range in 2025 and beyond. I welcome any
4 questions through the Chair. I also wanted to mention,
5 Nissa has my -- several of my business cards. She will
6 distribute those to the Council members. Perfect. So,
7 feel free to reach out to myself for Tim.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: My comment on that.
10 We have a sheep closure for Unit 26B west of the
11 Sagavanirktok and the Unit 24A, it's imperative that we
12 get this composition data. That was the primary thrust
13 of this Council was to get that composition data, which
14 was a ground survey that was done from 1986 to 2012 from
15 the Road down the Atigun Gorge. And it has -- and I want
16 -- and I talked to the Refuge Manager about this this
17 spring. The continuity of that that was done in June
18 when sheep are on this, on the south facing slopes eating
19 wildflowers and stuff, you won't run into this pilot
20 problem. People didn't build it and want to walk it.
21 Well, somebody can walk it, you can walk it. You walk
22 that with a spotting scope and the composition survey
23 was for quarter curl, half curl, 5/8 curl, three quarter
24 curl, 7/8 and full curl. And the long-term data set
25 showed that any sheep that got to three quarter curl
26 started disappearing throughout that entire data set.
27 So, review the Western Interior Regional Advisory
28 Council Sheep Management Strategy. Look at that at that,
29 have that clarified, that -- I embedded that in the
30 document. And we need to duplicate that that survey.
31 That's imperative to our understanding of the population
32 and the structure that we have, the age class structure,
33 the ram component tells you what the age class structure
34 is. And the Department of Fish and Game doesn't want to
35 think about it, because they don't want to know that
36 there's so many missing cohorts in the population, but
37 there are many missing cohorts in the population.

38

39 So, this whole air survey thing, this
40 is what the problem is. We've got an air -- but you got
41 staff that are physically fit and you can I could walk
42 that. I'm 67 years old. I'll walk the survey with you,
43 and I will tell you what you're looking at. But somehow
44 this has to happen because we our closure only goes to
45 2026. We need to have this data set. And I've been
46 beating and beating on Arctic for two years for this
47 data set. This Council has customary and traditional use
48 of dall sheep and Unit 26B. And so, this is -- this has
49 to happen. And so, if it can't happen with aircraft,
50 rewind the tape, the data set is in June. Once sheep

1 once the once the ground cover starts to open up and it
2 starts to get hot, the sheep move into high elevation,
3 and they disperse out. You have a long-term data set and
4 we have to duplicate that. And the best way to do it was
5 how it was done for many years, 1986 to 2012 is a long
6 period data set, as it was done by ground survey, by
7 walking. I remember when they did it. So, that would be
8 my comment. And that's as far as I'm going to go with
9 that. So, thanks so much for Artic's participation. Go
10 ahead there, Robert.

11
12 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
13 Clayton, I'm looking at page 112.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Of the Kanuti
16 Update.

17
18 MR. MERRILL: Right under the picture of
19 me.

20
21 MR. WALKER: I'd like to thank you for
22 your report, which, you know, I know it's always nice
23 to hear that we have first-hand reports to the Board,
24 because it does make a difference to when we have to do
25 something. And getting down into the moose right here.
26 You stated that there was 783 to 1,100 moose within the
27 Kanitu Wildlife Refuge, and my curiosity was with the
28 abundance of moose like that. How many wolf packs did
29 you have or know of inside the Kanitu Refuge?

30
31 MR. MERRILL: That information, I don't
32 know off the top of my head. Is a Chris Harwood on the
33 call by any chance? The biologist for Kanuti.

34
35 MR. WALKER: Well, yeah. Just to be fair,
36 I -- and 21E where I reside, I always make sure I ask
37 the people, ADF&G and the Department of Fish and Game,
38 the biologist, how many wolf packs do we have? Just out
39 of curiosity and, you know, like they estimate about 120
40 and 140 wolves in that area with, you know, our high
41 numbers of moose that do reside there. So, I'll just
42 kind of curious if you, your department or somebody else
43 did an aerial survey of this for predators.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'll answer that
46 question. I've been on this Council -- Kanuti used to
47 do track inventories, wolf pack track inventories, but
48 they haven't done those. The Department of Fish and Game
49 did a wolf control project near the Kanuti Refuge is
50 about six, five, six, seven years ago, they did an

1 analysis of the effects of the moose population with the
2 controlled use or the Kanuti area as their control. And
3 so, the analysis that Glenn Stout showed us was that the
4 wolf population was suppressed where that was treatment
5 was applied, but the wolf population responded back to
6 what it had been previously. So, there was -- there is
7 no, you know, people thought that there was a increase
8 in moose population locally, but that's a temporary
9 thing. My experience, I trap wolves in that country.
10 Wolf population has cannibalized itself down because the
11 population of moose has fallen significantly in 2018-
12 19, 19-20. We only had the last survey that the data
13 showed that, I think it was 21, survey data was three
14 yearly bulls per 100 cows, meaning that there's only six
15 yearlings recruiting into the population. And that's a
16 bad number. That's a real low number. So, the moose
17 population is actually in retraction still, and it's
18 starting to stabilize. But the wolf numbers will
19 cannibalize themselves. And I lost -- I saw several packs
20 that were either eliminated by other wolves or are they
21 reduced -- their productivity goes way down. I saw a
22 pairs [sic] -- packs that had five yearlings with them
23 only have one yearling with them, they had real low
24 recruitments. We have low hare population. Wolf numbers,
25 your answer to your question is wolf numbers have
26 actually retracted there because of the population of
27 moose has gone down and the wolf population has actually
28 cannibalized itself back down again. It's not that
29 they're not -- they're basically still at a significant
30 impact on the moose population, but there are less wolves
31 than there probably were when they when they were doing
32 wolf control before the deep snow years. So, that's they
33 used to do these track surveys, I don't know if Kanuti
34 has that on the -- in the future are going to be doing
35 those. But it would be probably behoove [sic] the Refuge
36 to actually fly a wolf track survey. They would hire up,
37 they don't have to be -- they would hire an experienced
38 pilot that was used to tracking wolves. And they would
39 get them to fly over several years and or several days
40 and come up with the a number of wolf packs in that
41 area. So, we need.....

42

43 MR. STOUT: Mr. Chair.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, go ahead.

46

47 MR. STOUT: Mr. Chair, this is Glenn
48 Stout, the Galena area biologist. Would you like me to
49 give a little bit of brief explanation on that?

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go right ahead,
2 Glenn. That's what we're looking for.

3
4 MR. STOUT: Alright, thank you. So,
5 coordinating with the Kanuti Refuge we continue to do
6 wolf surveys on the Kanuti Refuge proper, as well as the
7 controlled use area that we had, or the wolf control
8 area that we had done between 2013 and 2018. The last
9 survey we did was in 2020, we counted 21 packs with
10 approximately 96 wolves in that area. And as you
11 mentioned, we did see a decline in the removal area, but
12 it took about three years for that wolf population to
13 respond, to recover to pre-control levels. And so, by
14 2020, we were back up to the pre-control levels. So, to
15 answer the question, we had 21 packs with approximately
16 96 wolves spread out amongst those packs.

17
18 MR. WALKER: Yeah, great. I mean, Glenn,
19 you know, is Robert Walker here, member, I was just ask
20 Clayton. But I am curious because when you look at a
21 size of a moose that confined into this area and it's
22 0.35 moose per square mile, that's a lot of Moose. And
23 for that area. And I could understand there would be 96
24 wolves, because when you look at the size of that herd
25 that reside there, I would, you know, I would have a
26 concern too, because I don't know what the hunting
27 pressure would be on there too. And we would have to
28 take a look at it again next year if it's possible, if
29 you and Clayton, Glenn could do this and report back
30 next year.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Glenn.

33
34 MR. STOUT: So.....

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Glenn,
37 your response.

38
39 MR. STOUT: Yeah, to member Walker there.
40 We do those surveys when we get funding for them. And
41 so -- and we coordinate that with the Kanuti Refuge and
42 when they have funding, and we try and get funding. I
43 apply for funding every year, but I don't always get it.
44 I don't know if I'm going to get it for this spring yet.
45 I'm hoping to and if we do and the Kanuti has funding,
46 you can bet we'll try and get another wolf survey done.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And also, Glenn,
49 you're still intending to do a trend count for Kanuti
50 this coming October-November time frame.

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MR. STOUT: Yeah. Our plans are -- we do have funding to do a population estimation survey, not a trend count area, but it's a full population trend estimation survey, or GSPE survey for the Kanuti Refuge.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, good to know. Yeah, that's good. So, I think that that's important right now to get a population and also, demographics of what that population is right now. So, all right. I think we've covered this Kanuti report real well. Appreciate your supplementary information. And did Chris Harwood have any additional to that? I see Chris was online here also.

MR. HARWOOD: Mr. Chair, this is Chris Harwood with Kanuti Refuge biologist. I think Glenn and Clayton covered it. Thank you, Glenn, for stepping in. He had the most recent information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. All right. Thanks so much. Appreciate that information. That's where I like to have this kind of stuff now because we're moving towards our Wildlife proposals later on. And so, I -- I'm happy to hear that there's going to be a popular -- GSPE survey this, this coming fall possibly if we get snow for it. So, that was good. Thank you very much. Thank you, Clayton.

MR. MERRILL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'm glad you're on board. And so, we're a Kanuti complexing. And so, was Harwoof here. Oh, there's Harwoord over there. Oh, yeah. We're going to talk about this community complexing issue, which this Council was concerned about that. Complexing Kanuti with Yukon Flats.

(Pause)

Go ahead, Harlin.

MR. ITCHOAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, my name is Karlin Itchoak.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Karlin.

MR. ITCHOAK: K-a-r-l-i-n I-t-c-h-o-a-k. And also wanted to introduce myself as well, I'm the Assistant Regional Director for Refuges for the U.S.

1 Fish and Wildlife Service based in Anchorage. And happy
2 to talk about other issues too. I know there's a lot of
3 lot of other issues I talked about today that that you're
4 looking for answers and anywhere I can provide answers
5 there too, I'm happy to.

6
7 For the complexing, as many of you know,
8 we've been under budget constraints for a while. 2018
9 National Wildlife Refuge Service systems here in Alaska
10 started going through the base budget reset process. And
11 around that time there was discussions around complexing
12 different stations, Izembek and APB, another one was
13 Yukon Flats and Kanuti, as you know, and at the end of
14 that process, it was decided that they would hold -- we
15 would hold off on complexing Izembek, APB, and the focus
16 was on Yukon Flats and Kanuti. And so that process
17 started in 2018 and then it was to be about a five-year
18 process initiating in the around 2020. And since I've
19 been onboard in the last 9 months or so, we've been
20 looking at that and decided to hit the pause button.
21 We're still going to be doing complexing, but we've hit
22 the pause button in terms of whether it's going to be
23 Kanuti and Yukon Flats only because we wanted to go back
24 and do more consultation with the tribes, with various
25 tribes and other folks within the region. So, Sara Boario
26 our Regional Director, myself and our managers and some
27 of our liaisons, we've been holding consultation and
28 learning a lot through that process. But that's where
29 we're at with the complexing. Unfortunately, because of
30 the, the current budget situation we're going to have
31 to -- and the budget challenges that will continue in
32 2025, recognizing the budget declines are ensuring tough
33 choices that have to be made. But we are committed to
34 continuing the conversations through consultation and
35 more proactively engaging with the tribes around the
36 complexing, so.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, and then
39 of course you have reviewed our Western Interior
40 Councils discussion. See, we went through this process
41 with the Innoko and we were promised that Innoko would
42 be funded, they would be complexed with Koyukuk-Nowitna
43 and they'd be complexed and that it would be funded. But
44 what we see, and you've heard it, that Innoko is the
45 stepchild at this point. It doesn't have -- there's no
46 presence down there, hardly any presence that it's left
47 to these, to the basically to the wolves. The air taxis
48 are running rampant down there, doing whatever they feel
49 like and throwing rotten meat into the dumps and McGrath,
50 there's all kinds of stuff can happen down there without

1 any real presence. So, I'm concerned that Kanuti will
2 then become the stepchild, and that Kanuti is going to
3 be -- it has various -- it's got a proposed Ambler Road
4 going across nearly on top of the northern border of
5 that Refuge. There's [sic] all kinds of stuff going on
6 at Kanuti, and Kanuti has been a from day one, from this
7 inception of this Council, Kanuti has been in the
8 forefront of biological information. They have always
9 been in the forefront of coming up with innovative
10 things, doing stuff that other refuges kind of picked
11 up too. So, that's great. So, I am concerned that Kanitu,
12 is this going to go by the wayside, that it's not going
13 to have enough funding. It's going to be an especially
14 on the enforcement problem. So, we have that throughout
15 the entire region, our region here, we don't have enough
16 enforcement. And I think that, you know, when I had our
17 meeting in two 2023 in April of 23 were in Anchorage and
18 we were -- we had the Refuge Division Chief, I think
19 that's your position is right now, is basically there's
20 lots of -- I was asking, well, what about the biologists?
21 Are you going to take biologists out of the regional
22 office? You got a whole stack of them in there. You're
23 going to send them off to do field work? Are you going
24 to have -- you're going to have LE coming out of
25 Anchorage? You're going to have all this -- you still
26 got all this staff in the regional office. Are you going
27 to actually assist the refuges? If they're going to be
28 complexed, can you put them on like furloughed or like
29 detail, I guess you call it detail into those refuges.
30 That's what was and that was part of the discussion and
31 that was in April and of 2023 down in Anchorage meeting.
32 He wouldn't even come to our meeting. I could have hit
33 his office with a stone from our meeting place at the
34 diamond. So, I was a little concerned that he didn't
35 want to step up to the plate and actually face this
36 Council. So, I'm concerned about this complexing thing.

37
38 So, I'm going to -- I'm voicing all
39 these concerns to you because you're in the hot seat
40 now. So, I understand budgets, but I'm also am concerned
41 for the resources. And the resources, if they left to
42 the devices of the commercial entities can actually be
43 pretty much abused and just flat out say it. That's
44 what's happening in Innoko. That's why there's
45 discussion about controlled use or aircraft controlled
46 use areas and stuff like that. So, I would like you to
47 work with Director Boario about how you're going to
48 provide staffing. That's if you're going to complex, you
49 have to provide staffing to the refuges. They can't be
50 left. But all I see is a fire hose of money being sprayed

1 at Arctic Refuge regarding, you know, the 10-02 area.
2 But nobody wants the 10-02 area, nobody even bid on the
3 10-02 area. So, I'm not really concerned about that
4 because the oil companies don't even want the 10-02 area.
5 But I do feel that we have to focus on the problems that
6 we have. We have dall sheep problems. We got -- we have
7 to these refuges; they can't be left alone. They have
8 to have adequate staffing and I want to see as many of
9 the staff that we have, you know, we have some really
10 capable staff members at these refuges, and they have a
11 lot of institutional knowledge about these refuges. I
12 want to see them that institutional knowledge and
13 incorporated into the -- if you're going to go
14 complexing, it has to be in a thought out manner. So,
15 that would be my comments on that. So, since you're new
16 to this position and you had to hear it and you're right
17 here in front of us. I'm real -- that's real, I'm happy
18 to see that. So, because your predecessor wouldn't even
19 come up to the plate here. So, we have experience with
20 complexing in this region. And so, it's not been the
21 happiest of situation. And I'm sure that Koyukuk-Nowitna
22 is not super happy about that situation either, because
23 they don't have enough at least detailed staff to help
24 them out, assist. They got they got all kinds of stuff
25 going on here. So, they need help on Innoko, also. That's
26 a complex -- it's a template of what went wrong in the
27 complexing of these. So, let's take that, this situation
28 and Koyukuk-Nowitna, Innoko and apply that to -- let's
29 not make the same mistake at Koyukuk or at Kanuti and
30 Yukon Flats. So, any comments from the Council members?

31
32 (No response)

33
34 No. I think we covered that. Thanks so
35 much, Karl.

36
37 MR. ITCHOAK: Thank you, Chair. If you'd
38 like, I can give you an update on the transport issue
39 in Innoko or unless we've discussed that at nauseam.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, we'd like
42 that.

43
44 MR. ITCHOAK: I do oversee law
45 enforcement. Chief Shami -- Sham Hart is under our
46 division. And I appreciate Kevin Whitworth and others
47 bringing up this issue earlier. And we'd just like folks
48 to know that the law enforcement is patrolling the area
49 and has contacted the hunters in the field. The Fish and
50 Wildlife officers have been working with the troopers

1 on this in the last few weeks. We heard earlier some
2 comments about the hunters, maybe being the problem, but
3 I'm told from our officers that there have not been
4 issues with the hunters salvaging the meat. But the Fish
5 and Wildlife officers and the troopers are -- they've
6 received complaints from the hunters about the
7 transporter not picking them up in their game and from
8 the field in time. So, they're investigating that, and
9 it's under investigation, but our Fish and Wildlife
10 officers are on it. And I know Cody Smith was on earlier
11 and just appreciate what all of our officers are doing,
12 not only in this manner, but we have about 13 officers
13 right now. We're hiring another patrol captain, one just
14 retired in Kenai. So, we have about 13 when we're fully
15 staffed about 14 to 15 officers. And you mentioned
16 earlier, Mr. Chair, that we were understaffed in the law
17 enforcement and I would say grossly understaffed. And
18 you also recommended to the Council that you reach out
19 to Secretary Holland. I appreciate that, I'd recommend
20 reaching out to Congress as well, since we can't lobby
21 on ourselves, but on behalf of ourselves. But I would
22 just say that our 2015 International Association of
23 Chief of Police report, when we did an assessment of
24 what it would take to fully patrol 76.8 million acres
25 of refuges in Alaska, it would take about 77 officers.
26 And right now, as I mentioned, we have about 13, and
27 they're just doing an incredible job. They can't be
28 everywhere. I'm always told that we have a lot of dual
29 functioning employees. I haven't met one yet. They're
30 all quadruple functioning or multi-functioning
31 biologists-pilot, pilot-law enforcement officer. So, I
32 just want to give a shout out to the incredible job that
33 they are doing with what limited resources that we do
34 have.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I do appreciate,
37 you know, what the -- I saw Fish and Wildlife enforcement
38 on the Road the first year of the sheep closure in 2022.
39 And so, I talked to enforcement there. So, I do feel
40 strongly that if the permitted air -- the transporter,
41 is basically the hunters are complaining about not being
42 picked up, they're not fulfilling their concession
43 permitting. And they're causing great consternation for
44 possibly other reputable transporters. I feel that their
45 permit should be revoked immediately. I feel their
46 permit should be -- to comply they should be required,
47 there should be stipulations that they're required to
48 respond to their clients. They should have an airplane
49 on both sides of the Kuskokwim mountains so that they
50 can transport the meat to other locations. Not trying

1 to get it all back to McGrath. Send it, fly it down to
2 Aniak. You're on that side, you can fly right on the
3 river all the way down to Aniak, right down the valley
4 there. So, there needs to be some stipulations put into
5 that permit. I would revoke their permit at this point.
6 I would revoke it because they have complaints and they
7 have the whole community of McGrath is complaining
8 bitterly about the 100 clients that they took with the
9 significant amounts of wanton waste. And I do feel
10 strongly that the -- that (indiscernible) staff work
11 with the troopers and go back to the State statute of
12 what the statute says about meat salvage requirement
13 that's under statutory requirements to be in a preserved
14 state for two weeks, not just back to the bulk, back to
15 the to the communities up from the field, here it is,
16 we're throwing it right in the dump. That's not what the
17 statute says. So, I think that there's some significant
18 -- if they started writing tickets for rotten meat coming
19 out from the field, and that should be -- there should
20 be tickets. You would get a citation if you didn't have
21 all the meat, they should get a citation for the
22 condition of the meat also. If the hunters don't know
23 enough to book a -- the transporter should -- and there
24 needs to be education, anybody that's flying out into
25 those refuges on State and Federal lands needs to know
26 that this is a huge animal and this has to be removed
27 from the field in a timely manner. So, there's a -- I
28 would -- I'm really concerned about this air taxi thing.
29 The controlled use area that could happen, that couldn't
30 happen depends on the Board of Game process. But there
31 is -- there are avenues in regards to this revocation
32 of the permit. They've already performed in a poor manner
33 this year to where they need a revocation. So, that --
34 get their head out of their out of the sand, sort of
35 speak. So, any further comments on that, on the
36 transporter issue on Innoko? No. So, I think we're --
37 Nissa.

38
39 MS. PILCHER: This isn't about that. I
40 just wanted to let you know Tim texted and the weather
41 has come up pretty bad where he is, and he's no longer
42 able to stay connected for any length of time. So, he
43 had to sign off. But he will review all of the
44 transcripts when they get posted.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, okay. Yeah,
47 well, that's -- we're past the action items though, so.
48 All right. So, thanks so much, Karlin, I appreciate that.
49 I'm super happy with you in this position. I'm just all
50

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1 giddy about this stuff, getting good staff on U.S. Fish
2 and Wildlife.

3

4 MR. ITCHOAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Appreciate it. Thank you, Council.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. So, we
8 went through that. So, our Refuge, sheep, gavel to gavel
9 -- Gravel-to-Gravel Initiative. So, that's Koyukuk-
10 Nowitna, Koyukuk-Nowitna. Oh, here we are right here I
11 was skipping something. Koyukuk-Nowitna, Jeremy. And how
12 long have you been here, Jeremy? Kind of a long time,
13 isn't it?

14

15 MR. HAVENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
16 Council members. Yeah, I've been up here 13 years now,
17 I think. So, I'm learning every day and there's always
18 a new challenge, but it's really good. And I enjoy the
19 job and, you know, working with the Council here. But
20 real quick before I begin, I did have a handout I want
21 to give you guys as part of my presentation. I'll jump
22 into it here in a little bit, but I'll hand that out
23 before we get started.

24

25 (Pause)

26

27 Okay, for the record, my name is Jeremy
28 Havener. I'm the Refuge Subsistence Coordinator for
29 Koyukuk, Nowitna and Innoko National Wildlife Refuges.
30 First thing I want to start off with, just because we've
31 got quite a bit going on here in Galena with our office.
32 We've got some new faces with our staff. And first update
33 is David Zabriskie, our former manager, he moved on and
34 he's now in Tanzania, I believe. And so, he left this
35 summer. Replacing him is, he's acting, but we have a new
36 deputy refuge manager and that's Doug Calvin, and he's
37 right over there. He comes here from Oregon, he was
38 working for the Warm Springs Tribe, and I don't know if
39 you want to introduce yourself.

40

41 MR. CALVIN: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman
42 and Council. My name is Doug Calvin, I am the acting, I
43 guess, Refuge Manager, unofficially, and the Deputy
44 Refuge Manager. Had a couple of months to cross with
45 David Zabriskie before he followed his wife on attaché
46 job in Tanzania. So, I'm not new to the profession, but
47 I am definitely new to working in Alaska. I visit Alaska
48 on numerous occasions, but I'm honored to be here and
49 to work with you. I've been working on Confederated
50 Tribes of Warm Springs for over 32 years as a program

1 manager for their Fish-Wildlife Parks and built their
2 conservation enforcement program. Prior to that, with
3 the state of Oregon, California, Arizona, and the
4 Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service in
5 Australia. So, I'm not new and like Clayton and I found
6 out we had a lot in common last night. So, I'm honored
7 to be here and, like I said, wanted to engage a little
8 bit with the Council. And so, like I said, I've been
9 here, I think three months, less than Karlin, and Karlin
10 got me beat by about three months, so. But he's from
11 Alaska, so he's even got that ahead of me so, excellent.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I've talked to you
14 on the sidebar here. I'm real happy about your experience
15 level, especially working with tribes and understanding
16 tribal issues and so forth. So, I'm just a real dovetail
17 for this refuge complex that you have here. So, I'm
18 really happy with your -- you're coming here, you're
19 going to easily come up to speed. Sometimes it's like
20 it's like glacial trying to retrain a refuge manager
21 that just gets -- unless they got Alaska experience,
22 they just fall by the wayside. It's just overwhelming
23 to them. It'll be easy for you here. It's got a lot of
24 similarities. So, thank you for -- nice introduction
25 there, Doug. So.....

26

27 MR. HAVENER: Yeah, thank you, Doug. And
28 then next we had a new staff hire. Actually, it was just
29 kind of a change, and that's Marie Cleaver, and she's
30 right over there, and I don't know if she can stand up
31 real quick so everybody can say hi, but, yeah, she was
32 a budget tech for us for a number of years. She moved
33 to Galena from Ruby as a local hire or through the local
34 hire program and wanted to try something new. And, you
35 know, knowing her knowledge and experience in this area,
36 I thought she'd make a perfect fit for a refuge
37 information technician. So, she applied for and was
38 hired as our new RIT for this region. And, you know, I
39 just want to make sure everybody's aware of her position.
40 And, you know, one of the things we're always trying to
41 work on is tribal relations. And she's a great contact
42 as a liaison for our office and so, welcome, Marie.

43

44 MS. CLEAVER: Thank you.

45

46 MR. HAVENER: Before I jump into some of
47 the biological stuff and subsistence programs, I want
48 to talk a little bit about it. I always kind of look
49 over it sometimes, but we do have two park rangers for
50 our refuges, one in McGrath and one here in Galena, and

1 some of the things they've been working on. And, you
2 know, with those positions, we get a lot of environmental
3 education, you know, going into the schools here in
4 Galena and in McGrath. And, you know, myself, I'm a
5 hunter safety instructor for the state of Alaska. And
6 we've been to the villages and done some Hunter Ed
7 programs. But also, some of the things they've been
8 working on; we've -- every year we have two science
9 culture camps. And those took place this summer, one in
10 McGrath, one in Galena. Kelly down in McGrath also was
11 working on Refuge brochures, and I know these have been
12 out for a little while. It's probably been about a year,
13 but I don't know if these have been introduced to the
14 Council. And so, I brought a whole bunch here today and
15 I can hand those out if people are interested. But both
16 of our park rangers worked on these and we've got one
17 for all four refuges. We were kind of the guinea pigs
18 in this, in that we were going through a new format, and
19 so we had to work with a national team and provide a
20 whole bunch of information. So, all staff was working
21 on that, but it created a really good product. It kind
22 of just has a lot of information about each refuge, you
23 know, the history on the Refuge, things you can do there.
24 And then the thing I think that's really neat is they
25 kind of dedicated a whole page as a map. So, you can
26 actually see some detail on here. And it's, I don't
27 know, it just turned out really good, I just want to
28 acknowledge our park rangers for the work that they've
29 done to get these created. And so, they -- like I said,
30 it's probably been about a year that we've had these now
31 maybe a little bit less, but I just want to make sure
32 the Council was aware of those. And you know, hopefully
33 we can get those out to people.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Pass those around
36 for me.

37
38 MR. HAVENER: Yeah, no, absolutely.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, continue.

41
42 MR. HAVENER: One -- so, what I just
43 handed out, the pamphlet and that is on the Wild and
44 Scenic River Corridor Management Plan or Comprehensive
45 Management Plan, excuse me. And I'm not sure if our
46 former manager talked to the Council at all about this
47 process, but we are -- we've been working on this now
48 for probably a year or year and a half, and I just want
49 to make sure everybody's aware of it. Right now, we're
50 going through the consultation process, but what we are

1 doing is, we are creating a Wild and Scenic River
2 Comprehensive Management Plan for the Nowitna River.
3 It's a wild river that was created by the Wild and Scenic
4 Rivers Act of 1968, but of course wasn't created until
5 1980 when the Refuge was established. But with this
6 process, we just want to make sure the Council is aware
7 we don't have an actual date of when this draft plan
8 will be released. Right now, our best guess is mid-
9 October. But in this handout I gave you, there's
10 information about what we're doing, why we're doing it,
11 and then there's a website where you can go to find that
12 information. Once this is available for comment, we can
13 make sure that Council members and this Council has
14 access to be able to get on to the website to read over
15 the draft and also make comments that they feel
16 necessary. One other thing that we've just completed is
17 a is an 810 analysis, and that's also going to be in the
18 draft. And you know, with this we discovered there's not
19 going to be any impact to subsistence. But anyway, I
20 just wanted to brief the Council on that. I'm sure
21 there's a lot of details with this, but, you know, for
22 time's sake I'm going to keep moving on and then I can
23 open up for questions at the end.

24
25 So, biological program. We had a busy
26 summer. It seemed like most of our inventory monitoring
27 projects took place. Right now, I think today, actually,
28 our pilots came out and they were flying beaver cache
29 surveys on the Nowitna. And so, we'll have that
30 information sometime this winter all compiled. And I'll
31 plan on this February meeting that you guys are having,
32 we'll get a full biological report and have that to you
33 guys so you can see, you know, the I&M projects that we
34 have going on in particular moose surveys. And with that
35 being said, the moose surveys, those will be taking place
36 in November. One of the big things we're going to be
37 looking at this year and we've talked about it for a
38 couple of years now, but I think things are falling in
39 place is on the Nowitna Refuge, we've noticed the adult
40 numbers slightly declining in that population, and I
41 know we've made some cuts on the number of draw permits
42 in that area recently, but we are going to be flying the
43 full GSPE population survey. And so, that's going to
44 take a lot of extra flying hours, but we'll get that
45 done this November, you know, if conditions are right.
46 And you know, something doesn't prevent us from doing
47 that. But I just wanted the Council to be aware of that.
48 I know Council Member Honea has been really interested
49 in that. We've done quite a few village visits and talked
50 to talk to the tribes on that, and it seems like

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1 everybody's expressed concerns on that population. With
2 that being said, the fisheries update.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can I stop you
5 there? Are you going to do a GSPE with ADF&G on the
6 Koyukuk also or?

7

8 MR. HAVENER: I don't think we are. And
9 I know Glenn's on here so he might know more information
10 about that.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: If you're going to
13 do the -- oh, you're just going to do it.....

14

15 MR. HAVENER: 21B.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF:the novi
18 [sic] -- I, okay. Did you get a survey, GSPE survey last
19 year for Koyukuk? I haven't heard of one yet.

20

21 MR. HAVENER: I have not.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Are you there,
24 Glenn?

25

26 MR. STOUT: Yeah. Mr. Chair, this Glen
27 Stout. We tried to do the GSPE, but we got weathered out
28 of it so, we weren't able to complete it. I've got
29 funding to do one of the three sub areas again, and
30 that's my plan is to try and get it done. We've put a
31 priority for our funding on the Kanuti first, and then
32 one of those three sub areas over in 21D, 24D is our
33 second priority.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, that's what
36 I need to know. Thanks so much. Appreciate that. So,
37 continued, Jeremy.

38

39 MR. HAVENER: Yeah. And so, our Fisheries
40 Biologist, Wyatt put together a quick little report on
41 some of the things he's been working on. And one of them
42 I wanted to talk about real quick just because I know,
43 Jack you wanted to you asked some questions about the
44 water temp information. And so, yeah, our fish biologist
45 has been going around and trying to implement putting
46 out water temp monitors. And I did speak with him briefly
47 and it sounds like those temperature monitors are --
48 that's all they're doing. They don't have the ability
49 to do pH or any other things. So, it's working with our
50 Water Resources branch at a Fish and Wildlife Service,

1 that's where the temp loggers are coming from. And we
2 are putting them out and, you know, on here it talks
3 about some of the places we've put them, and that
4 includes the Dakli Wheeler Creek, Billy Hawk Creek,
5 gisas [sic] or yeah, Gisasa River, Willow Lake over by
6 Huslia. And we do have intentions in the future to try
7 to get some things out in the upper Nowitna, maybe it's
8 Silatna River. And just wanted to kind of clarify some
9 of that stuff.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I have some
12 comments about that. You know, the water temperature,
13 that's a really important issue. I would like to see
14 some baseline, you know, trophic, you know, basically
15 how much algae, how much insects is in each portion of
16 that -- known spawning areas for whitefish and salmon.
17 So, that would be in conjunction with this project, is
18 what is actually going on in the substrates? You know,
19 because we have, you know, chums, they vacate the
20 drainage, but coho Salmon and chinook stay in the system.
21 So, that's an important aspect. It's also the aspect of
22 what's going to affect those whitefish populations. It's
23 where those whitefish are going to spawn, when they
24 emerge, they're going to have to have food. And so that's
25 a kind of an important part of that, okay.

26
27 MR. HAVENER: So, we appreciate those
28 comments. And so, now for the subsistence portion, a
29 couple updates. So, I just got back from the Nowitna
30 Check Station on Monday evening. And I guess during my
31 staff updates, I forgot to introduce one of our
32 volunteers, and he's over here. He helped me out a ton
33 this year at the Nowitna Check Station. I think he spent
34 what three weeks out there, Bob? And that's Bob
35 Rybarczyk, he was the former Refuge Manager here, and
36 he came back to help out with the Nowitna Check station.
37 But we've got most of the stuff put away, and we're just
38 trying to turn things back over to Fish and Game. But,
39 we this year we had 117 hunters with 39 moose harvested.
40 So, the harvest came back up from a couple of years ago
41 and.....

42
43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 117. Oh, excuse me,
44 117 hunters. And how many?

45
46 MR. HAVENER: 39 bulls were harvested.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you.

49
50

1 MR. HAVENER: And it seemed like, you
2 know, most people were seeing things. We did have one
3 black bear harvested this year. And most people were
4 seeing moose, so it seemed like things were pretty good
5 for everybody. You know, we checked the meat on everybody
6 coming out, and it seemed like everything looked good
7 and all the meat was there. But yeah, no, it was a good
8 year overall, and it seemed like most people are happy.
9 Following the State season there, we have a Federal Moose
10 Hunt, it's FM21-01. And for that hunt, we had nine
11 permits issued this year and four moose have been
12 harvested. That's preliminary, I'm still kind of going
13 through and tracking some of that stuff down, but I
14 think that'll probably be the final number if I had to
15 guess. So, it seemed like most people were happy and
16 we're successful that we're coming up the Nowitna
17 hunting. The Innoko Federal Hunt, I just wanted to touch
18 base on that real quick. There's a hunt down there from
19 February 15th through March 15th. But I think it's been
20 3 or 4 years now, I'm not exactly sure on the exact
21 date, but the State created a registration hunt that
22 takes place exactly at the same time as the Federal
23 hunt. And so, what that's done is caused most of the
24 subsistence users in that area to get the State
25 registration permit, because then they can hunt on
26 corporation land and lands closer, you know, to their
27 village, so they don't have to travel so far. And just
28 wanted to touch base on that. I don't think we've issued
29 a Federal permit for that and at least 2 or 3 years, and
30 that's been the case this last February and March as
31 well. Also, there is a Federal fall hunt there and I
32 don't have exact numbers, I do stay in touch with Josh
33 Pierce, the area biologist down there. And what has been
34 done there is a combined State-Federal permit that
35 people get for that for that early portion. And I think
36 the numbers have been pretty minimal, but that hunt is
37 still available. And if the Council was interested, I
38 could try to dig up some of that information and, and
39 find the exact harvest data for that early hunt in 21E,
40 is the Game Management unit.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Maybe at our spring
43 meeting. Oh. go ahead.

44
45 MR. KRISKA: Oh, I was just going to --
46 are you saying that fall hunt is that from September
47 25th to the 30th of September?

48
49 MR. VAVENER: Member Kriska. Yeah, that's
50 that is September. No, excuse me. It is August 25th

1 through September 30th and that is, it's in Game
2 Management at 21E so, it's down around GASH the villages.
3 And there's a few days on either end of the State hunt
4 where there's a, there's a Federal opportunity available
5 and that has a combined State-Federal permit that people
6 get a registration permit, I can't think of the number
7 off the top of my head, 836 maybe, but that's the permit
8 I'm talking about.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. That -- yeah,
11 that answers your question?

12
13 MR. KRISKA: I was just wondering because
14 a lot of people are getting mixed up with that. There's
15 -- they don't -- I guess it's down, this down the lower
16 part. But some people said there's hunting season is
17 still open. I said, no, I don't think so. So, they're
18 thinking it's up this way on the Federal lands, but it's
19 not.

20
21 MR. KRISKA: No, member Kriska. Thank you
22 for that information. That's good to know. And those are
23 things that, you know, we're always looking to hear and
24 try to clear up some of that confusion because one of
25 the things you know, we can do at the Refuge, you know,
26 especially working with an RIT in our visitor services
27 staff, is try to send out some outreach. I know member
28 Walker reached out to me this this fall or well, summer
29 and was kind of asking some questions about law
30 enforcement and that specific permit and we put together
31 some flyers and sent out. But you know, definitely want
32 to try to spread the word so we keep people aware of
33 where those hunts are open.

34
35 Last thing I want to touch on is the
36 delegation of authority decision. We're going to be
37 starting to look into that here. It'll be after moose
38 season or moose surveys are completed. And once the
39 reports kind of put together, but definitely will be
40 reaching out to everybody and want to hear if there's a
41 need for moose. And those areas we're making a decision
42 on are on Federal lands and Game Management Unit 21B,
43 21D outside the controlled use area, 21D inside the
44 controlled use area and in 24D. And so, we will -- once
45 that report and that report usually gets done around
46 December, we'll start making phone calls, you know,
47 doing tribal consultation, talking to the Regional
48 Advisory Council members and then the state of Alaska
49 and the Advisory Committee Chair to see if there's a
50 need for that hunt. And those hunts take place mostly

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1 the one that we've kind of looked at is up around Huslia,
2 and that one is in it's been April 10th through the
3 15th. But I just want to give you guys a heads up, you
4 know, and, you know, if anybody wants to maybe talk
5 about how the moose season went, you know, we're looking
6 for that information. So, just want to make sure you
7 guys are aware of that. But that's my presentation. And
8 I'll leave it open for questions. Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Robert, go
11 ahead.

12
13 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 Jeremy, do you -- do they still use that refugee cabin
15 there on the Refuge?

16
17 MR. HAVENER: Member Walker, I'm assuming
18 you're talking about the field camp. That's -- it's, I
19 think, 350 miles up from the mouth of the Innoko River.
20 And yeah, that field camp is still there. In 2014, when
21 we took management of the Innoko Refuge, we did go down
22 there and did a couple trips of kind of cleaning things
23 up, and I know there were some boats and stuff, and we
24 did some auctions, and I think people in the GASH
25 villages had a chance to purchase some of those. But
26 yeah, it's still there and it's kind of a base for field
27 operations. And we do use it at least once a year for
28 banding waterfowl at this at this point.

29
30 MR. WALKER: Yes, I remember back in the
31 day that it was used 24/7, and you had a pilot that did
32 fly out there pretty much daily. And to condense, you
33 know, to conduct surveys and all this research that went
34 on there, I was, you know, like when I read up on most
35 of it, you know, I was really surprised on how much data
36 that they produce from that area for the whole
37 surrounding area, and it was pretty interesting. And
38 where did all that data go, did it all stored in
39 Anchorage?

40
41 MR. HAVENER: Member Walker, yeah. We
42 still have -- when we did the transfer, a lot of that
43 stuff came up to Galena, and we're still sorting through
44 a lot of that stuff. I mean, it's there. But my specific
45 knowledge of it is I don't know exactly where it's at.
46 I know, it is in our office.

47
48 MR. WALKER: Yes. Because I did ask about
49 a study that was done by one of the biologists, the
50 lady, I can't remember her name. I read the report, and

1 I had a copy. And when I left the Federal RAC here the
2 first time I was burnt out, I took everything and burnt
3 it up. And I'm kind of kicking myself, you know, that I
4 never should have did [sic] with some of it because some
5 of it was very useful for what we're going to do now.
6 And if that could be found where a lady made a report
7 to the RAC about how some moose walked all the way from
8 there, all the way back behind Anvik called Benselena
9 Dome, had her calf and walked all the way back. And if
10 we could find that information, that would be very
11 helpful for us, because we can say that, you know, this
12 is a very -- this place here is a very important place
13 for moose to originate and where they do come from and
14 how they did. And I did track there right by the cabin
15 back in the day, too. And we used to go up there and we
16 used to get invited to eat, you know, it was kind of
17 kind of strange here at Beaver Camp and going up there
18 and getting invited. So, it was it was kind of nice,
19 though.

20
21 MR. HAVENER: Now, we appreciate those
22 stories, and I'll definitely stay in touch with you on
23 that report you're looking for. I'll see if I can do
24 some digging this winter and come up with something.

25
26 MR. WALKER: Okay. Thank you, I
27 appreciate that.

28
29 MR. CALVIN: Mr. Chairman and Council. I
30 think a lot of those are in. We have a lot of files
31 upstairs in our building here and we -- a lot like I
32 said, we're pretty limited in regards to our staff time.
33 And I know Boomer one of our staff biologists. Is it you
34 know trying to get some of that stuff organized and, you
35 know, even digitized as well as sorting through those.
36 And that's kind of one of the priorities, I think our
37 retired manager, Bob here probably has a better
38 reflection on some of that, but I think there's most of
39 those files are in our office here in Galena, so.

40
41 MR. REBARCHIK: Yeah, yes.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Step up to the mic
44 there, Bob.

45
46 MR. REBARCHIK: My name is Bob Rebarchik.
47 I was previously a Refuge Manager up until 2022, I
48 retired in 2020 2nd June. Those files are in the office
49 upstairs, primarily. I believe the person you're
50 referring to is probably Beverly Skinner, who was one

1 of the biologists. Her husband was also the biologist.
2 They're on the Innoka Refuge for about 15 years, and I'm
3 guessing that's who may have done that report. I have
4 not seen it, but I would bet it's in those files.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Robert.

7
8 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
9 know, it just couldn't be found, but I just.....

10
11 (Simultaneous speech)

12
13 MR. REBARCHIK: This is first we've heard
14 of it, so now we can look.

15
16 MR. WALKER: Well, I'm, you know, I'm not
17 going to run down there and tear into your materials and
18 look for it, but I don't know if you've recorded or put
19 it on diskette, but it would be very helpful because
20 we're working on a proposal to have this place here put
21 under, you know; God, my mind is running 90 miles an
22 hour; control use area. And that's what we're -- the
23 more information we have, it's going to be better for
24 us, because I know it's going to be a fight with the
25 State, and I don't really want to fight. I'd just like
26 to sail it to smooth through where it would be in
27 everybody's benefit, not only ours, but it would make
28 it so easier for people to look at this and say, well,
29 you know, okay, we had our chance there and we kind of
30 blew it, but we don't want to have to us blow it because
31 and, you know, the more information we can have, it
32 would be better for us to -- I really appreciate that.
33 Thank you, Jeremy, and you with your crew and your new
34 member here.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, thanks so much.
37 Appreciate that. One more comment there, Doug. Go ahead.

38
39 MR. CALVIN: Yes, one more comment. I --
40 since I've only been here six months, I've heard a lot
41 of good stories about the Innoko Field camp, both from
42 staff. I've been trying to get down there myself dealing
43 with some of the administrative stuff, trying to get
44 Karlin and myself down there. I have some, I guess some
45 brainstorming ideas how to bring that back to being a
46 very productive research facility as well. Maybe not in
47 the glory days where we have all the funding, but I
48 think a good example that I used at the Chiefs and the
49 Managers meeting was a friend of mine was a manager at
50 the middle of the Frank Church Wilderness in Idaho. So,

1 it's the largest wilderness in the Lower 48. And they
2 were managers with the University of Idaho that worked
3 with the Forest Service land, actually Wilderness, where
4 it was like 30 or 40 miles in, you had a little -- all
5 you had was a bush plane thing, but it developed a lot
6 of good information and research information similar to
7 what you're talking about over time. And it's kind of
8 like one of the premiere, that's what I keep hearing
9 about this complex since I got here between Innoko and
10 stuff, and how to maybe make that a more productive
11 facility, as well as a Refuge establishment and work
12 with the tribes and the villages as well as like some
13 of the university. And we have the University of Alaska
14 and Fairbanks. So, I'm going to be promoting that the
15 best I can, and that might help provide us with
16 additional information, but also additional funding to
17 be able to operate that facility.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, I appreciate
20 that.

21
22 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
23 know, they sent Jimmy Bentham, who was the pilot for the
24 Refuge, and they sent him down by snowmachine. They said,
25 come on up, you're invited for dinner. And we looked at
26 each other, my partner said, yeah, good idea. We'll go
27 up and we'll have something different to eat from what
28 we've been eating. So, we kind of like washed up, got
29 ready, went up, and when we got up there, they had beaver
30 meat. You know, we kind of like looked at each other
31 when we were eating beaver meat for two weeks already,
32 you know, and we thought we were going to have something
33 different, you know? But we were courteous, and we said
34 yes, oh man, this is really great, you know, like we
35 never had it before. So, that was the story that we
36 (indiscernible).

37
38 MR. CALVIN: Wonder if that was Ed, our
39 current pilot that's assigned to the refuge comes back
40 forth. That's due in the beaver lodge surveys as we
41 speak with his wife, who's -- but he started his career
42 there as a tech, so it might Ed.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, we need to
45 move on in this agenda. Thanks so much. Appreciate it.

46
47 MR. STOUT: Mr. Chair.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. Who said that?

50

1 MR. STOUT: Mr. Chair. This is Glen Stout
2 with Fish and Game. While you were talking on moose, I
3 thought I'd give you just real quick numbers from the
4 Koyukuk River Check Station.

5
6 CHAIRPERON REAKOFF: Okay.

7
8 MR. STOUT: We checked 243 hunters, and
9 our preliminary harvest was 98 moose. We've had 51
10 antlers turned in, they're in Galena. So, all the reports
11 I've been getting really area-wide is people did real
12 good on moose up and down the river.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. I appreciate
15 those numbers, Glenn. That's -- those are important
16 numbers for us. So, all right, that's -- is that
17 percentage of harvest per hunter gone up or down? 98
18 moose for 243, is that around average-ish?

19
20 MR. STOUT: So, those are very typical
21 numbers pre-COVID. You know, we really had kind of a
22 rain shadow effect after 2020 and all our numbers went
23 down, and then we had a couple high water years and
24 success rates were down. So, for about three years we
25 had pretty low numbers. These numbers are much more back
26 to normal.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, all right.
29 That was the question. So, all right. Appreciate that.
30 So, we need we got a lot of stuff in front of us here.
31 So, we got Aaron Moses was the next step for YKD.

32
33 MS. PILCHER: I think it was actually
34 Gravel-to-Gravel. And then the YKD update.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, gravel-to-
37 gravel. So, this -- we've had this discussion several
38 times on Gravel-to-Gravel. And so, but I would like if
39 there's a presentation, I would like a real brief one
40 because we've getting delayed in our progress here. So,
41 who's giving this update, the gravel-to-gravel update.

42
43 MS. PILCHER: That's Becky. Are you on?

44
45 MS. SHAFTEL: Hi, Mr. Chair. My name is.
46 Sorry.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Becky.

49
50

1 MS. SHAFTEL: Yes, Becky Shaftell. I can
2 keep this very brief. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and the
3 Council members for the opportunity just to give a very
4 short update. It's great to hear that you've already
5 heard about this initiative, which is really trying to
6 bring our Federal partners in the Department of Interior
7 to be working more closely with tribes and tribal
8 consortia on the Western Alaska salmon Crisis. And I'll
9 just give you a couple updates. We have an in-person
10 meeting taking place this week in Anchorage. If there
11 are any members or listeners that are really interested
12 in the projects that have been funded thus far, there's
13 been a lot of focus on stream restoration work, invasive
14 species work, and tribally led assessment projects
15 across the Yukon and Kuskokwim watersheds, and also the
16 Norton Sound regions. That'll be next week. I can put
17 my email in the chat. I am the coordinator on the project
18 at BLM, but there's also a coordinator named Boyd
19 Blihovde at Fish and Wildlife Service, and both of us
20 have been working together to try to bring partners
21 together and schedule some of these engagement
22 activities. Just to mention one other important thing,
23 we're working to finalize a memorandum of understanding.
24 It was mentioned earlier on the call by one of our other
25 signatory partners, the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal
26 Fish Commission, and we really hope that will be signed
27 prior to AFN on October 16th. A really important document
28 moving forward that we hope will shape this partnership
29 and better actions to help with salmon. So, that's it.
30 But if there are any questions, please reach out. I'll
31 just put my email in Boyd's email in the chat and
32 hopefully others can find us if they're interested in
33 hearing more. Thank you very much.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Kevin Whitworth
36 was on our Council and gave us a real good overview of
37 the gravel-to-gravel issue last year. And so, we've
38 heard quite a bit about that and I think is good to hear
39 the update and where your progress is at this time. So,
40 thank you Becky. So, we got Aaron Moses from YK Delta.
41 Are you there, Aaron?

42
43 MR. MOSES: Yes, Mr. Chair, I'm here. Can
44 you hear me?

45
46 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, I can hear
47 you fine. So, a brief overview of YK Delta. Go right
48 ahead.

49
50

1 MR. MOSES: All right, just for the
2 record, my name is Aaron Moses. I'm the Subsistence
3 Coordinator for Yukon Delta. Kevin gave a really good
4 intro to the fish from the summer. I'll just give you
5 guys a little bit more data. For the summer, we fished
6 a total of 498 hours and resulted in a minimum harvest
7 of 53,194 salmon. And this is compared to last year,
8 where we fished 270 hours with an estimated harvest of
9 69,800. So, we had more fishing hours but this summer
10 seemed like there was a little bit less fish. The sockeye
11 did come in fairly normal, but on the lower end. In the
12 past -- last year we had 800,000, but this year we
13 estimated about 600,000 sockeye. So, that could have
14 been a little bit due to that. The composition for
15 harvest of those 53,000 was 41% chinook salmon, 27%
16 sockeye, 25% chum and 5% coho. That's just a little more
17 info for salmon. Going on to waterfowl, we -- this year
18 or next year, the emperor geese hunting will be closed.
19 They are lower than the threshold of 23,000. The last
20 estimate came in at 18,000. So, starting next year, all
21 hunting of emperor geese will be closed. Another thing,
22 the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza was a concern
23 coming into 2024. Yukon Delta was unable to sample birds
24 due to logistical issues, but we did find and report 22
25 dead birds from field camps. We have found that emperor
26 geese have really high immunities to avian influenza.
27 Up to 98% and 65% to the current strain from 2022 and
28 2023. The proportion of the population of cackling geese
29 that have immunity to Avian Influenza went from 35% in
30 2022 to 50% in 2023, meaning that they are getting the
31 Avian Influenza, but they are surviving. Adults seem to
32 survive well, but the past two winters there have been
33 die offs of juveniles because they do not have these
34 immunities.

35
36 Going on to moose, our season for -- on
37 the Kuskokwim in Zone 2 is still open. We have a fairly
38 lengthy season all the way to October 15th. And for the
39 third year we are going to be able to have a winter
40 moose hunt on the Kuskokwim Mountains, Kilbuck
41 Mountains. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game did a
42 minimum moose count up in the tributaries last year and
43 counted 2,300 moose and that's just the minimum count.
44 Three years ago, when we did a minimum count, we only
45 counted 780. So, the population up in the mountains on
46 the Kuskokwim has basically tripled. So, we are moving
47 to have any [sic] moose hunt starting this winter. And
48 the hunt is only for federally qualified subsistence
49 users. And also, on for transportation or transporters
50 for moose hunting in our -- in this area, we do have two

1 transporters here for non-resident hunters. But we --
2 the stipulation that we give them is that they are not
3 allowed to drop off any hunters in areas accessible to
4 subsistence users. So, a lot of the time they're off in
5 lakes that are quite a ways off the main river system.
6 We had law enforcement in Saint Mary's this year. And
7 he said that there was a little bit less pressure hunting
8 from non-residents that are doing their DIY hunts, but
9 he did see quite a few people in Saint Mary's. And that's
10 pretty much -- that's the hub of that area. So, that's
11 the point from Anchorage that they a lot of people come
12 in. Just staffing updates. Having said that, we got new
13 Refuge Manager, Spencer Reardon. He was -- he has been
14 a Wildlife biologist here for the last year, but he grew
15 up here in Bethel. So, we have a local Refuge Manager
16 now. We still have some shortages and staffing, but we
17 are hopefully able to hire as supervisor of biologists
18 soon. With that if you guys have any questions.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That was all great
21 information, Moses or Aaron, I mean, and the -- I'm
22 surprised at that increase of that moose population, but
23 that makes sense. There may be dispersal from other
24 portions of in Unit 18 from the Yukon side and other.
25 It's just showing the response to the shrubification
26 [sic] of the tundra areas and the expansion of these
27 populations. That's great news because we got [sic]
28 other areas in Alaska that are having declining
29 populations or reduced populations. So, any comments or
30 questions for Aaron? No. Thanks so much, Aaron.
31 Appreciate your report to us. So, we're -- the proposed
32 rule update from the National Park Service.

33
34 MS. PILCHER: Actually, Jack. National
35 Park Service asked if Marcy with the Gates of the Arctic
36 could give her update first.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, that's where
39 I was going to go with that, but that's great. So, Marcy,
40 can you give us the Gates of the Arctic update?

41
42 MS. OKADA: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Council
43 members. My name is Marcy Okada. I'm the Subsistence
44 Coordinator for Gates of the Arctic National Park and
45 Preserve. And I'd like to refer you to your supplemental
46 meeting packet, page 131. We just have a really short
47 update for Gates of the Arctic.

48
49 First of all, Jack had mentioned our
50 Subsistence Resource Commission meeting in Anaktuvuk

1 Pass this past April. There's two members from this RAC
2 that are on our Subsistence Resource Commission both
3 Jack Reakoff as our Vicechair and Pollock Simon Sr. from
4 Allakaket. Our next meeting is coming up next month in
5 November in Fairbanks. It will be November 13th and 14th.
6 And then moving right along to our update on the Western
7 Arctic Caribou Herd. Just want to note that last winter
8 there were quite a few caribou from the Western Arctic
9 Herd that went up into the Nulato Hills. And then Western
10 Arctic Herd caribou that were on the North Slope between
11 Atqasuk and Nuiqsut. And then also we had some caribou
12 in the western portion of Gates of the Arctic. I also
13 want to note that this past spring, 50 more satellite
14 collars were deployed on the Herd. 46 of those collars
15 were on females and four collars were on males. And then
16 lastly, we have a new sheep biologist. His name is Zach
17 DeLile. And him and his crew were able to do distance
18 sampling surveys for dall sheep this past summer, from
19 June 28th to July 8th. In both Gates of the Arctic
20 National Park and Preserve, and then also on BLM and
21 State managed lands surrounding the Dalton Highway
22 Management corridor. Results are still pending from this
23 survey. And a lot of this information is going to be
24 shared at our upcoming Gates of the Arctic Subsistence
25 Resource Commission in November -- Commission meeting
26 in November. So, that's just our quick update if folks
27 have any questions.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so
30 much, Marcy, and I look forward to meeting the new sheep
31 biologists at the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence
32 Resource Commission meeting, and hopefully we'll have
33 some numbers. We need to have data from that survey. And
34 so, any questions for Marcy on her presentation? No,
35 that was adequate, Marcy. Thanks so much.

36
37 MS. OKADA: Thank you.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, we -- we've
40 the Gate, the park services proposed rule issue before.

41
42 MS. PILCHER: Yes, she just has a brief
43 update.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so did there's
46 just a real brief update on that. And who is giving
47 that?

48
49 MS. PILCHER: Eva Patton.

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1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Eva, are you there?

2

3 MS. PATTON: Yeah. Hi, Chairman Reakoff
4 and Council members. Can you hear me okay?

5

6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We hear you great.
7 Eva, go right ahead.

8

9 MS. PATTON Hi. Thank you, Jack and
10 Council members. And, so wonderful you're all meeting
11 there in Galena and was hoping to be there, too. It's
12 been a few years. Just want to express my appreciation
13 to the Council and to the community, and the tribe and
14 all the good work everyone is doing there on the Yukon.
15 And exciting to hear from Diloola as well from TCC.
16 We're looking forward to working with you in your new
17 role in the Tribal Resources Stewardship Program there
18 at TCC. This is Eva Patton, I'm serving in the role of
19 the Subsistence Program Director for National Park
20 Service now in the regional office out of Anchorage, and
21 we do work with all our Subsistence Parks throughout
22 Alaska. Just a quick update. We did hear back from Pat
23 Owen, from Denali. She got called out so, she won't be
24 available this evening for the Denali sheep update. But
25 the council does have that report from Denali in your
26 supplemental materials. And if there's any questions,
27 happy to help make those connections moving forward.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Eva. Eva, I would
30 like to have that interaction with Denali at our February
31 meeting that's coming up. I think that's important
32 information for this Council. But we will be dealing
33 with sheep issues, but I don't -- those -- there was
34 some details that I needed to discuss but we don't have
35 time for that anyways right now. But at the spring
36 meeting I want to go into further details about some
37 composition issues and so forth with that, with those
38 studies about comparisons. And I was real happy to see
39 that Denali had quite a bit of sheep survey data there,
40 but I would like Denali to be available for discussion
41 at our at our February meeting. So, continue with your
42 report.

43

44 MS. PATTON: Thanks, Jack. Yes,
45 Absolutely. Happy to help make those connections for the
46 upcoming meeting. And just real quickly, report before
47 the Wildlife Rule, the National Park Service regional
48 office did receive a substantial Inflation Reduction Act
49 grant for addressing climate resilience and food
50 security and the National Park Service subsistence

1 communities. So, we do have -- we are working with our
2 resident zone communities, our park nexus communities
3 in co-stewardship agreements, which was a big part of
4 that IRA funding and also funding to support research
5 and monitoring and important subsistence research for
6 ungulates, sheep, caribou and moose specifically, and
7 also salmon, mostly focused on the Copper River, where
8 the Wrangell-St. Elias has in season subsistence
9 management authority. But in part of our funding, we
10 were able to pivot as Serena noted for the Yukon River
11 Drainage Fisheries Association to fund their summer 2024
12 Subsistence Harvest Monitoring program on the Yukon
13 River. And they were also pivoting to more of a
14 environmental based monitoring with support and apps
15 through the Indigenous Sentinels Network. Anyway, we
16 were really pleased to be able to be a part of that
17 support on the Yukon River and will be engaging with all
18 our Park communities moving forward in these co-
19 stewardship agreements and, and opportunities for
20 funding. We are on the agenda today to discuss the
21 National Park Service Wildlife Rule, which has come
22 before the Regional Advisory Councils in the past year.
23 And this was addressing specifically concerns that the
24 National Park Service had about bear baiting on National
25 Preserve lands. So, it has no effect on subsistence. But
26 because of the interest in the overlap with subsistence
27 reporting and also had solicited feedback from all of
28 the RACs and SRCs on this. That Wildlife Rule was passed
29 just recently in August, and it is now on National
30 Wildlife Refuges under sport hunting regulations. So,
31 under State regulations, it is now prohibited to bait
32 bears specifically for public safety reasons. So, the
33 concerns were both immediate relative to bears defending
34 a bait station and more long-term relative to food
35 conditioning. And it was overwhelmingly supported by
36 most of the RACs and the SRCs and in the hopes of you
37 know, preventing any concerns about food conditioning
38 of bears and you know, any persons [sic], subsistence
39 or otherwise out on National Preserve lands to not
40 encounter a bait station which would potentially pose
41 concern for, for safety. In addition, this Wildlife Rule
42 that was just passed, did clarify trapping regulations
43 on National Preserve lands. And this does apply to both
44 subsistence and to State regulations that any -- that a
45 firearm can be used under a trapping license to safely
46 and quickly kill an animal that has been -- is in a
47 trap, but got anchored from a trap, or was in a trap and
48 escaped from that trap and is injured or wounded.
49
50

1 So, it does clarify those regulations
2 and in Park Service lands to be able to dispatch an
3 animal under a trapping license with a firearm. There
4 were other proposed prohibitions in the proposed
5 Wildlife Rule from the National Park Service, primarily
6 looking to provide support for a subsistence priority.
7 In particular, the hunting of caribou, the hunting of
8 swimming caribou on National Preserve lands in the Park
9 Service did receive feedback. There were, you know,
10 interests and concerns from tribal members who are no
11 longer rural representatives or are no longer rural,
12 federally qualified subsistence users residing in urban
13 areas that would like to return home and hunt in a
14 traditional way. So, those other provisions were not
15 adopted in this current rule. So, currently it's just a
16 prohibition on baiting on national preserve lands under
17 sport hunting regulations, and then clarifying that use
18 of a firearm under a trapping license.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, well I'm --
21 I was happy to see that the clarification under the --
22 for the trapping regulations because I've had animals,
23 you know, they get really super excited and they may get
24 -- they may break something and get loose, and so I've
25 had to dispatch them, you know, immediately after they
26 were getting away. So, I was happy to see that change.
27 That's -- it's, you know, best to take the animal, it's
28 -- it was caught. It needed to be dispatched anyway so,
29 I'm happy to see that aspect. Bear baiting is very little
30 bit -- very lightly used, even near the gates of the
31 Arctic Park where the subsistence are -- the Gates of
32 the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, Denali in
33 our region is lightly bear baiting is not a large factor
34 there. So, I -- so that's not an impact to this region.
35 So, I maybe in other regions but not here. So, I
36 appreciate your update there. Supposed to start my
37 generator at home, sorry. And so, I -- we need to move
38 on, I appreciate that update Eva. Any comments or
39 questions from the Council on that presentation? Seeing
40 none, that was fairly thorough, Eva so thank you very
41 much. So, we're going to be moving. Nissa.

42
43 MS. PILCHER: I'm just double checking.
44 Erin Julianus was going to give the BLM update that is
45 next, she did let me know that she had to run home really
46 quick, but she'd be back on at about 5:30. It's close
47 to that, I'm going to quickly -- the next agenda item
48 on under Bureau of Land Management is a news release. I
49 just wanted to let you guys be aware of that. I don't
50 know anything about it other than what's in the news

1 release. So, the Biden-Harris administration affirms
2 protection of 28 million acres of public lands in Alaska.
3 This is informational only, and that document is in the
4 supplemental material.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

7
8 MS. PILCHER: So, that's all. I just
9 wanted to share that information with you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right.

12
13 MS. PILCHER: But, Erin, did you get back
14 on?

15
16 (No response)

17
18 All right, if it's okay, we can go to
19 Liz with the next agenda item and other business, and
20 then when Erin does call in she can give her brief update
21 on the Central Yukon region.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, that'd be
24 great.

25
26 MS. PILCHER: Okay.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Liz.

29
30 MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon -- evening,
31 Mr. Chair, and members of the Council. I'm Liz Williams.
32 I'm the cultural anthropologist at OSM or one of them,
33 and I'm the anthropologist for this Council, and we
34 talked a lot about the fisheries resource monitoring
35 program. And that's where we provide funds through a
36 competitive process for all sorts of entities to conduct
37 research on subsistence fisheries in Federal public
38 waters. But there's also the partners for Fisheries
39 Research Monitoring, anyway, the Partners Program is
40 what we call it. And so, we wanted to remind you of that
41 because of the continuing resolution and the election
42 year, we're not really sure when we will get the funds,
43 but there will be a notice of funding opportunity at
44 some point where we will inform you of this, beginning
45 of this competitive process. And this is a unique
46 competitive grant because it's aimed at Alaska native
47 and rural nonprofit organizations to strengthen Alaska
48 native and rural involvement in Federal subsistence
49 fishery management. And this really gets to the heart
50 of the Fish and Wildlife Services, as well as DOIs intent

1 to increase co-stewardship, because a successful
2 applicant for this program can hire a fisheries
3 biologist, an educator, or an outreach specialist. And
4 this is salary money for a full-time position to work
5 on research, community harvest surveys, all these things
6 that involve local community sort of control and
7 creating their own method of harv [sic] of their own
8 harvest data collection method. So, it's a unique
9 opportunity.

10
11 We have at least six active partners
12 right now. We have Hoonah Indian Association, Yakutat
13 Tlingit Tribe, Qawalangin Tribe from Unalaska Native
14 Village of Eyak, Native Village of Napaimute, which is
15 in Aniak on the YK delta and the Orutsararmiut Native
16 Council out of Bethel, TCC has also been a partner and
17 because of the fisheries problems and the closures, a
18 lot of communities have asked us about funding for
19 culture camps, and we can't just provide money for
20 culture camps perse but if a successful applicant hired
21 an educator, fisheries biologist or outreach specialist,
22 they could incorporate planning and implementation of a
23 culture camp as part of their program. So, again, it's
24 the salary for a full-time permanent person to take care
25 of these types of things. And again, there's a lot of
26 complaining about turnover among Federal employees and
27 Federal agencies, and they don't get to know the people,
28 or once they do, they leave. And this is an investment
29 in growing our own in Alaska and hopefully hiring and
30 keeping rural Alaska native employees in government
31 agencies that work on resource management and all other
32 types of positions that exist in their hometowns or in
33 their home State. So, that's my brief presentation. If
34 anybody has any questions, you can contact Karen Hyer
35 or me, and we'll definitely let you know when the notice
36 of funding opportunity does become available.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thanks, Liz.
39 Is [sic] there any questions from the Council?

40
41 (No comment)

42
43 Seeing none, thank you for that
44 overview. Oh, Robert, I didn't hear it.

45
46 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
47 know, I asked this afternoon what was going to happen
48 if there was a change of presidency come November and
49 January. What kind of outlook are we gonna look at if
50 there was a change from Democrat to Republican?

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MS. WILLIAMS: Nobody knows.

MR. WALKER: That's the best answer I heard all day, thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Wow, thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, thanks so much, Liz. Appreciate that. And lis [sic] -- Nissa tells me that we have Aaron and, and Jeff on the phone. So, go ahead, Erin and Jeff. It's BLM, spotlight go ahead, go ahead and sign on, can you hear us?

(No response)

Are you there?

MR. Beyersdorf: Yes, I can hear you just fine.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, go ahead.

MR. Beyersdorf: Well, I'll let Erin go first, I know she's online as well.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Erin. We're not hearing.

MS. JULIANUS: Hey, can you guys hear me?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I can hear you now. So, go right ahead.

MS. JULIANUS: All set, Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: A little bit closer to the mic.

MS. JULIANUS: I was trying to figure out the star six thing, my goodness. Can you guys hear me now okay?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right, that's a pain, I've been there.

MS. JULIANUS: Okay, yeah. Yeah, so, this is Erin Julianus with the Bureau of Land Management in Fairbanks, biologist for the Central Yukon field office. You caught me, like, right in the transition of headed

1 home. So, I apologize for that, but, yeah, as Jeff said,
2 he's also on the phone and can speak to, you know, the
3 Central Yukon RMP and the Amber Road, if you guys have
4 any questions about that. I didn't submit a summary
5 report for this meeting for the Central Yukon. I think
6 this is the first time I've missed it in ten years, so
7 I apologize to the Council for that. But most of our
8 business is kind of same-old and my report is going to
9 be pretty brief today. So, the Central Yukon Resource
10 Management Plan has been finalized, and the record of
11 decision, which is kind of the final part of the process,
12 is in the final review status. So, it hasn't been signed
13 yet, but we should have a signed record of decision
14 soon. And we're going to have a new management plan for
15 BLM lands in the Central Interior for really the first
16 time in over, over 30 years, which is exciting to me and
17 I know, exciting for our staff. Let's see, we hired a
18 new manager for the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center.
19 His name is Brian Perry, he came up from Yellowstone,
20 worked for the Park Service, and we're really excited
21 to have him onboard. AIVC, the visitation at the Visitor
22 Center continues to be high. And we're gonna -- we plan
23 to open the winter Visitor Center, our Coldfoot contact,
24 contact station, again this year from mid-February
25 through mid-April, which has been a lot of fun in the
26 past, so. The one thing I guess the one maybe action
27 item for the Council is regarding some new signs we're
28 going to be installing at the Yukon River bridge at the
29 boat launch. Yeah, I was listening closely to earlier
30 public testimony about the trespass issues on
31 allotments, you know, especially during the hunting
32 season. And that's actually, in part, largely what the
33 signs are intended to address. So, we're working on
34 language for those signs. You know, right now it's going
35 to be Leave No Trace principles, and, yeah, reminders
36 about private land and ethics when using the river. So,
37 yeah, we're working on that language right now. It would
38 be great to -- we're certainly going to involve, you
39 know, tribal entities. But it would be great to, you
40 know, get the Council's thoughts on that as well, you
41 know, recognizing that, of course, signage can't solve
42 trespass issues entirely, but maybe it can help, so.

43
44 Let's see continued permitting
45 workload. Our permitting workload is always pretty high.
46 I don't think I have any -- anything in particular to
47 address as far as that goes. We're going to be renewing
48 the Anaktuvuk Community Winter Access Trail right of
49 way. So, working on that this winter. But yeah, same
50 old, you know, permitting guides, tour operators

1 construction projects along the Dalton Highway, so. And
2 then for Wildlife work, we just finished the composition
3 survey for the Rea Mountains and Hudson Hills Caribou
4 Herds in September. We're hopefully going to complete
5 the Middle Fork trend count again in November and maybe
6 help Glenn out with the Kanuti GSPE. As Marcy said we -
7 - they the Park Service was able to complete the distance
8 estimation or the transect dall sheep -- dall sheep
9 surveys and the 1A, 1B survey area again this year,
10 waiting for results on that. I continue to be grateful
11 to the Park Service, yeah, for their willingness to kind
12 of partner with us to get that work done every year. So,
13 let's see. I think that's about it for the updates that
14 I have. Kind of in the interest of time, yeah, and with
15 that, I would yeah, turn it over to Jeff if you'd like
16 to add anything, and we can answer any questions after
17 that.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I would like a
20 comment right now. I'm happy to hear that you're putting
21 up signage about -- at the Yukon River bridge to catch
22 the public as they're crossing not only into the areas
23 associated to the Road, but they're also like, there's
24 hundreds of boats launched. Bob Mauer was counted over
25 155 boats before and before they were finished launching
26 there, they're gonna go out and be getting onto a Native
27 allotment. So, I'm really happy to hear that you're --
28 I do you know, as you approach the bridge, I think you
29 need a sign previous to the bridge that points out, I
30 see you got a nice sign there for your Visitor Center,
31 but I also see you need to be -- have a little one
32 previous site, just a little one that shows that there's
33 something coming up. There's nothing before the bridge
34 as far as you know, services and stuff like that, so I
35 do -- I am happy to hear about that signage issue because
36 there's going to be like -- there's literally thousands
37 of hunters that cross over that bridge, and that's the
38 perfect place right in the bottleneck to catch them, to
39 inform them. And, and if they got a -- if they know it's
40 coming up, they would be able to turn in there. We have
41 a lot of people coming out of South Central that never
42 been up here before, because they lost the Nelchina Herd.
43 So, I'm -- I think one little sign up, you know, half a
44 mile up there by Pump six or something like that to
45 catch them before they cross the bridge. That'll,
46 that'll.....

47
48 MS. JULIANUS: South, south of the, yeah.
49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: South of the bridge
2 if, so that they, they can see that's coming up and then
3 they can get the information they need, which is going
4 to address this whole -- some of the trespass we got
5 here at Galena came from the bridge, that's where those
6 guys came from. So, that's where we need to get -- I
7 think you've got a great idea putting those signs there,
8 (indiscernible) down at the boat launches. That's
9 another place where they're gonna go dump their boat in.
10 So, thanks for all that information. I look forward to
11 seeing that -- results of that, and hopefully you get
12 the middle fork trend count and dall sheep survey results
13 for, for our upcoming meeting in, in February. So, Jeff,
14 you want to give us update also.

15
16 MR. BEYERSDORF: Yes, (indiscernible)
17 Chair Reakoff and members of the Council, this is Jeff
18 Beyersdorf, I'm with the Bureau of Land Management here
19 in Fairbanks and Chair Reakoff, I just -- I really had
20 just kind of an overall 30,000 foot update, and then I'm
21 just prepared if you had any potential questions, you
22 know, as Erin mentioned, in spring of this year, we
23 issued the final Environmental Impact Statement for the
24 Central Yukon RMP. With that part of the process is it,
25 is a request for a Governor's consistency review and any
26 protest, we did get a protest and that, that protest is
27 being handled at our headquarters office. Once that
28 protest is resolved, then we would look to issue the
29 record of decision. I -- as Erin mentioned, that's fairly
30 close. I expect that we may see it before the end of
31 October. And as, as you and members of the Council may
32 be aware, we selected alternative E within that RMP EIS
33 that was issued. We also had the -- this past spring,
34 we had the Ambler Access Road Supplemental EIS issued
35 in April of 2024, and then in June of this past year,
36 we had the record of decision. And with that supplemental
37 EIS and the record of decision, we chose the no-action
38 alternative for the Ambler Road. So, we're not issuing
39 a right of way for the Ambler Road.

40
41 A couple of other things I wanted to
42 pick up on what Rebecca Shaftel provided, we've been
43 also the recipient of some bi-partisan infrastructure
44 law Inflation Reduction Act funding, we've been
45 utilizing that for reclamation of streams to bring back
46 fish habitat. We've been doing that both in the Nome
47 Creek area up in the Whites and then also out in the 40
48 mile in Jack Wade Creek, a component of that, we've been
49 doing some assessment inventory and monitoring to find
50 out what the conditions are on the ground in regards to

1 some of the -- these stream and terrestrial habitats
2 there, and then the last thing I really have to share
3 is that I know there was a mention of the Indigenous
4 Sentinels Network and BLM has also been engaged with the
5 Indigenous Sentinels Network and working with some of
6 the representatives out of Circle with that. So, I'll
7 take any questions that you may have at this point.
8 Jack, I'm sure you have a couple for me, so.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, I -- one of
11 the elephants in the room is this PLO 5150 issue. This
12 Council is opposed to lifting that as recommended
13 several times that 51-50, the Dalton Highway corridor,
14 2.1 million acres is -- be retained predominantly
15 because of its value for subsistence users, for the
16 communities. Expanding now that -- with ice roads, you
17 just gave a report on -- again on this Ice Road down
18 Anaktuvuk, there's many subsistence users starting to
19 use that Road, and they have customary and traditional
20 use for caribou and stuff from that Road. So, we've --
21 I've enumerated all those various communities before
22 that, that was in your -- in the record. And so, I would
23 like the Council to know where we're at with 51 -- PLO
24 5150. I'm opposed, this Council's on the record is being
25 opposed to lifting that, and I would like a brief update
26 on what is -- the State made any priority, what is their
27 status since September 12, the last time I talked to
28 you.
29

30 MR. BEYERSDORF: Well, I think as far as
31 an update, what I would say -- through the Chair, to the
32 members you know, there was a Congressional hearing this
33 summer with our Director Stone-Manning at that
34 congressional hearing the PLO 5150 did come up. And there
35 were questions from Senator Murkowski and follow up
36 letters from Murkowski and Sullivan in regards to the
37 PLO 5150. What I can say is at this point, that process,
38 I would say, is on hold. BLM is willing to pick that up
39 if there's interest in moving that forward from the State
40 side and there's support at the department level for
41 that. And I understand your concerns. I've heard that,
42 and you and I know that we've sat down at the table and
43 had discussions on this and, you know, BLM if those, --
44 if that were to move forward, we remain committed to a
45 very public process for that, that would include public
46 engagement and comment opportunities from stakeholders
47 in regards to any issues, concerns and being able to
48 address them before we could make any decisions. But at
49 this point, what I would reiterate is that is in a hold
50 status.

1

2 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's exactly
3 what I wanted on the record from you. Jeff, I appreciate
4 that status report. And so, I did want to comment on the
5 BLM aspect, Central Yukon. We discussed this illo, illio
6 weed I forget how you pronounce the name, this invasive
7 weed that's been looked for in Bettles in the Vor Lake,
8 the mother load of where that's gonna come from, is from
9 Grayling Lake. Is there an inventory being done there?
10 We've got air taxis come flying off that lake all the
11 time, and they're going all over the refuges and stuff.
12 They're spreading, spreading -- if it's there, they
13 could be spreading it all over the place. So, I'd like
14 a status report of that weed an invasive weed in that,
15 in Grayling Lake specifically, because that's where --
16 practically all the air traffic is coming off out of a
17 lake system on the Road is at Grayling Lake, and there's
18 lots and lots of vehicles that could -- and various
19 things that park (indiscernible) close to that could
20 actually introduce that into that lake. So, I wanted to
21 bring that up. When I was -- when we were listening to
22 that report about Kanuti, you know, looking at Vor Lake
23 and Bettles and stuff, it's like, well, it might not be
24 there, but it could be going into Grayling Lake, and
25 that, that would -- may not -- that aircraft would not
26 be fueling up in Bettles got aircrafts that are flying
27 off Grayling Lake could be flying, you know, they're
28 flying their own -- fueling right there on the road. So,
29 can you give us a sort of an overview of what you've
30 done with that, Erin or Jeff?

31

32 MS.JULIANUS: Yeah, yeah, this is Erin.
33 The -- our fisheries staff did do an inventory for elodea
34 in Grayling Lake, specifically this past summer. So, and
35 I don't know if they have committed to do it annually,
36 but I know the past couple of years they have for, for
37 those very reasons.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, it should be a
40 requirement that the aircraft's are -- operators are
41 aware that they -- said that we do not want to bring
42 this into the Brooks Range, we do not want it
43 disseminated -- the permitted carriers they're flying
44 off of Grayling Lake should have to be hyper aware of
45 that issue that we do not want this introduced. The
46 other question I had, and that was -- is the guide
47 allocations for the commercial guide permits that are
48 issued for the BLM lands. The allocations were far too
49 high to start with, with the population status of the
50 dall sheep. I would like a report at the next meeting

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1 on that permitting. Steve are -- Steve your, your
2 permitting guide.....

3

4 MR. BEYERSDOF: (Indiscernible
5 - distortion)

6

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Say again.

8

9 MR. BEYERSDORF: Steve Taylor.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Steve Taylor,
12 exactly.

13

14 MR. BEYERSDORF: Yeah.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, I would like
17 a report on that at the next meeting, because that's a
18 very important issue. We have, you know, there's -- it's
19 basically on hold. We don't want to go into laps of our
20 closure with just a full on having permitted guides that
21 have more allocation than the population actually has
22 and without any regards to subsistence or any other
23 users. So, it's basically the allocation was set for
24 full allocation to the commercial use and not any
25 consideration of subsistence use. I also want to talk
26 about at that meeting about where these permits are
27 actually valid. In regards to the guide use area that
28 are associated to the Road. So, that's a heads up for
29 the next meeting. So, any questions.....

30

31 MS. JULIANUS: Yeah, I'll speak to, to
32 I'll speak, I'll speak to Steve about that, Jack. And
33 yeah, maybe we can just plan on him. Yeah, just coming
34 with Tim McGrath at the next meeting, so.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, all right.

37

38 MR: BEYERSDORF: And they will -- through
39 the Chair, to the members, you know, when I was in
40 Wiseman last month there were some local individuals
41 that expressed concerns in regards to guides, and I was
42 planning on following up one on one with them directly.
43 So, that has been heard, and, you know, as Erin
44 mentioned, we will -- we'll visit with Steve and we can
45 be prepared to present some information at the next RAC.

46

47

48 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, yeah,
49 that's -- I wanted that up on, you know, for -- at this
50 presentation. I wanted that up for the next meeting. So,

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1 any other comments or questions? Nissa, you got a
2 comment?

3

4 MS. PILCHER: I did. There was an acronym
5 that went out. It was GSPE, and Chris messaged me that
6 that means Geospatial Population Estimator. So, just to
7 get that on the record.

8

9 MS. JULIANUS: Sorry.

10

11 MS. PILCHER: Oh no worries, no worries.
12 And then also.....

13

14 MS. JULIANUS: Was that the only acronym?

15

16 MS. PILCHER: I think so, I believe so,
17 thanks, Erin. And then also just in my 530 state, I
18 accidentally shot right over the Office of Subsistence
19 Management's report and went to the partners
20 presentation. So, when we're ready the OSM report would
21 need to be given.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, well, we got
24 our agency's reports now, so, now I feel comfortable
25 about going to the other reports that we have here, and
26 I've lost track of where I'm at on this, so. Brent, go
27 right ahead.

28

29 MR. VICKERS: Thank you, MR. Chair,
30 members of the Council, on behalf of the Office of
31 Subsistence Management. Oh, for the record, this is
32 Brent Vickers, Office of Subsistence Management and I
33 want to thank you all for your service and exceptional
34 work that you have done on behalf of your communities
35 and user groups. We value your expertise and your
36 volunteer contributions of your knowledge, experiences
37 and time with the regulatory process. All right, OSM
38 administrative move. At the request of many stakeholders
39 made during listening sessions and tribal consultations
40 across the State, Congress has administratively moved
41 OSM from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service directly to
42 the Office of Assistant Secretary -- within the Office
43 of Assistant Secret [sic] -- Assistant Secretary Policy,
44 Management and Budget. This move became effective in
45 July -- July 15th, 2024. So, just a few months ago. This
46 move is one of many efforts that the Department of
47 Interior is making to strengthen Federal Subsistence
48 policies and structure, and to ensure that the
49 federally-qualified subsistence users and Alaska native
50 peoples [sic] have an opportunity for meaningful

1 engagement in the Federal Subsistence Management Program
2 implementation. This move is a response to the concerns
3 and input of Alaska native communities and people, many
4 of whom rely on subsistence uses and to the need to
5 enhance program operations for all federally-qualified
6 subsistence users, particularly in the face of a
7 changing climate.

8
9 OSM responsibilities and functions of
10 administrative support to the Federal Subsistence Board
11 and Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils remains the
12 same following this move to the Office of Secretary.
13 Federal Subsistence Management programs operations
14 continue seamlessly, and the regulatory cycle is going
15 on without any interruptions. If you need to reach out
16 to OSM staff, we now have new email addresses that have
17 been updated on our website. The main contact phone
18 number remains the same (907) 786-3888 and our main email
19 address is subsistence@ios.doi.gov. I'll just say from
20 -- personally, I think that working with the Office of
21 Secretary has been excellent so far. They have been very
22 eager to learn, to help us, to take on -- help us get
23 through the transition, we've had weekly meetings, bi
24 weekly meetings with different groups and everything
25 you've heard from Eric Werwa, he's been great, his staff
26 has just been excellent. I also -- I'll just be honest,
27 I'm very happy with the move so far. I've been very
28 happy with Office of Secretary, even though they're in
29 D.C., they've been very -- they've been communicating
30 with us daily. Also, I just wanted to mention in regards
31 to the move relation, that this is sort of a side note.
32 I've heard murmurings and even read that because of the
33 move, OSM was not able to provide funding this cycle for
34 the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, FRMP. That
35 is inaccurate, we didn't -- basically didn't have money
36 and we had to make that decision before the move -- that
37 Congress passed the move. And really it came down to --
38 we funded more projects than usual in our last cycle
39 because we had some leftover funds from the Covid years
40 and not traveling. So, we decided to then invest a lot
41 more money into the FRMP. We are continuing to fund all
42 those projects at the same time with the -- we don't
43 have -- we haven't had a budget increase with the
44 continuing resolutions that have been going on, but we
45 have been able to hire some new staff and fill in those
46 vacant positions that have been vacant for years. So,
47 really, we just didn't have any funds to spend. It's
48 very unfortunate both -- everyone at OSM was very
49 disheartened when we really just had to face we didn't
50 have the funds for that and just wanted to mention that

1 cause I had heard it was in regard to the move, but that
2 had nothing -- we are, yes.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And what is the
5 prospectus for funding, future funding?

6

7 MR. VICKERS: We -- well, it all comes
8 down to Congress and everything, but we have put in
9 requests for more money for the FRMP, as well as funding
10 for a Wildlife monitoring program.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, being under
13 DOI's Policy, Management and Budget, maybe they got
14 deeper pockets somewhere.

15

16 MR. VICKERS: You know, I don't know how
17 it all works. Until we have -- we'll see with the new
18 elections and the new Congress, if they're able to put
19 it forth, a new -- the budget request for us, and that's
20 all out of our hands.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right, right.....

23

24 MR. WERWA: Hi, this is Eric Werwa, I'll
25 just say, yeah, again. Congress determines the depth of
26 our pockets. We will -- they will be as deep as the
27 amount of money that we are given to use.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Understood, Eric.
30 And what is your last name again? I keep missing it.

31

32 MR. WERWA: It's a Werwa, W-e-r-w-a.

33

34 MR. VICKERS: I'll mention that Eric is
35 currently on the phone at 9:30 p.m. East Coast time,
36 It's great to hear you, Eric. Thank you for joining our
37 meeting.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I like that
40 dedication, Eric. I appreciate you being on the phone.
41 I was requesting that somebody from DOI monitor these -
42 - this meeting, and so, you can see the kind of
43 consternations that we're having during these
44 deliberations and with the various issues. So, I'm happy
45 you're getting the broader perspective of this -- how
46 this Council is working. So, thank you very much for
47 being there. Go ahead and continue, Brent.

48

49 MR. VICKERS: Okay, thank you. Some

50

1 information on correspondence, which I know is always
2 of interest to this Council. We like to let you know
3 that -- all know that we've been very aware of the
4 frustrations that the Council have been expressing about
5 correspondence, particularly the slow or non-existent
6 responses back to you. This is an area that we have
7 hoped our recent move would improve, and I'm happy to
8 let you know that we're already seeing positive movement
9 on this front. The new direct lines of communication
10 between our office and the Secretary of Interior's
11 Office have allowed us to work with them on getting
12 these letters, the attention they deserve. Members of
13 the Secretary of Interior's Office are reviewing the
14 current set of letters sent to the Secretaries, are
15 digging in on the issues, and hoping to provide signs
16 of progress back to the Councils in the near future. We
17 are looking forward to sharing more information with you
18 all as responses and courses of action are developed
19 around this issue. You have all highlighted.

20
21 Update on the Wildlife Final Rule in the
22 2024-2026 regulations booklet. The Final Rule for the
23 Federal Subsistence Management Regulation for the
24 Harvest of Wildlife on Federal Public Lands in Alaska
25 for regulatory years 24 through 26, have been published
26 in the Federal Register and went into effect on August
27 29th, this summer. The regulation booklet are [sic]
28 available online on the Federal Subsistence Management
29 Program website, or hard copies can be mailed to you
30 upon request.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I want to comment
33 on that issue. The publishing of that Rule, and the
34 adoption of the actions taken by the Federal Subsistence
35 Board was picked up by the sport hunting communities,
36 and so they felt that the regulatory changes that the
37 Federal Subsistence Board had made were not actually
38 valid, and my brother in law was taking -- he was in
39 communication with some of these people, and it was like,
40 no, they passed the regulations. It's actually the
41 regulatory changes that have been made. But the
42 publishing -- there was public that was under the
43 perception that because they were not published in the
44 -- in finalized until August 29, were not valid
45 regulations until that time. So, this is another issue
46 of making sure that once the Federal Subsistence Board
47 makes those -- that -- those, those regulations have to
48 be adopted before July 1. They have to be published
49 before July 1. That's the regulatory year for, for the
50 adoption of the -- so, there were people maybe thought

1 they could hunt illegally in closure areas or whatever
2 because those regulations weren't published. I wanted
3 to bring that up at this meeting because this regulate
4 [sic] -- regulation book wasn't even available to my
5 community. This is the first time I've seen one. We
6 didn't get -- we didn't have them at the Visitor Center.
7 I didn't -- I have not had one. These have to be sent
8 out to, to the communities. You know, you don't have to
9 send me a pile of them. But I mean, I deal with the mail
10 in my community, in my area. So, I deal with the mail
11 so, you could've sent me ten of these and I'd be good,
12 but nobody had one of these. So, you know, there's --
13 there are some issues with the delay of the publishing
14 of the Final Rule and then the production of this handy
15 dandy, referred to as the handy dandy that has to be
16 finalized. And, the Federal Board met in April, those
17 regulations should be going into -- be immediately
18 published in the Federal Register so that they -- that
19 they're finalized by July 1, at least finalized by July
20 1. This book may be -- take a little to get published,
21 but the reality is there's people that seem to think
22 that those regulations are invalid until that's
23 published in the Register. And so, I would, I want to
24 bring that up, I want you to analyze that, that position.
25 But I want you to be aware that that's what's actually
26 going on.

27
28 MR. VICKERS Yeah, thank you for that. I
29 know that the length of time it's been -- the extreme
30 length of time, the slowness of getting these things
31 published, has been a huge source of frustration on our
32 part. I can name some people who practically have ulcers
33 waiting for the Final Rule to get published. This is,
34 again, something else that we hope gets sped up with our
35 move to the Office of Secretary, because it's, again,
36 just going through hoops and us waiting and -- but what
37 I really appreciate is your feedback and knowing the --
38 what -- how people interpret that. And so, we can at the
39 very least improve how we communicate to the public when
40 these things are taking longer than we had hoped, and
41 that's great to know. So, thank you for your input on
42 that.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, I thought that
45 was opportune time to have discussed that, you know, the
46 -- this publishing date and what that actually -- what
47 the results of that actually is doing. So, and I'm glad
48 that Eric's on the phone there to hear that aspect of
49 this, of this regulatory process. We went through a huge
50 Board meeting stuff. But up until that's published, the

1 public doesn't think that it's actually valid. So, I --
2 continue I'm just bringing up a point there, thank you.

3

4 MR. VICKERS: Okay, thank you again.
5 Update on the regulations regarding the Federal
6 Subsistence Board composition. Based on requests during
7 joint consultations, the Department of Interior and
8 Agriculture are in the process of revising the
9 regulations concerning the composition of the Federal
10 Subsistence Board. The Final Rule regarding this
11 revision is expected to be published by the end of this
12 fiscal (indiscernible) well soon. It was expected to be
13 in end by -- the end of September, but we haven't seen
14 it yet, so hopefully soon. The departments are expected
15 to add three public members to the Board. These members
16 will be nominated or recommended by Federally recognized
17 Tribal Governments and will be required to have certain
18 knowledge and experiences. The Rule will also define
19 requirements used to select the Board Chair, and will
20 affirm the Secretaries authorities to replace Board
21 members and the Secretary's responsibilities and
22 oversights regarding the Board's decisions. The rule
23 will become effective 30 days after publication in the
24 Federal Register. Update on deferred Wildlife Proposal
25 WP 24-01, a proposal to sell the hides of brown bears.
26 At its public meeting in April 3rd, 2024, the Board
27 deferred its action on Wildlife Proposal, WP 24-1 a
28 request to allow the sale of brown bear hides taken
29 under Federal regulations. Board's justification for
30 deferring the proposal was two-fold one to allow time
31 to explore options for federally qualified subsistence
32 users to obtain a permit allowing the sale of a hide
33 from Federal agency, and two to potentially establish a
34 work group to negotiate with the Alaska Department of
35 Fish and Game concerning the use of its permit to sell
36 a brown grizzly bear hide and or skull.

37

38 Our update is that ADF&G is not able to
39 permit the sale of brown bears on behalf of the Federal
40 Subsistence Management Program if the proposal is passed
41 as submitted as discussed by the Board. In other words,
42 ADF&G cannot permit the sale of brown bear hides taken
43 in units with one brown bear limits under Federal
44 regulations. OSMs therefore exploring opportunities for
45 federally qualified subsistence users to a permit -- to
46 obtain permits from Federal agency. We will update the
47 Board on this option at the Fisheries Regulatory Meeting
48 in February 2025.

49

50

1 OSM staff updates, would like to provide
2 you with the most recent OSM staffing updates since the
3 All Council meeting held in March of this year, OSM
4 welcomed our new acting or temporary director, Ciisquq
5 Crystal Leonetti. She will be in this acting role until
6 the end of November and her permanent position, Crystal
7 is Alaska Native Affairs Specialist at the U.S. Fish and
8 Wildlife Service. Among regular OSM director
9 responsibilities, Crystal has been leading OSM through
10 its administrative move and is doing a tremendously
11 wonderful job. She really is, She's doing great. OSM
12 Director's position was advertised on September 5th and
13 closed on September 25th, 2024. OSM had some staff
14 departures, Theo Matuszkiewicz, OSM Supervisory
15 Regulatory Specialist retired in July after over 20
16 years of faithful service, and the OSM, staff will miss
17 his greatly -- is in-depth knowledge of regulations, his
18 kind advice and wonderful sense of humor. Justin Kohler,
19 who was an OSM fisheries biologist, has been acting in
20 his position, the Regulatory Specialist in the interim,
21 and was able to jump right in and ensure that OSMs final
22 and proposed rules, as well as meeting announcements,
23 are seamlessly moving through the approval and Federal
24 Register publication process. This position will be
25 advertised for permanent hire fairly soon. Kayla
26 McKinney, OSM Subsistence Outreach Coordinator, left OSM
27 to move to another State. Lee Honig and Sherrie Gould
28 Fares are covering some of this position duties in the
29 interim while performing their regular duties, and
30 they're doing superb jobs. The vacant position of the
31 Subsistence Outreach Coordinator will be advertised in
32 the near future. We encourage all individuals with
33 diverse outreach skills and interests, in working in
34 subsistence issues and rural communities to apply.

35
36 In August, we were also saddened to
37 learn of the departure of OSMs Deputy Director Amy
38 Howard. She left the Federal service for a new job with
39 Aleut Corporation as the Director of Lands and Natural
40 Resources. Her last day with OSM was August 30th. While
41 congratulating Amy on her new job, we will sorely miss
42 her inclusive and fair management style, her great
43 support for the entire OSM team and her smile. Katya
44 Wessels, who was the Council Coordinator -- Coordination
45 Division Supervisor, is serving and acting as -- serving
46 as Acting Deputy Director until the end of October. After
47 that, God help us all, Brent Vickers, myself, will serve
48 as Acting Deputy Director for the next two months.
49 Litigation uptake, a detailed litigation update was
50 provided to the Councils at the March 2024 All Council

1 Meeting. Since then, in the Kake Emergency Hunt, which
2 is the Alaska Department of Fish and Game versus Federal
3 Subsistence Board. The matter briefing is now in
4 progress before the Ninth Circuit Court in the Kuskokwim
5 matter, the District Court found in favor of the U.S.
6 and all claims and enjoined the State from taking any
7 further actions and violating Title 8 of the Kuskokwim
8 River. The State has appealed, and a briefing has just
9 recently commenced before the Ninth Circuit Court, and
10 that concludes my updates, thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, thanks so
13 much, Brent. That's a -- that was a mouthful.

14
15 MR. VICKERS: Yep.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so yeah,
18 that's, that's a lot of good information there. And so
19 I was -- yeah, Amy, Amy did a great job. She was a real
20 good person. I -- sorry to see that private sector
21 poaching off good people like that. That's, that's
22 annoying. So, I think that all of these things are very
23 pertinent, and I think that it's -- it helps the Council
24 understand the inner workings of how the Federal program
25 works with OSM, and so, so, I'm glad that you're at our
26 meeting here since you're gonna be stepping up closer
27 to that fire. Just hope you don't singe your beard there.
28 That's a hot seat. So, where are we at there, Nissa?

29
30 MS. PILCHER: Well, now we're into other
31 business. We already did A, the -- Liz gave her update
32 on the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program. And
33 the rest of the agenda is pretty much mine and it will
34 go quickly.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right. Go
37 ahead, Nissa.

38
39 MS. PILCHER: So, next up is the 805C
40 report. If you guys have a copy of that. Why did I --
41 Oh, there it is. So, it's on page 123, I believe, of
42 your meeting book, for some reason, I didn't put it in
43 my notes.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 123?

46
47 MS. PILCHER: Yep. So, the Board action
48 differed from the Council's on five proposals that were
49 found on the non-consensus agenda. Most of those were
50 different for what I would call administrative reasons,

1 and not that the Board differed from your reasoning,
2 like one was deferred, that kind of thing. But you have
3 it in your book, you can review it at your leisure, and
4 I believe it was sent to you as well. So, that's all I
5 have on that agenda topic, unless there's questions.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No, I don't have
8 any questions on that.

9

10 MS. PILCHER: Okay, the next is 2025
11 Council application and nomination open season. So, as
12 we are all aware, this Council does have two vacancies
13 and there will be a couple of seats expiring come
14 December of 2025. That is what's going on. The roster
15 in the book is old Tommy. So, yours would reflect a much
16 higher date. So, you're totally fine. Tommy has actually
17 been recruiting prospective members and introducing them
18 to me. Please, please do so. I will gladly talk about
19 this program to anyone if you want to send them my
20 direction. So, please help spread the word about the
21 upcoming open season, as well as the two vacancies that
22 also need to be filled. And especially those who reside
23 in the mid to headwaters of the Kuskokwim and now that
24 we have lost member Whitworth, normally I would do a
25 plea for the GASH region as well, but now we have member
26 Walker with us. So, for those members whose term will
27 expire in December of 2025, so that's next year, I will
28 make sure that you are fully aware and trust me, I will
29 pester you until you get your application in, or you
30 tell me to leave you alone, that you're not putting it
31 in. So, don't worry about missing that. The next action
32 or the next item is correspondence update. This is a big
33 chunk of your agenda, but it is -- these were all mailed
34 or emailed to you, but I just wanted them in one location
35 for you to be able to review.

36

37 These are all letters that your Council
38 sent or joined in other -- with other Councils to send.
39 Such as the Quadrilateral Council letteral -- letter
40 concerning the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. I won't read
41 them, they're in front of you, but those were all
42 approved and sent out to everybody that needed to get
43 them. That was on the header and the CC list. I did
44 include two other pieces of correspondence for you as
45 informational only, in case you were interested. The
46 Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group wrote a
47 letter concerning trawling and Kuskokwim Bay. I believe,
48 to the Federal entities. And then the Office of
49 Subsistence Management just sent a letter to the North
50 Pacific Fisheries Management Council on communication

1 with Councils regarding chum salmon bycatch. They had -
2 NMFS had a very short comment window about this subject.
3 And OSM was able to submit a comment since really no
4 Councils had an opportunity to do so. It is also listed
5 -- it is also in there for you to read as well. So, that
6 concludes correspondence. The next is the Board of Fish
7 Agenda Change Request update. We did already talk about
8 this a couple times. That is the ACR that was submitted
9 for Area M revolving aggregate seine length. So, that
10 is gonna go before the Board of Fish the end of October
11 at their work session to -- for them to debate the merits
12 of it meets the ACR or not, if they choose not to submit
13 it or not to further it into a proposal as an out of
14 cycle proposal, the Council has directed me to submit
15 it when it is in cycle I believe, which is next year and
16 that will be done. And also, the Council did direct me
17 to seek other interested parties that were interested
18 in co-signing that has already started. And I will
19 continue to do so up until, like we figure out if it's
20 going to be a proposal or not. Oh, and then the next,
21 the next one will actually take a while, sorry. But that
22 concludes everything other than declining balance cards.
23 So, bear with me, this is the last agenda item. So, as
24 you have heard, OSM moved out of the Fish and Wildlife
25 Service and were under the Secretary of Interior. This
26 transition gives us the opportunity to revise some of
27 our administrative processes, such as the way we process
28 travel for Council members on official business. OSM is
29 considering ways to make -- considering ways to make the
30 way we process Council member travel more efficient and
31 user friendly, and we'd like your feedback on this
32 matter.

33
34 Currently, Council members receive
35 about 60% of their estimated total per diem in the form
36 of a check at the start of each meeting, which is called
37 a travel advance. The remainder of this is mailed to you
38 in a second check once all the travel vouchers are
39 processed after the meeting ended. Rather than
40 continuing to issue and mail checks, we are considering
41 switching to a declining balance card. These are like
42 debit cards that 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 a card is lost, it can be replaced, but it
49 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.
2 There's a set limit on there, so, like there's a certain
3 amount of money loaded onto the card.

4
5 Yeah, exactly. Your coordinator will be
6 able to tell you how much per diem has been deposited
7 onto the card, and the cards can be used to pay for
8 expenses such as meals, taxis, groceries; taxi and
9 parking receipts would still need to be submitted to me
10 so I could get you reimbursed. OSM will continue to book
11 flights and lodging. Council members would use their
12 declining balance card when they check into a hotel or
13 to other accommodations. The remaining per diem owed to
14 Council members after the meeting would be direct
15 deposited into your bank account. Any ATM fees would be
16 reimbursed as part of this direct deposit, as well as
17 any unused portion of the travel advance funds on the
18 card. The card will be turned off between the meeting,
19 so it can't be accidentally used. If OSM decides to
20 proceed with using these declining balance cards, then
21 in order to set them up -- here's the catch, we will
22 require Council members to submit forms to us that
23 contain personal identifiable, personal identifiable
24 information such as your date of birth and banking
25 information. Please know we respect your privacy, and
26 this information will be confidential. Declining balance
27 cards are potential -- a potential new tool and no final
28 decisions have been made, we're hopeful that we could -
29 - that they could help reduce the administrative burden
30 that comes with processing travel for the over 100
31 Council members twice a year, and help you receive your
32 per diem payment more quickly.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can we comment on
35 that?

36
37 MS. PILCHER: Oh, please do, to help us
38 evaluate this change, OSM would like to hear your
39 feedback and questions. And this is a topic that all
40 Councils are discussing, please be candid.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I would be okay
43 with that, but I do know people that don't have bank
44 accounts and they might not be able to accommodate this
45 methodology. So, I think there should be an alternates,
46 you know, some people can, can do it this way or we can
47 maintain the old advance and check method, which the
48 checks can actually be cashed when people are in
49 Fairbanks or something. But I would be concerned about
50 Council members -- I've known many Council members and

1 I've -- they would probably not be able to utilize this
2 and would therefore wouldn't -- so, they might be able
3 to get the card, but they don't have a bank account to
4 deposit the money into. So, the balance could actually
5 be -- if there's a balance due, they could just send
6 them a check. That would be the way to do that. They can
7 give you the card, okay here's your card it's all loaded
8 up. You can run it when you get into Fairbanks and you
9 can eat and all that. But if there's still additional
10 funding there, you didn't use it all. You only eat once
11 a day and you might end up with extra money like me. I
12 -- you would just -- the person would get -- receive a
13 check in the mail or they could submit their -- they
14 might not feel comfortable putting out all their bank
15 information because of breaches and security or
16 something. So, that would give the Council member the
17 option of, of using the card, but then the balances
18 would then be transmitted back to them with a check if
19 they didn't feel comfortable or didn't have an account.
20 Those would be the -- that would be my main comments to
21 protect our Council members. We got to think about all
22 the various people that may be in the future. This might
23 not even be an issue in 20 years, but right now it would
24 be. Robert.

25
26 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That
27 discussion that we had at the last meeting too at the
28 very end was, you know, we've never been given a pay
29 raise, for how long, I think it should have been brought
30 here too. And what do we get in a day Nissa, 200 dollars?
31 50 dollars or what?

32
33 MS. PILCHER: Honestly, I don't know --
34 the per diem rate changes based on where you are. So,
35 like the State -- I could say specifically because it
36 doesn't change, but the Federal government changes and
37 I don't remember what Galena's are, I can look for it
38 though.

39
40 MR. WALKER: Okay, well, you know, I
41 Wanna [sic] make a motion to this, if I could.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON REKOFF: Go ahead.

44
45 MR. WALKER: Mr. Chair, member of the
46 Board, that -- I make a motion that we raise our meeting
47 fee 100% from what we are getting now. Mr. Chair.

48
49 MR. KRISKA: Sencond.

1 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, we don't have
2 quorum, that's probably the biggest problem we have
3 right now.

4
5 (Simultaneous speech)

6
7 MS. PILCHER: Yeah, yeah, if we don't
8 have quorum, and so the per diem is based on Federal per
9 diem. So, you guys get what Federal employees get when
10 they travel. And I don't know -- I don't know if there's
11 a process that would allow certain people that are
12 traveling on Federal business to get a higher rate than
13 others, my guess is no, but I can definitely write that
14 down. And this, of course, all falls back on the fact
15 that you guys aren't compensated, which has been brought
16 up a couple times. There's a joint letter, there's a
17 letter going up internal, Eric Werwa did hear your guys'
18 comments and concerns about, excuse me, not getting
19 compensated, but I am not sure that requesting that your
20 per diem be increased will go anywhere just because it's
21 based off of Federal per diem rates.

22
23 MR. WALKER: Yes, yes. I -- Mr. Chair.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Robert.

26
27 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
28 know, Nissa, I mean, I've been on Board for 15 years
29 before I took a 15 year break, and we've been talking
30 about this 15, almost 20 years ago, you know, and if I
31 would look at what percent rate that I would say we
32 would go over the last 20 years with like an 8% increase
33 into our funding as we are, not only us but the other
34 RAC Boards too, because I think that, you know, we're
35 running on, like, almost 25 years ago payment, because
36 we do pay taxes on this. And this is something that has
37 to be -- I think this really should be hashed out now.
38 I think we should have a negotiation team to go in and
39 talk, because if we don't talk, we're never going to get
40 nothing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Robert. We
43 transmitted a letter, you know, to regarding this
44 compensation issue, pointing out that we're actually
45 have deference with the Federal Subsistence Board. We're
46 not just advisory, we're actually making management
47 decisions. We made some valid points. They haven't
48 analyzed that aspect yet. So, we have -- we're -- we
49 already have a letter transmitted and so that letter was
50 finalized. And so, what would be the process now, that

1 letter will be received and be analyzed. And who would
2 be doing the analysis? Where Brent go?

3

4 MR. WALKER: (Indiscernible)

5

6 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, but anyways.

7

8 MS. PILCHER: My vague, vague
9 understanding of what's going on, and Cory's looking at
10 me like he -- oh no -- never mind, I'll take it. Is that
11 your Council wrote a letter, the Joint Council also wrote
12 a letter that got transmitted to the Federal Subsistence
13 Board. Then it went to the Department of the Interior
14 and Agriculture, since it's a joint -- And wait, is that
15 in a, it might be in a reply somewhere, hold on. It is
16 going up the ranks of whatever is.....

17

18 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's actually --
19 it's going, it's gone through the hoop, through the
20 Federal Subsistence Board. And it's targeting now --
21 targeting the true -- who the agencies; the Secretary
22 of Commerce and Secretary of Interior's offices. So,
23 that's where it should be right now. That's as high as
24 that thing has ever gotten. We've bounced that ball off
25 that wall many times. We've not hit that hoop yet. So,
26 now we've got it in the right court. So, I'm not
27 discouraged by how far that actually went, went through
28 the Federal Subsistence Board process. We're discussing
29 this compensation issue and, and where our letters were
30 at, at this time. They're at the Secretary's offices,
31 it's an analysis so, I'm encouraged that it went past
32 the Federal Subsistence Board because it always bounced
33 right back off that wall, right back in our face at the
34 Federal Subsistence Board. Robert is right, we've been
35 talking about this issue for 20 more than 20, 20 to 25
36 years. I've - many, many it's actually happened at the,
37 the Subsistence Resource Commission level also, it's
38 also happened at that level also. So, I'm encouraged
39 where it's at right now. We don't really need a
40 resolution. We ought to let them -- they're actually
41 analyzing it right now.

42

43 MR. WALKER: (Indiscernible)

44

45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No, they just got
46 it. When did they get it?

47

48 MR. WALKER: For the other one that we
49 asked for back in 19 -- what the heck was 2000.....

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1 (Simultaneous speech)

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The letters that we transmitted this -- the letters that we transmitted this -- those last meetings in March. When did it, the Federal Subsistence Board pass it on to the agencies, that would have been at their work session this summer.

MR. WALKER: Well, is Brent holding it up?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're asking.....

MR. VICKERS: I promise that wasn't me.

MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. Go right ahead, whoever's on the phone.

MS. WESSELS: Hi, this is Katya Wessels.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay Katya, go right ahead, Katya (distortion).

MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I would like to shed a little bit of light on the letters. So, the letters were received and they were processed by OSM and the Federal Subsistence Board considered them and decided to forward them to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, so, the -- several letters were -- some of them were sent early in the year. But specifically, I think the joint letter on compensation was sent to the Secretary of the Interior on July 29th. It was before the Board work session, and there's just more discussions happening now. You know, the letter is in the Secretary's office, but there's more discussions happening now on the process of how these letters will be reviewed, in which order, and to get you the Councils some answers to your questions and your requests are being considered, that's true. What you said, Jack, is exactly correct. So, that's where we're at, at this moment. I see a lot of positive movement that the Secretary's Office is paying attention to what is happening. And you know, we, we're hoping we'll get some kind of answers relatively soon. I cannot provide you with a date, but that's where we're at, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks for that clarification on the dates of when the Federal

1 Subsistence Board passed that through. That's -- so
2 right now it's actually gotten -- it's gotten way past
3 any, any kind of a recommendation. That recommendation
4 would fall flat because that's not how they analyze this
5 stuff. They use -- they have certain parameters, but
6 they're also gonna analyze whether these Councils are
7 actually falling under -- fully under Act -- Federal
8 Advisory Committee Act. We're actually, we're actually
9 not quite that. We're actually making decisions. So,
10 that would be -- the Federal Subsistence Board members
11 are paid a per -- a stipend, a per diem or allocation
12 for their day -- every day they're at the Federal
13 Subsistence Board meeting those -- they actually fall
14 under a specific status, and we would like to know at
15 the -- at our next meeting what that status of the
16 Federal Subsistence Board members are would be in a, in
17 a step right below those Federal Subsistence Board, but
18 they're making decisions, we're making decisions. So,
19 we're not -- this has moved for -- way further forward
20 than it's ever had before. And so, this -- were being
21 transcribed right this minute. Go ahead and talk Robert,
22 I want you to get lots of stuff on the record, go ahead.

23
24 MR. WALKER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair
25 and member of the Board that, you know, we have -- every
26 time we go out to rural Alaska to -- the price of living
27 is higher out here compared to what we do in Anchorage
28 and Fairbanks. And, you know, like, maybe we should even
29 get COLA, why not? Because we're, we're not, we're not
30 served breakfast, lunch or dinner. We are just given a
31 stipend and that's it, we're on our own. We're just like
32 -- but you do provide housing for us. But the point is,
33 is that we're going to be doing this if we're gonna have
34 to go buy our own breakfast, our own lunch, and our own
35 dinner, we should be given COLA. So, this would offset
36 what we're talking about. I know this is supposed to be
37 a wage Board thing, but, you know, this is the Federal
38 Government -- we're just like, hey, here you go bye and
39 we have to be hauled around like we're special people,
40 VIP people. I mean, we don't even have our own vehicle,
41 we got driver's license, I got a commercial driver
42 license. And I just find sometimes how we are being
43 treated like, you know, like just because you're the
44 Board that you have a right just to do this, this, this,
45 this and that's it. Because, hey, you know, we are
46 knowledgeable people. We are part of this selection that
47 has been done by the OSM. I've been here for a long
48 time, seven, 15 years before I took a break. And we're
49 still at the same place that I left 17 years ago. And I
50 just, I just kinda [sic] find it really hard because I'm

1 not asking to be special, but I'm just asking that how
2 we do things to make things work and we're being treated
3 like different people. I don't know, for I'm not saying
4 you guys are racist or anything, but I'm just saying
5 we're just like, treated like the same thing year after
6 year, after year, after year. We want you to do this,
7 we ask you to do that. And then when we ask for
8 something, well, we're gonna have to go back and look.
9 We have to look at the budget, we have to go over here.
10 And I, and I just think that, you know, there's time for
11 change, that this has to be re-evaluated. I'm, I'm just
12 hoping that Brent could be -- get up there and into
13 where he could be in charge of OSM and take a harder
14 look at all these issues that not only we talk about,
15 but what we have to do, too. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Robert. Go
18 ahead, Jenny.

19
20 MS. PELKOLA: I've been on this Board for
21 many years too, and I remember when I first got on that
22 we started talking about this. Well, I didn't understand
23 what they were talking about, but Robert is right. You
24 know, it's more expensive in the village, and you can
25 go to the store and you can see we have to pay, like,
26 what, 10, 11 dollars for a little tiny bottle of a box
27 of milk or whatever. So, it is more expensive to come
28 to the villages, and I remember back in time we had a
29 two and a half day meeting and, you know, like, now
30 we're running how many hours late, but over than we used
31 to, I mean yeah, we used to get done in two and a half
32 days, and we had a lot of material to cover, and you
33 know, some of them take a long time, and some of them
34 are short, which you know, it's too bad that they have
35 to make them short, because I like to hear everything
36 when they say, well, I'll just make this brief, you
37 know, because they feel like they're taking up too much
38 time, I think. And it shouldn't be like that if they're
39 gonna -- if they work hard to make a report, they should
40 give a report, the whole thing. And I try to keep up on
41 their -- what they're saying, and I get lost in some of
42 them because some of them are just to (indiscernible).
43 What do you call it? Repetet?

44
45 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Repetitious.

46
47 MS. PELKOLA: Yeah, repetitious. Which is
48 good too, because the more you hear something, it sticks
49 in your brain. But I agree with Robert, it's -- it is
50 very disgusting. Especially, like when you come to

1 somebody's hometown and they don't even get a lunch or
2 a sandwich or something. I remember in the past too here
3 in Galena when we used to have a meeting here, we --
4 they'd find somebody to make us lunch. And then, of
5 course, we had to pay for it, but, you know, so you
6 don't have to run out of this building and trying to
7 find somebody to give you lunch and or run to the store
8 and spend way over than what you, you just got, you
9 know, allotted for, you know, for your lunch. But I
10 think it's something we need to look at. And I just
11 thank you for bringing all the snacks, which is very
12 good, and I noticed there wasn't very much sweets, which
13 is very good for me, because as older you get, you don't
14 want to eat too much sweets. So, I thank you for whoever
15 brought the snacks. Thank you very much, Nissa, thank
16 you. And thank you for calling me at the last minute,
17 but you were already here. Otherwise, I probably
18 would've had a whole list to order anyway, that's what
19 I'd like to say.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Jenny. I
22 appreciate those, those comments, it is -- and it's,
23 it's good for DOI Eric to hear that there's - this,
24 these per diem rates that are analyzed down in Washington
25 D.C. do not reflect 11 to 18, 19 dollars a gallon for
26 fuel, and many villages, 7.50 is considered cheap, and
27 food items are between 100 to 2 to 500% over Fairbanks
28 shelf prices. And Fairbanks isn't noted for its
29 exceptionally cheap food prices. So, we're talking big
30 bucks here, and so these per diem rates that I was --
31 Nissa was scrolling through some of those, those are not
32 actually taking into account antiquated data, not taking
33 into account inflation rates, that's -- it's an
34 exponent, it's a compounded factor when the airplanes
35 have to fly the stuff out here. Well there's a whole
36 bunch of airplanes, she's gonna have to, you know, get
37 drowned out by freight planes flying in and out of Galena
38 here, flying fuel and stuff in and out of here. So, this
39 issue has been on and on and on, and this is as high in
40 the mark as it's gotten. I'm going to be real bummed out
41 if Office of Management and Budget down there and in the
42 Secretary's Office actually rejects what we said,
43 because we're gonna have to start all over. They're gonna
44 keep hearing it, they're going to keep hearing it from
45 every last Council for the rest of the program's life,
46 which could be hundreds of years on Federal public lands.
47 They're going to keep hearing it, that these Councils
48 are actually integral and recognized under the
49 reevaluation as a major part of the statutory
50 requirements to have a meaningful role in subsistence

1 management. And so, to have meaningful participation,
2 we're not gonna get participation if people can't even
3 survive on the, on the per diems. And basically, there's
4 other, there's other organizations that have a much
5 higher per diem rates and much higher stipends and so
6 forth to participate in meetings. So, I do hope that
7 this moves forward. I have higher hopes now than I've
8 ever had, being here for 31 years. I this is as high as
9 this ball has bounced. So, any further comments?

10

11 MR. WALKER: Jeff was shaking his head
12 (indiscernible). Jeff, you were shaking your head when
13 Jack was talking. Did you want to -- oh Brent, Brent,
14 sorry.

15

16 You were, you were disagreeing with
17 something Jack was saying.

18

19 MR. VICKERS: No, no, I'm not this
20 (indiscernible).

21

22 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No, no, he was, he
23 was basically affirming that these costs are
24 unbelievable here.

25

26 MR. VICKERS: Yes.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, he was like,
29 I know, it's just unreal. That was his reaction.

30

31 (Simultaneous speech)

32

33 MR. WALKER : I make a motion to adjourn.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We have -- we
36 wanted to have final comments, and Jenny wants to have
37 a final comment, Jenny's always got really good final
38 comments.

39

40 (Simultaneous speech)

41

42 MS. PELKOLA: My comments done, but.....

43

44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I want Jenny's
45 final comments, I like to hear them. Go ahead, Jenny.

46

47 MS. PELKOLA: Should I take an hour or a
48 half or what, I just want to talk -- reiterate about the
49 fish, fishing. Oh, Jenny Pelkola. You know, we talked
50 in depth about it, about not being satisfied with what's,

1 going on with the fish. So, I just think we need to
2 continue, continue hashing -- talking about it and doing
3 that and, and I say this almost at every meeting, I
4 think it's very important for all the members to try to
5 be on -- in person, because I think in our whatever you
6 call that thing at the end of the book, about our when
7 we're gonna serve the -- beyond a Council, we're
8 committed to, like, two meetings a year. So, I think in
9 person -- okay, I got that, and I think that we need to
10 -- I know we have ten RACs in the State, all in different
11 areas, and I think we need to -- when we have a meeting
12 like that lady from Eastern Interior was gonna sit in
13 in our meeting, which I think is good, I think we should
14 have interaction between, if we could, you know, with
15 the other RACs to see what they're doing cause I don't
16 know what's [sic] a lot of them are doing. Wanton waste,
17 it's sad to hear about that and McGrath, and I know if
18 those Greenpeace people heard about this, they'd
19 probably put a stopping -- a stop the moose hunting and
20 everything. I think I got the right group. And we also
21 -- when we have a meeting, we should maybe send an
22 invitation to the host village or to Tribal Councils,
23 you know, and we talked about the compensation and also
24 that should be for phone calls, but that's just
25 encouraging them to stay home so, I won't say that. I
26 take that back off the record. And we talked about this
27 in the past, an alternate person. We wouldn't have all
28 this phone problems and cutting in and out if the people
29 were here, and I think our meeting would move on faster
30 and I think that's all I have to say, thank you.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks so much,
33 Jenny. Appreciate those comments and Tommy, you got
34 final comments.

35
36 MR. KRISKA: We'll be here a couple of
37 hours. No, I'm kidding, I just agree with Jenny where,
38 you know, we should have a joint venture, some meetings
39 with the other RACs. I think it's very important, I do
40 talk to a lot of them on the phone every other day. I
41 talk to a lot of people out there about everything that's
42 going on with RACs and fishing and a lot of other things.
43 It's amazing to find out where I'm at in this time in
44 my life. I'm -- I put a lot into trying to do the right
45 thing for our people. Wanton waste that -- that's a real
46 bad thing, I kinda [sic] feel bad because I'm a
47 transporter myself and to get in that loop it's really
48 bad. I mean, I don't allow that around what I'm doing.
49 I talk, you know, to the guys I transport and tell them
50 that if you're out there and you get a moose, I want you

1 out of there within four days from the time you get your
2 moose or you can come out early and which they agree
3 upon. And that's what happened to all my clients this
4 year, they came out 2 or 3 days early. Yeah, you just
5 gotta talk to them, I guess. But some guys like with a
6 hundred hunters, I don't know how, how you do that. It's
7 just collecting money and dropping people and throwing
8 in people, throwing out people I don't know, that's a
9 different business. And it's just sad that the
10 transporter name is being used for that. I don't like
11 that. But.....

12

13 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Say Tommy, do you
14 require them to have an InReach to be able to contact
15 you when they want, when they've gotten.....

16

17 MR. KRISKA: Oh, yeah, I do have InReach,
18 I have satellite phones, I have -- all my boats have
19 radios. I check with them when I'm dropping another party
20 off, or go by them and let them know what's going on,
21 but they can contact me if they want out within 24 hours,
22 I told them, give me 24 hours, you need to contact me,
23 but they'll text my InReach and I get that at home
24 anywhere around services like in here, I can get a
25 InReach. And so, we're connected 100% of the time. So,
26 if they want out, I'll go get them. And being here in
27 person or either the alternate, I think that's something
28 I am -- this meeting is only for two days. I have to get
29 away from a lot of the things I do, and I'm a very busy
30 person, but this stuff is pretty important. If it could
31 all connects to everything else that we do through the
32 Tanana Chiefs and Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
33 Association and Mid Yukon Advisor. I'm on lot -- a mentor
34 for some other things, but the whole thing is connected,
35 big. I do a lot of talking with the guys. It's all
36 connected, and it's all for the people, so. I don't know
37 about this per diem thing. I don't know how that kind
38 of stuff. It's still down in few dollars. You should
39 give us 2 or 3 dollars and we'll call it good, because
40 I don't even -- I never even cashed that check at all.
41 I kind of ate in my boat and out of my boat ever since
42 I got here. Because it was just a hassle to be running
43 around to these stores. Jenny was right that, you know,
44 possibly have some meals fed to us. I mean, I go to a
45 lot of meetings in Fairbanks and everything is way
46 different. And I think that they got their things going
47 and they know what they're doing and -- but they're
48 never listened to, like we should be. I don't know, I
49 just -- I'm really happy to be at these meetings and
50 it's kind of frustrating that the outcome of a lot of

1 it over time, I've been into this thing since 1990 in
2 and out of a lot of different Boards and things getting
3 worse rather than better. I mean, I kinda [sic] feel, I
4 don't -- I said it once before that, you know, we give
5 all these departments and all these people this advice
6 and everything, and it seems like nothing comes of it.
7 It's -- personally, I think a lot of it is used against
8 us to better their ways of making money out of the
9 resources on this land, which is sort of a bad deal. But
10 I think you know that, like I said, that buck goes back
11 to the White House or wherever it's coming from. And
12 they have to listen, and they have to do what they gotta
13 do in order to get paid. So, I don't know, I'll leave
14 it at that, I could talk all day. But anyway, you guys
15 have a great time or go home safely because, you know,
16 I need to go home safely. But I just found out that two
17 hours ago or not even a person passed here in the clinic,
18 and it's my lady's half sister. So, you know, there's --
19 -- some of these things that you have to put up with and
20 then have a straight face is it's kinda pretty hard to
21 do so, but just be strong and things will happen. But
22 anyway, I have to let you go because I have -- gotta run
23 all the way home and that's down.....

24
25 MR. HONEA: I have my own.

26
27 MR. KRISKA: Oh! Robert have his own, he
28 says. But anyway, I better let him talk, thank you very
29 much and I see you guys at the next meeting.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks so much,
32 Tommy. I really appreciate you coming to the meeting and
33 all the good information you bring us, and my condolences
34 to your family. Go ahead, Robert.

35
36 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
37 members of the Board, staff, our recorder who, I gave
38 her a little extra candy here so she can make it home
39 tonight. It's always nice to come and listen and do some
40 friendly criticism here for our Governments, whether
41 it's State or Federal. Congratulations on Brent for his
42 position to be here. I look forward to work with you a
43 few more years, I hope so, and the rest of the staff
44 also, and our TCC lady too who has come here and really
45 -- I think TCC is moving up too, because I think they're
46 starting -- to start utilizing the Western Interior and
47 the Eastern Interior a little bit more as they go along,
48 which is great because I think government-to-government
49 relationship should be taking place with these other
50 entities too and the other RAC Boards. Money is something

1 that is a commodity that -- the high price of living is
2 -- I can't blame the Federal government for that, but I
3 think that it is partially responsible for that as we
4 speak, as the last four years with the democratic
5 government that we have, it certainly has brought up the
6 price. I notice when we go to stores in Anchorage, it's
7 almost like 25% of everything. A box of cereal back in
8 the Anvik cost almost 11 dollars, now it went up like
9 almost 5 dollars for a box of cereal. So, this is
10 something that even a box of milk went from 2.50 up to
11 4.50, that's 2 dollars, you know, and if you use 100 a
12 year, that's 200 dollars. So, all these things add up,
13 you know, and I'm not here to, to get rich of this
14 government here, but I'm just want to have things better
15 for our way of life. But it seems like we're losing. And
16 Tom's right, you know, we're fighting, fighting,
17 fighting, and we're -- and we're not seem like gaining
18 in any place. Seem like when I left and I came back,
19 we're at the same place because the Federal government
20 say we're here for your subsistence, but on the other
21 hand, this is public land. So, it still is a public
22 land, so, we didn't gain too much there. Trespass was
23 set up by the Federal, not by the Federal, by the State
24 government with the native claims under ANSCA here so,
25 you know, they know they can get away with it because
26 they talk among themselves. Cause I've been asked
27 questions about corporation land since I was a president
28 once. That they can come on your land and kill a moose
29 and you get caught and they get ripped up or something,
30 they go to court, they pay 500 dollar fine, they get to
31 keep the meat and the moose or whatever. So, this is
32 [sic] things that a lot of people don't realize that,
33 hey, this corporation land you can't do this, but there
34 are loopholes and everything that you do. So, anyway, I
35 enjoyed this meeting. I got to say what I had to say.
36 And we got our Chairman back. So, that is something that
37 is also nice, and I see we still have three vacancies,
38 two vacancies now on our -- so, our February meeting is
39 going to be interesting too, and a new recorder.
40 Congratulations to you on that one. Thank you, Jack,
41 thank you, members of the Board, thank you, staff. I'll
42 end it there.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thanks so
45 much, Robert. Good to have you back on the Council.
46 Always have lots of, lots of discussion and probing
47 various aspects of this whole program. I appreciate the
48 Council members that attended the meeting, I appreci
49 [sic] -- I've been there where those, you know, being
50 stuck on the phone and trying to deal with the phone

1 issues and, and I've -- I feel that we can improve that
2 aspect. We were dropping some of the calls because it
3 did exactly what I was afraid it was gonna do here. The
4 internet would dump us off and we would get our -- we
5 would lose, then everybody's got to dial back in. You
6 are on the other end of the phone. You're trying to find
7 out what's going on, you dial in, you're stuck -- we
8 lost I don't know, we probably lost at least close to
9 an hour on this whole dropping the call thing. It's
10 imperative that this program devel [sic] -- you hear
11 those crystal clear people, Serena she's talking on,
12 she's talking on Starlink, you hear that kind of, kind
13 of bandwidth, you know, there on Starlink. That's what
14 that is, and I wanted one here, I wanted one here. When
15 did I say that? Two months ago, a month and a half ago?
16 I wanted one here. And so OSM has gotta bite the bullet,
17 it's not that much. The time we lost here, all the wages
18 that was [sic] lost, the staff sitting around here is
19 cheap, is cheap stuff. You buy it, get the modern stuff
20 that's updated, and so there's this -- these Councils
21 every last ten Councils needs their own Starlink. If
22 they -- if there's the slightest doubt about what the
23 internet is. I've been on -- I've heard people in
24 Anchorage, bandwidth isn't that good if somebody's
25 sitting in their house, and sometimes in Anchorage. I've
26 heard people fading in and out. If there's - if the
27 slightest doubt that we're not gonna be providing a
28 public forum in the modern world then we -- and so we
29 should consider even at that point, moving forward with,
30 with video capabilities, then we'd have true interaction
31 with the public. This is stuff to think about at the,
32 at the OSM level. I'm not decrying what OSM has done
33 right now. I'm just saying that I was, you know, when
34 we got the capabilities, we got to be able to start
35 using it. So, that was -- but that was the way this
36 meeting went. I think we covered a lot of very important
37 issues. We gave a lot -- we got lots of public comments
38 and I'm super happy with TCC's movement forward, the
39 program is really accelerated forward. It was like flat
40 on its face, it was like years -- I was like, where's
41 TCC? Where's TC? Almost every meeting I was asking for
42 TCC, not present at all, no comments about anything. And
43 so, we've -- there's been a big movement forward, I'm
44 happy with that.

45
46 I'm happy with Kuskokwim River Inter
47 Tribal Fish Commission, Kevin is -- that they're doing
48 a lot of projects, I'm seeing a lot of good movement
49 forward with, with YRDFA. I'm seeing a lot of good
50 movement forward in the Federal subsistence programs,

1 and the refuges and parks are moving forward with getting
2 the data that these Councils need for proper fish and
3 wildlife management, for subsistence. And so, I'm
4 there's various people that sat through this entire
5 meeting. I'm really happy about that. And so, I'm looking
6 forward to our next meeting. There's a lot of important
7 issues on the horizon that are for our next meeting. And
8 so, the -- at that point, thanks so much for your
9 attendance, thanks so much for -- I'm real pleased with
10 your performance here. So, we are -- the Chair will
11 entertain a motion for, for adjournment.

12

13 MR. WALKER: I'll move.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Moved by Robert.

16

17 MR. WALKER: I'll move.

18

19 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair this is Tim.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, you, you came
22 back. Okay, I didn't know you were there, Tim. So, okay,
23 your final comment.

24

25 MR. GERVAIS: I would like to thank the
26 community of Galena for hosting the meeting. I'd like
27 to say excellent job to you Chairman Reakoff on
28 contributing your knowledge and managing the meeting.
29 I'd like to thank all the Council members for giving up
30 a week of their life to come to this meeting and
31 contribute. What you're saying and doing is important.
32 These communities, the people of the region and the
33 (distortion).

34

35 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Are you still
36 there, Tim?

37

38 (No response)

39

40 I think Tim dropped. Rogue wave,
41 apparently. So, I don't know if he's going to be able
42 to come back on. Tommy's dressed and needs to go to
43 Nulato and so I think.....

44

45 MS. PELKOLA: I second the motion.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny.
48 Those in favor of adjournment signify by saying aye.

49

50 IN UNISON: Aye.

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CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, meeting
adjourned.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through
189 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the
WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY
COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 3rd 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 15th
day of October 2024.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager