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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING

TELECONFERENCE - ALASKA
MARCH 30, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Anthony Christianson, Chairman
- Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
- Chris McKee, Bureau of Land Management
- Greg Siekaniec, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Don Striker, National Park Service
- Gene Peltola, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- David Schmid, U.S. Forest Service

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Teleconference - 3/30/3021)

(On record)

MS. DETWILER: This is Sue Detwiler, we're a couple of minutes before 2:00 but I'll just start with a kind of preliminary check to see which Board members and supporting Staff are online right now. And just in case folks don't know me, I'm Sue Detwiler, the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management. And I'm just going to quickly start with -- do a quick run through to see who we have online.

BIA, is Gene Peltola on.

MR. PELTOLA: Roger. Roger. 10-4.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Gene.

BLM. I understand Chad is not going to make it today, Chris McKee, are you here?

MR. MCKEE: I'm here Sue. Good afternoon, everybody.

MS. DETWILER: Thanks, Chris.

Park Service, Don Striker.

MR. STRIKER: I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Great.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Greg, I heard you.

MR. SIEKANIEC: Yep, thank you, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Dave Schmid, I heard you, you're on from Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, thanks Sue, I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Great. I'm not sure if Rhonda Pitka was able to make it, Rhonda are you on?

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1 MS. PITKA: Hi, yes, I'm on.

2

3 MS. DETWILER: Excellent.

4

5 And, Charlie Brower, Public Member, are
6 you on?

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 MS. DETWILER: Okay. I'm not sure if
11 Charlie's going to be able to attend.

12

13 Finally, Chair Anthony Christianson,
14 are you on.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I'm on,
17 Sue. Thank you.

18

19 (Pause)

20

21 MS. DETWILER: This is Sue Detwiler,
22 and I believe we are ready to go, we have a -- it looks
23 like we have a quorum of the Board members and we have
24 the Staff members who are supporting this call so I
25 would say we could go ahead and open up the call
26 Operator and then turn it over to the Chair to begin.

27

28 OPERATOR: Okay, and, Pippa, this is
29 the Operator again, I'm turning the call over to you,
30 correct?

31

32 MS. KENNER: Yes.

33

34 OPERATOR: Okay, all right, give me
35 just a moment and we will begin.

36

37 (Pause)

38

39 OPERATOR: Welcome and thank you for
40 standing by. All lines have been placed in a listen
41 only mode for today's presentation. The call is being
42 recorded, if you have any objections, you may
43 disconnect at this time. I will now introduce your
44 host, Ms. Pippa Kenner.

45

46 You may begin.

47

48 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Operator. This
49 is Pippa Kenner, and I would like to open the meeting

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1 by introducing the Federal Subsistence Board Chairman,
2 Tony Christianson.

3

4 MS. DETWILER: This is Sue Detwiler,
5 Chair, Tony Christianson, are you online still?

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 MS. DETWILER: Okay. So Tony may have
10 dropped off, I'm going to run through the list of Board
11 members again and make sure we still have a quorum in
12 case other folks got dropped off and for the record.

13

14 MS. KENNER: Sue, can you.....

15

16 MS. DETWILER: Did you have something,
17 Pippa.

18

19 MS. KENNER: Yes, please, Sue, it could
20 be that he has not made it on to the speaker's list and
21 I will check that now. Otherwise he's just on mute.

22

23 MS. DETWILER: Yeah. Okay.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm back on
26 Sue.

27

28 REPORTER: Tony, are you there?

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'm here,
31 this is Tony.

32

33 REPORTER: Thank you.

34

35 MS. DETWILER: Okay. So before we were
36 officially being recorded we did run through the -- do
37 a quorum call for the Board and all members are present
38 on the call except for Charlie Brower. So unless our
39 Solicitor thinks we need to go through on the record of
40 the roll call again I would just turn it over to Chair,
41 Anthony Christianson to kick us off.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hey, yeah,
44 welcome everyone, this is Anthony Christianson.
45 Welcome to the teleconference today, thank you for
46 taking your time. And we'll go ahead and call on Sue
47 there so she can review and adopt the agenda and get us
48 started for the day, and just ask, you know, before we
49 get started God Bless the proceedings today, and, thank
50

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1 you, Sue.

2

3 MS. DETWILER: Yeah. Okay, thank you,
4 Mr. Chair. Again, this is Sue Detwiler, Assistant
5 Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence
6 Management with Fish and Wildlife Service. And we have
7 one agenda item today, and let's see I'll just review
8 the agenda.

9

10 It's fairly short. One substantive
11 agenda item. After we review and adopt the agenda, the
12 main agenda item is for the Board to address the
13 Wildlife Emergency Special Action Request WSA21-02
14 which would increase the harvest limit from two to
15 three moose in the Unit 18 remainder hunt area through
16 the current season, which ends on April 30th, 2021. So
17 once the Board addresses that special action, the final
18 action would be to adjourn.

19

20 So I'd give it back to the Board to act
21 on the agenda.

22

23 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
24 Greg.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Greg, go
27 ahead, you have the floor.

28

29 MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah, I move to adopt
30 the agenda.

31

32 MR. STRIKER: Second, Park Service.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
35 that motion to adopt the agenda and second. Any
36 discussion.

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
41 all in favor say aye.

42

43 IN UNISON: Aye.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any opposition,
46 same sign.

47

48 (No opposing votes)

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
2 unanimously.

3
4 MS. DETWILER: Okay. So I guess that
5 brings us to the next action item which is to address
6 the Wildlife Special Action Request 21-02, and Robbin
7 LaVine is giving the analysis on that.

8
9 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Sue. Good
10 afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. My name
11 is Robbin LaVine, and I'm an Anthropologist with the
12 Office of Subsistence Management. For those of you
13 listening online you can find a copy of the analysis on
14 our website.

15
16 Emergency Special Action WSA21-02 was
17 submitted by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional
18 Advisory Council and it requests the Federal
19 Subsistence Board increase the harvest limit for moose
20 in Unit 18 remainder from two moose to three moose
21 through April 30th, 2021, which is the current hunt
22 season.

23
24 The proponent states the requested
25 action is needed to support subsistence uses and to
26 ensure longterm sustainability to the area moose
27 population. The proponent acknowledges the lower Yukon
28 River moose population is currently much larger than
29 can be supported by available habitat. They express
30 concern that this moose population is -- if this moose
31 population is not reduced then it is at risk of
32 crashing. The proponent underscores the urgency of
33 this request by pointing to the dramatically low 2020
34 salmon returns and the recent closure to the harvest of
35 Mulchatna caribou that have left many families without
36 enough food for the winter. They further state that
37 expanding harvest opportunity of the super abundance
38 moose population in the lower Yukon River will help
39 support sharing with those in need of subsistence foods
40 throughout the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region.

41
42 In early 2021 the Alaska Department of
43 Fish and Game along with Refuge Staff surveyed the Unit
44 18 remainder hunt areas of the lowest Yukon,
45 Andreafsky, and Paimiut areas. Unofficially, they said
46 preliminary numbers show increases in moose populations
47 in all three areas since the last time they were
48 surveyed. Staff estimate there are between 20 and
49 25,000 moose in that area and last year there were
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1 between 7 to 800 moose harvested. These preliminary
2 population updates were presented to the YK Delta
3 Council at their March 2021 meeting by the ADF&G area
4 biologist. He stressed that this lower Yukon River
5 moose population was still growing despite the very
6 liberal moose hunt regulations currently in place.

7
8 At the Council meeting, ADF&G Staff
9 also discussed the observed need for more subsistence
10 harvest of moose in other areas of the YK Delta. In
11 the Unit 18 Kuskokwim hunt area the number of harvest
12 tickets issued for moose greatly increased with over
13 500 additional permits issued this year reaching a
14 maximum harvest rate of near 10 percent. Official
15 population estimates should be available this week.

16
17 If this Emergency Special Action
18 Request is approved by the Board, the moose harvest
19 limit in Unit 18 remainder will increase from two to
20 three moose through the current hunting season ending
21 on April 30th. No effects are expected for non-
22 Federally-qualified users.

23
24 The requested increase harvest limit
25 could slow the continued growth of this moose
26 population, which would be a positive effect. In
27 addition the expanded harvest limit might promote
28 further sharing of moose throughout the Yukon-Kuskokwim
29 region and support subsistence families in need.

30
31 If this Emergency Special Action
32 Request is not approved by the Board, Federally-
33 qualified subsistence users, many of whom have limited
34 subsistence resources will not be able to take
35 additional moose from an area that is exceeding moose
36 population goals and habitat capacity.

37
38 The OSM conclusion is to support
39 Emergency Special Action WSA21-02 with the following
40 justification.

41
42 There is currently a demonstrated need
43 for more moose harvest opportunity to support
44 subsistence communities throughout the Yukon-Kuskokwim
45 Delta region and ample moose population in the Unit 18
46 remainder hunt area to help address this continuation
47 of subsistence use request.

48
49 Thank you all, and I'm ready for your
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1 questions.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that. Any questions from the Board.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Gene, good to hear you, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good to hear from you as well. Yes, Robbin, thank you for your presentation, I appreciate that. And I don't recall hearing it, but could you refresh my memory on which villages have a positive C&T with regard to moose harvest within GMU18 remainder.

MS. LAVINE: Oh, gosh, that's a lot. So that would be residents of Unit 18, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, Upper Kalskag and Lower Kalskag have customary and traditional use determination for moose in Unit 18, that portion of the Yukon River drainage up stream of Russian Mission, and that portion of Kuskokwim River drainage up stream, but excluding the Tuluksak River drainage. Residents of Unit 18, St. Michaels, Stebbins, Upper Kals -- Kalskag and Lower Kalskag have a customary and traditional use determination for moose in Unit 18, that portion north of a line from Cape Romanzof to Kusilvak Mountain to Mountain Village and all drainages north of the Yukon River down stream from Marshall. Residents of Unit 18, Lower Kalskag, and Kalskag have a customary and traditional use determination for moose in the Unit 18 remainder area of this customary and traditional use determination. And I would say that actually -- and I would remind you that the Unit 18 remainder hunt area is not the same thing as the remainder of the Unit 18 area discussed for customary and traditional use determinations. It's a complicated area.

So I would say all of those folks.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA. Followup, if I may. So, Robbin, the followup on that -- I appreciate the descriptor and the reason I was asking is in the analysis, one of the justifications providing the additional moose bag within this area is due to the high population. So with your recent effort going through those communities that are eligible to

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1 participate, if the Board chose to consider and chose
2 to act upon it, would there be an administrative
3 mechanism which would allow any Federally-qualified
4 user from outside the positive C&T area to go harvest
5 moose within GMU18 remainder, that could provide for
6 additional harvest if population rise is a concern at
7 this time.

8

9

Thanks.

10

11

12

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
other questions.

13

14

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

15

16

17

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Gene,
you have the floor.

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25

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, thank you, Tony.
Yeah, I was wondering if you could followup on that,
please, Robbin. Is there administrative action with
the Board's potential action on this special action
request which would allow for Federally-qualified users
outside the list you just referred to, to be able to
harvest from this population.

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27

28

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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MS. LAVINE: Thank you. Through the
Chair, this is Robbin LaVine. This analysis does not
address an expansion of the C&T. But those eligible
for participation in the hunt in Unit 18 remainder are
broad and inclusive of all communities in the Unit 18
area, unless somebody can -- unless somebody can
correct me, I believe it's expansive of the folks
within the Unit 18 remainder, and all of the villages
that I mentioned, but we have not requested -- or the
proponent did not request an expansion of the C&T or an
inclusion of all rural residents for participation in
this hunt, and that would take further analysis.

42

43

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44

45

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

46

47

48

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Robbin,

appreciate it.

49

50

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other

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1 questions from the Board for Robbin.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
6 well, thank you, Robbin, appreciate that. We'll move
7 on to Pippa Kenner, ISC recommendation.

8

9 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
10 the record my name is Pippa Kenner, and I'm the Acting
11 Policy Coordinator of the Office of Subsistence
12 Management here in Anchorage. I worked with the
13 InterAgency Staff Committee to develop a recommendation
14 for Wildlife Special Action WSA21-02.

15

16 They wrote: The OSM Staff analysis
17 provided a thorough and accurate evaluation of the
18 Emergency Wildlife Special Action Request. The
19 InterAgency Staff Committee concurs with the analysis
20 and recommends the Federal Subsistence Board approve
21 this special action request.

22

23 The ISC believes that this action will
24 not have significant effects on the status of the moose
25 population in the hunt area, it might be beneficial to
26 mitigating herd size amidst habitat limitations.

27

28 Additionally, this action will provide
29 more harvest opportunity for local people at a time
30 when other large land mammal and fish resources in the
31 area are depleted.

32

33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Pippa, appreciate that. Any questions for the ISC.

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
41 we'll ask if the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council Chair,
42 Ray.

43

44 MR. ONEY: Yes, good afternoon, Mr.
45 Chairman. Ray Oney for the record, Chairman for the
46 Yukon-Kuskokwim Regional Advisory Council.

47

48 As you know Unit 18 on the lower Yukon
49 River has seen a significant increase in the moose

50

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1 population in our area thanks to the moratorium that we
2 instigated back in the early '90s. As a result of that
3 we asked for a five year moratorium because of the
4 people that -- the hunters that were going great
5 distances to harvest their moose in Unit 21, I believe,
6 up in Paimiut area, Russian Mission area, that was our
7 main moose hunting area. And a lot of people have not
8 caught their moose because of the great distances that
9 they had to travel. A lot of times they would come
10 back with no moose, and as a result of that the people
11 in the Lower Yukon asked for a five year moratorium.
12 When the five year moratorium came there was an
13 increase in the moose population in our area, and as a
14 result of that the people in Unit 18 asked for two more
15 years of the moratorium. So in the late, I believe,
16 '90s, is when we had our first moose hunt. And as a
17 result of that we have begun to see increases in the
18 moose population in Unit 18 and over the years the
19 moose population has exploded. And we're continuing to
20 see the moose increase in our area and that has given
21 us to question the browsing that the moose depend on in
22 our area. And we've asked for a moose survey every
23 year just to see what the moose population is doing in
24 our area. And as a result of that we're still seeing
25 increases in the moose in our area.

26
27 And because of the salmon crash that we
28 had last year, both the chinook and the chum salmon
29 that were destined for the Yukon River has been the
30 poorest that I've seen over the years and not too many
31 people have harvested their needs for the winter. And
32 also the people on the Kuskokwim side, where they
33 depend on the Mulchatna Caribou Herd have also
34 decreased over the years and we're thankful that we are
35 beginning to see the increasing moose population in
36 those areas too, and we're thankful that people will --
37 hopefully will have an opportunity to harvest that
38 third moose.

39
40 And we are asking for support from the
41 Federal Subsistence Board to allow us to harvest one
42 more moose for the remainder of the moose season and
43 look at the next season of moose -- moose season. So
44 we're thankful that the Council were able to at least
45 look at some avenues of trying to increase subsistence
46 opportunity for people in our area.

47
48 Thank you.

49
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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
2 questions from the Board for Mr. Oney.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
7 thank you for calling in today, appreciate you sharing
8 that with us. We'll move on to the State liaison,
9 would you guys like to comment on this proposal.

10
11 MR. BURCH: Hello, Mr. Chair. This is
12 Mark Burch with the Department of Fish and Game. If I
13 may provide some additional information and comments.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, you have
18 the floor.

19
20 MR. BURCH: For the record this is Mark
21 Burch with the Department of Fish and Game. Fish and
22 Game supports this special action request.

23
24 The State season is segmented into
25 three moose seasons in Unit 18 remainder, the ability
26 to harvest multiple antlered bulls in the fall and to
27 encourage increased cow harvest. The first segment is
28 August 1st through September 30th for two moose, only
29 one of which may be an antlered bull. A person may not
30 take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf.

31
32 The second is October 1st through
33 November 30th, and the bag limit is two antlerless
34 moose, no antlered bulls.

35
36 The third is December 1 to April 30th
37 for two moose, those are any moose.

38
39 Antlerless moose hunting is allowed for
40 non-resident hunters in Unit 18 remainder. The current
41 season for non-residents is December 1st through March
42 15th and the bag limit is one antlerless moose.
43 Regulatory year 2017 was the first year for antlerless
44 moose hunts for non-resident, no non-residents have
45 reported harvesting an antlerless moose yet. We
46 anticipate that participation in this hunt will remain
47 low.

48
49 When we look at twinning rate, browse

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1 removal rate of the Paimiut survey area, we are
2 starting to see indication of resource limitation. The
3 trend along the Yukon is range expansion and growth
4 with some growth being very rapid. All indicators such
5 as twinning rates, calf to cow ratios and habitat
6 surveys point to a continuation of this trend in the
7 lowest Yukon, Andreafsky survey areas. Populations
8 within each survey area show growth over time with
9 little to no moose in the early 2000s to the current
10 population. The population for 2021 is estimated to be
11 23,669 moose in the three survey areas in GMU 18
12 remainder combined. The Paimiut survey area population
13 has increased from 3,793 moose to 4,786 between 2018
14 and 2021. The population in the Andreafsky has
15 increased from 2,748 to 6,852 between 2012 and 2021.
16 In the lowest Yukon survey area it has grown from 8,226
17 to 12,031 from 2017 to 2021.

18
19 The reported harvest of moose in Unit
20 18 remainder has increased over the last 10 years as a
21 result -- as the season and bag limits have continually
22 been liberalized by State and Federal regulators. As a
23 result annual harvest has increased by 200 moose or
24 more. The annual harvest might be stabilizing around
25 700 moose or more right now. There's a positive C&T
26 finding for moose in Unit 18 and an ANS of 200 to 400.

27
28 The Department has no biological
29 concern with the additional harvest. Hunt managers
30 have lost the ability to control the moose population
31 in the remainder. The moose population continues to
32 grow, even though it's the most liberal season and bag
33 limits for moose in Alaska. The population is on a
34 trajectory to over shoot the carrying capacity of the
35 winter habitat along the Yukon River in the remainder.

36
37 Finding ways to increase antlerless
38 moose harvest opportunity will benefit hunters and may
39 also slow the growth rate of the population.

40
41 Because of the cost and logistics
42 involved it is difficult to get non-local hunters in
43 any meaningful numbers to harvest moose in this hunt
44 area.

45
46 It's also likely that residents of the
47 Yukon River communities have reached the amount desired
48 for moose harvest and providing additional opportunity
49 will result in little or no new harvest. Harvest

50

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1 records indicate that only 10 to 30 hunters take two
2 moose in any regulatory year.

3
4 Biologically, we could triple the
5 current annual harvest. All options to achieve
6 additional harvest should be on the table as we
7 currently have a surplus of moose. This opportunity
8 will not last so we should take advantage of it while
9 we have it.

10
11 Again, the Department supports this
12 proposal to allow additional harvest opportunity
13 because there is no biological concern for the moose
14 population in the remainder of Unit 18. Aligning State
15 and Federal regulations could simplify the management
16 of moose in this area and reduce confusion with
17 stakeholders.

18
19 We suggest the following:

20
21 The first season from August 1st to
22 September 30th for three moose, only one of which may
23 be an antlered bull. A person may not take a calf or a
24 cow accompanied by a calf.

25
26 The second would be October 1st through
27 November 30th and the bag limit of three antlerless
28 moose, no antlered bulls.

29
30 And then finally the third, December
31 1st through April 30th would be three moose, and that
32 would be any moose.

33
34 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
37 Mark. Any questions from the Board for Mark.

38
39 MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, BIA.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene, you have
42 the floor.

43
44 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45 Good afternoon, Mr. Burch. Appreciate the presentation
46 you gave us. And going through the three State seasons
47 which we have which are the general seasons, the
48 current season now is December 1st through April 30th,
49 the State does have a two moose bag limit, has the
50

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1 Department considered utilizing EO authority to
2 increase that to three moose for the remainder of this
3 harvest -- until the end of the harvest in April.

4

5 MR. BURCH: Mr. Peltola, through the
6 Chair. I'm not aware that we have considered that for
7 this season. Yeah, I'm just not aware. As I -- I'll
8 just leave it at that. I don't think we've addressed it
9 at this point.

10

11 MR. PELTOLA: Okay, I was just curious.
12 Because I noted that, you know, in the OSM presentation
13 and throughout yours, the desire to reduce the
14 population and addressing harvest levels or not, so I
15 was just curious to that effect. So thank you,
16 appreciate it.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, any
19 other questions.

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
24 appreciate that. Thank you, Mark. At this time I'll
25 call on Sue to see if there was any public comments.

26

27 OPERATOR: If you have a public comment
28 at this time please press star one on your touchtone
29 telephone, record your first and last name. To
30 withdraw your comment you may press star two.

31

32 One moment for the comment.

33

34 (Pause)

35

36 MR. BURCH: Mr. Chair, this is Mark
37 Burch.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Mark,
40 you have the floor.

41

42 MR. BURCH: Yeah, Area Biologist,
43 Patrick Jones, was able to let me know that the
44 Department has not received any formal request to
45 increase that bag limit for the remainder of this
46 current moose season.

47

48 Thank you.

49

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
2 you, Mark.

3
4 OPERATOR: The first comment is coming
5 from Timothy Andrew, your line is open.

6
7 MR. ANDREW: Hello.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, Timothy,
10 you have the floor.

11
12 MR. ANDREW: Hi, thank you. Mr.
13 Chairman, I hope I'm -- I hope you are able to hear me
14 well enough otherwise I can take it off speaker and go
15 into the regular telephone mode. Is this okay?

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: This is fine, I
18 can hear you well, you have the floor.

19
20 MR. ANDREW: Okay, great. Yeah, for
21 the record my name is Timothy Andrew. I am
22 representing myself at the moment but I've provided
23 testimony before the Federal Subsistence Board for many
24 years under the Association of Village Council
25 Presidents, and the ONC, but at this moment I'm
26 representing myself. I currently live in Bethel but I
27 used to be a resident of Marshall, which is in the
28 lower Yukon area, in fact it's in the Paimiut census
29 area.

30
31 But I've experienced from no moose to
32 this current moose population growth that we have today
33 and I am very concerned about the continuous increase
34 in the moose population and I don't think any other --
35 any increase in the bag limit is going to increase the
36 hunting that is currently going on and would like to
37 see it happen but it's likely not going to happen
38 because it gets -- I mean it would get to a certain
39 point where we're saturated with moose within the Lower
40 Yukon area and also in other areas as well. But one
41 thing I would like to throw in and probably not within
42 the discussion today is that to ease up on proxy
43 hunting regulations, where proxy hunting is allowed for
44 anyone, not necessarily those that are disabled or
45 cannot hunt for other reasons, that opens up to anyone
46 that needs a moose, that anybody could possibly hunt on
47 their behalf. Many of our people, some of them can't
48 afford snowmachines. Some of them can't afford
49 transportation mechanisms to get them to some of these
50

0017

1 areas to hunt, therefore, you know, people that are
2 able to can prox -- would be able to proxy hunt for
3 other people.

4
5 The other comment I would like to make
6 is that much of the effort, currently, I believe, is
7 within the Ohagamiut Point area, the island out there
8 -- I can't remember the English name for it, but we
9 used to call it (In Native) area, and that's where most
10 of the hunters go. Many moose have been taken out of
11 the area but the population seems to bounce back every
12 year and repopulates in the highly favorable area where
13 these moose are. It's really unfortunate that the
14 lowest Yukon and the upper reaches of the Paimiut area
15 have little to know increase in hunting pressure like
16 -- like it happens in the Ohagamiut Point area, and I
17 don't know how we could possibly encourage people to go
18 into the lowest Yukon and the part of the Andreaafsky
19 and upper of the Paimiut area.

20
21 I believe that is my testimony and
22 would be happy to answer any questions that anybody may
23 have.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
26 appreciate you taking the time to call in. Any
27 questions from the Board.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have a good
32 day, again, and thank you for taking the time to call
33 in today. And just for the record, you do support the
34 proposal for the moose.....

35
36 MR. ANDREW: Yes, I do. I do support
37 the proposal.

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
40 you.

41
42 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, very much.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, all right.

45
46 OPERATOR: The next comment is coming
47 from Janessa, your line is open.

48
49 MS. ESQUIBLE: Hi, can you hear me?

50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Janessa,
2 you have the floor.

3
4 MS. ESQUIBLE: Okay, thank you. Hello,
5 my name is Janessa Esquible, and I'm the Natural
6 Resources Director for Orutsararmiut Traditional Native
7 Council here in Bethel. And I'm calling on behalf of
8 ONC.

9
10 ONC supports the Temporary Special
11 Action Request WSA21-02 submitted by the Yukon-
12 Kuskokwim Delta Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory
13 Council requesting to increase the harvest limit from
14 two to three moose in the Unit 18 remainder hunt area
15 through the current season ending April 30th, 2021.

16
17 Through recent personal communication
18 with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife
19 Biologist Phillip Perry, on the most recent moose
20 abundance estimate in Unit 18 remainder was well over
21 20,000 moose, therefore we believe the moose population
22 can support the proposed increased harvest limit of
23 three moose. The proposed change may also increase the
24 number of elders, widows, and disabled in communities
25 that are hunted for and we really appreciate your
26 consideration and opportunity to provide public comment
27 on this emergency wildlife special action request.

28
29 Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
32 Appreciate you taking the time to call in today. All
33 right, thank you, was there.....

34
35 OPERATOR: And the next comment.....

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

38
39 OPERATOR: And the next comment is
40 coming from Neil DeWitt, your line is open.

41
42 MR. DEWITT: Thank you for this
43 opportunity. My name is Neil DeWitt. I sit on the
44 Anchorage AC but I'm here only on my own behalf today.
45 The question that I have, during the RAC meeting as I
46 was listening in, I thought I heard that you had a
47 bunch of Federal land that you would have to take
48 action on to open up so that the rest of the State of
49 Alaska that are not Federally-qualified subsistence
50

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1 users can actually come out there and hunt. I guess
2 I'll start with, is that correct, do you have land that
3 needs to be opened up?
4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think that
6 would be a question for Staff, I don't think we're
7 opening up land, I think we're liberalizing a current
8 hunt right now.
9

10 MR. DEWITT: I understand that. But I
11 guess the reason I question that is if you have that
12 many moose and you need some of them taken, I
13 understand and I'm all for the Federally-qualified
14 subsistence users to get their fair share, but if you
15 need help to control it, if we opened it up to the rest
16 of the state, as you said there's not very many -- I
17 don't know if there's an actual number or not, but I
18 know that it's hard to get out to your area during the
19 winter months to hunt, even in the fall, you know, you
20 don't have as many transporters and stuff going that
21 direction and that's kind of why I was asking that
22 question.
23

24 Thank you for your time.
25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, I think
27 that's a fair question. Yeah, I was going to call on
28 the Staff, what is the current regulation and status on
29 that land for the non-Federally-qualified hunter, is it
30 in a rural subsistence user only hunt mode or is
31 it.....
32

33 MR. DEWITT: No.
34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:
36liberalized to the point where the sporthunter can
37 -- so does somebody have that answer?
38

39 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, this is Robbin
40 LaVine.
41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Robbin,
43 you have the floor.
44

45 MS. LAVINE: There is currently a State
46 season in Unit 18 remainder for residents to harvest
47 two moose from December 1st through April 30th. That
48 is an opportunity that Alaskan residents can avail
49 themselves of now. This special action is about
50

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1 increasing the harvest limit from two moose to three
2 for the remainder of the Federal season, and this is an
3 opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users.

4
5 Thanks.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
8 that clarification Robbin. I hope that helps answer
9 your question.

10
11 MR. DEWITT: Thank you, sir, I
12 appreciate your time.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
15 taking the time to call today. Operator, next online.

16
17 OPERATOR: The next comment is coming
18 from Sherry Tomichook (ph), your line is open.

19
20 MR. EPCHOOK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
21 I'm Chariton Epchook, Chairman of Kwethluk
22 Incorporated. And Kwethluk Incorporated is in support
23 of the Special Action Request 21-02. We are already
24 foreseeing this summer that we're not going to be
25 fishing for chinook at this time, our people depend on
26 the salmon and then as well as moose. Our people from
27 here travel by snowmachine up into the Yukon area and
28 by boat going up the Johnson River up towards remainder
29 of Unit 18.

30
31 With that Kwethluk Incorporated is in
32 support of the special action request.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
35 Appreciate you taking the time. Any questions.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
40 appreciate you calling in today. Anyone else online
41 Operator.

42
43 OPERATOR: No further comments at this
44 time.

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
47 That concludes our public comment section. With that
48 we will open up the floor for to make a motion to
49 support WSA21-02.

50

0021

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: Hey, Tony, this is
2 Greg, could you repeat what you're -- where you're at.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We are -- for
5 Board deliberation and the floor is open for a motion.

6
7 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
8 Yeah, this is Greg with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
11 floor, Greg.

12
13 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 At this time I would move to approve Wildlife Emergency
15 Special Action 21-02. If I receive a second I will
16 further justify why I intend to vote in support of my
17 motion.

18
19 MR. PELTOLA: Second, BIA.

20
21 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Gene. The
22 moose population in Unit 18 remainder hunt area exceeds
23 management objectives. Increasing the harvest limit
24 from two to three moose will provide additional
25 opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users
26 who have already felt the strain of a decreased salmon
27 harvest over the past decade and the current closure to
28 the Unit 18 subsistence caribou hunt. Support of this
29 emergency special action is justified to allow for
30 increased moose harvest opportunity by Federally-
31 qualified subsistence users.

32
33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
36 that, Greg. Open the floor for discussion.

37
38 (No comments)

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
41 I'll call for the question.

42
43 MR. PELTOLA: Question.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been
46 called.

47
48 REPORTER: Who called the question.

49
50

0022

1 MR. PELTOLA: BIA, Peltola.

2

3 REPORTER: Thank you.

4

5 MR. PELTOLA: You're welcome.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hi, Tina.

8

9 REPORTER: Hi.

10

11 MS. DETWILER: So, Mr. Chair, this is
12 Sue, question's been called, do you want me to go ahead
13 and do a roll call vote?

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, please, I
16 call for a roll call, please. Thank you, Sue.

17

18 MS. DETWILER: Yeah, thank you. And
19 for the record I just wanted to note that Chad Padgett,
20 the Board member from BLM is not present today, Chris
21 McKee is acting for him.

22

23 So with the roll call vote, start with
24 Greg Siekaniec.

25

26 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Sue. I
27 support the motion as made.

28

29 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

30

31 Gene Peltola, BIA.

32

33 MR. PELTOLA: BIA votes to support.

34

35 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

36

37 BLM, Chris McKee.

38

39 MR. MCKEE: BLM supports.

40

41 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

42

43 Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

44

45 MR. SCHMID: Yeah, the Forest Service
46 supports with the justification provided by Fish and
47 Wildlife Service.

48

49 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

50

0023

1 Don Striker, Park Service.

2

3 MR. STRIKER: We support the motion in
4 deference to the RAC and for the reasons so well
5 articulated by Mr. Siekaniec.

6

7 MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

8

9 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

10

11 MS. PITKA: Hi. I support the motion
12 in deference to the Regional Advisory Council and as
13 stated by Mr. Siekaniec. Thank you.

14

15 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Rhonda.

16

17 Public Member Charlie Brower, have you
18 joined us.

19

20 (No comments)

21

22 MS. DETWILER: It sounds like not. So
23 finally, Chair Tony Christianson.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support,
26 thank you.

27

28 MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. So
29 motion to approve WSA21-02 passes unanimously.

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And
32 thank everyone for taking their time today to get
33 together for the meeting and good luck to all the
34 hunters out there to fill your freezers.

35

36 Open up the floor for a motion to
37 adjourn.

38

39 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair, this is
40 Greg. Motion to adjourn.

41

42 MR. STRIKER: Second.

43

44 MR. PELTOLA: Second.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Have a good
47 day.

48

49 MR. SCHMID: Third. Thank you, Mr.

50

0024

1 Chair.

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MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair
and all the Board members, appreciate your time.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Staff, Board
and Chair.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

