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SOUTHEAST ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

Andrew P. Kashevaroff Building
Juneau, Alaska
February 28, 2023
8:30 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Donald Hernandez, Chairman
- Calvin Casipit
- Michael Douville
- Harvey Kitka
- Cathy Needham
- Patricia Phillips
- Robert Schroeder
- John Smith
- Louie Wagner
- Frank Wright

Regional Council Coordinator, DeAnna Perry

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Juneau, Alaska - 2/28/2023)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I want to thank Mike Douville for a new Chair's gavel, it actually has a very nice sound to it. Thank you, Mike. We might have to use that from time to time during the course of the meeting.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Well, as far as I can tell we have everybody here to start our meeting. And just check with DeAnna here for a second.

DeAnna.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So we can call the meeting to order of the Southeast RAC for 2023 winter meeting. And we'll start off with our Secretary, Frank, do you have a list of members here to run through the roll call and establish that we have a quorum.

MR. WRIGHT: I'll start off with Larry Bemis.

(No comments)

MR. WRIGHT: Larry Bemis.

(No comments)

MR. WRIGHT: Frank's here.

Cal Casipit.

MR. CASIPIT: I'm here.

MR. WRIGHT: Michael Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Here.

MR. WRIGHT: Jim Slater.

(No comments)

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MR. WRIGHT: Jim Slater.

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(No comments)

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MR. WRIGHT: Bob Schroeder.

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MR. SCHROEDER: Here.

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MR. WRIGHT: Albert Howard.

10

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(No comments)

12

13

MR. WRIGHT: Albert Howard.

14

15

(No comments)

16

17

MR. WRIGHT: Don Hernandez.

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19

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Here.

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21

MR. WRIGHT: Patricia Phillips.

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MS. PHILLIPS: Here.

24

25

MR. WRIGHT: Louie Wagner.

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27

MR. WAGNER: Here.

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29

MR. WRIGHT: Harvey Kitka.

30

31

MR. KITKA: Here.

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MR. WRIGHT: John Smith.

34

35

MR. SMITH: Here.

36

37

MR. WRIGHT: Cathy Needham.

38

39

MS. NEEDHAM: Here.

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41

MR. WRIGHT: We have a quorum, Mr.

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Chair.

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45

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you, Frank. We could possibly have some of the other Council members who are not present calling in on the phone, I don't know if they will be available. I did get an email from Jim Slater last night. He's down in California. His father's been ailing, he's kind of

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1 helping out down there. He's hoping to call in but
2 he's been really affected by all the floods and power
3 outages and everything and he wasn't sure if he was
4 going to be able to call in or not so he may join us at
5 some point. So, yeah, if anybody else comes on the
6 phone lines.

7

8 Let's see we also need to have some
9 meeting announcements from our Council Coordinator.
10 DeAnna Perry, go ahead.

11

12 MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good
13 morning everyone. This is the Southeast Subsistence
14 Regional Advisory Council meeting. We would like to
15 let folks on the phone know that the agenda and meeting
16 materials can be found online at the Federal
17 Subsistence Program website and that internet address
18 is www.doi.gov/subsistence, and then you'll go into the
19 regions tab choose Southeast and you'll see a block
20 there for meeting materials. For those attending the
21 meeting in person please make sure you sign in at the
22 front table. There's a sign-in sheet each day for the
23 meeting. If you would like to address the Council
24 during the meeting, for folks in the room if you'll
25 fill out one of the blue testifier forms that's also on
26 the intake table that will help us keep track of anyone
27 who wants to speak throughout the meeting. And for
28 those on the phone who would like to speak, please get
29 our attention by saying Mr. Chair, and wait to be
30 recognized by the Chair before you start speaking.
31 Going back to the phone, for all participants on the
32 phone, please remember to mute your phones when you're
33 not speaking. If you do not have a mute button you can
34 press star, six, or the little asterisk and six, that
35 will mute your phone, then if you would like to speak
36 unmute it the same way. I would like to let everybody
37 know that we did not have an analog line in our
38 conference room so that means our court reporting is
39 going through a polycom system or speaker phone, that
40 might make it a little bit more challenging for us to
41 hear you on the phone so I'd like to remind you to
42 please speak clearly and, again, mute when you're not
43 speaking.

44

45 A reminder to all, our meetings are
46 conducted by Robert's Rules. It helps us provide
47 structure and maintain order throughout the meeting.
48 All participants, and that's Council, Staff, public
49 members are expected to be courteous and respectful in
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1 all interactions. No insults or foul language will be
2 tolerated in this public meeting. If any kind of
3 unruly behavior or insulting language from anyone
4 occurs during this meeting please be advised that I as
5 the designated Federal official, will intervene
6 immediately.

7

8 Lastly, for those in the room I would
9 ask you to just take a minute to look at your cell
10 phones and please silence any ringers so that we can
11 make our distractions minimal.

12

13 And I think that's it, thank you, Mr.
14 Chair.

15

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
17 DeAnna.

18

19 Now, we can go through some welcomes
20 and introductions. We have a few people here that
21 would like to introduce themselves and welcome us to
22 Juneau. Is Frank Houston here yet?

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Perhaps not.

27

28 How about is Rob Sanderson here?

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Apparently not.
33 But I see that Dave Schmid is here. So, Dave, come
34 forward, thank you.

35

36 MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
37 It's great to see all of you again. It seems like it
38 wasn't too long ago we were in Ketchikan and I'd like
39 to, I guess, first welcome you on behalf of the Forest
40 Service. This is our regional office location here in
41 Juneau. And I was assuming, if I followed Fran I'd
42 have very little to say but she's not here yet and so I
43 would like to acknowledge that we are on ancestral
44 lands here in Juneau of Tlingit/Haida/Tsmishan people
45 here throughout Southeast, they were here long before
46 the Tongass National Forest and I do want to
47 acknowledge that. I have been very proud here in some
48 of the direction that we've been heading here as an
49 agency in terms of our relationships and enhancing our
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1 relationships with the tribes as well as all of rural
2 Alaskans here.

3
4 I just wanted to start with a big thank
5 you to all of you around the table. This is truly
6 important work that you all do here and it's not
7 something that you just sign up for and then show up
8 for meetings. I know that you're all actively involved
9 and you represent Southeast Alaska really well and all
10 the communities that we serve here and that's a big
11 deal. It's important work. I truly value that and I'm
12 honored to be here with you today.

13
14 I'd also like to thank our Forest
15 Service folks. We have an amazing Staff here that are
16 growing that help support you all and are here to do
17 that. And first, and, foremost, DeAnna Perry, having
18 an opportunity to work with DeAnna over the last five
19 years, you all lucked out here across the state here
20 with the RACs, you've got the best, and I'm not bashful
21 to say that. I've had a chance to work with DeAnna and
22 she is amazing, and a great resource. And then we've
23 got a whole cast here, you'll get to meet them all
24 today here and I think that they are doing just
25 excellent work here in terms of trying to help you all,
26 have the information you need to make decisions and
27 proposals that come before the Board. And I would say
28 I am humbled to sit on the Board as a Federal member
29 representing the Department of Agriculture, the
30 Secretary of Agriculture. And I think I've shared with
31 you before, I do a lot of things here in my role and my
32 job with the Forest Service but this is the most
33 important one for me. When I look at how people in
34 communities and rural folks, in particular, lives are
35 affected by the decisions that the Board makes, I take
36 that very seriously, that's an awesome responsibility.
37 And sometimes it's not easy but it's really some of the
38 most important work we do here in Alaska and it's not
39 something you do -- I've worked most of my career here
40 but I've made a lap around the country and it's very
41 different here in Alaska and very important.

42
43 And so with that, I don't have a lot to
44 add this morning other than a warm, sunny welcome. If
45 you were here the other night, I'm told that the aurora
46 was like the most spectacular, did anybody see it, I
47 saw pictures, I was asleep, but it was pretty
48 spectacular. But we've got a lot of Forest Service
49 folks coming to this meeting, I will be here with you
50

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1 to about noon today, and try and poke my head in a few
2 other times if we can. My deputy -- our deputy, Chad
3 VanOrmer, will be here this afternoon. Frank Sherman,
4 I know will also be here this afternoon and, again, a
5 little bit later in the agenda. Frank has been the
6 acting Forest Supervisor on the Tongass since Earl
7 Stewart departed and I would share that we do finally
8 have a -- we call it a cert, but a list of folks that
9 have applied to that position that we're going through.
10 So it's a really important position here in the Forest
11 Service and so we'll be doing a very careful review of
12 that and hopefully in the next few here we'll be able
13 to make a selection and we'll certainly share that with
14 all of you when that happens.

15

16 So that's about all.

17

18 I think I've got one other little
19 agenda item here this morning. I'll save that until
20 you get to old business, I think it'll be a good agenda
21 item for this group based on where you've all been.

22

23 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you,
24 again, all Council members here for your hard work here
25 on the RAC.

26

27 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Dave.
28 Glad to hear you'll be around for a little while. As
29 some of the Forest Service issues come up we might have
30 an opportunity to ask you some questions or other
31 people on your Staff about some of the things that come
32 before us so, good, thank you very much.

33

34 MR. SCHMID: Be happy to. Thank you,
35 Mr. Chair.

36

37 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Okay, as
38 way of introductions, while we're still waiting for
39 some of the local folks that want to welcome us here,
40 maybe we should introduce the Council. Council
41 members, go around the room and, you know, just briefly
42 for the record say who you are and where you're from
43 and then we'll have the Staff do the same, and members
44 of the public.

45

46 So Patty Phillips.

47

48 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Patricia Phillips from Pelican, Alaska.

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1 MR. WAGNER: Louie Wagner, Jr., from
2 Metlakatla, Alaska.

3
4 MR. DOUVILLE: Mike Douville from
5 Craig.

6
7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I'm Don Hernandez,
8 I live in Point Baker.

9
10 MS. NEEDHAM: Cathy Needham from
11 Juneau.

12
13 MR. WRIGHT: Frank Wright from Hoonah.

14
15 MR. KITKA: Harvey Kitka, Sitka.

16
17 MR. SMITH: John Smith, III., Juneau.

18
19 MR. CASIPIT: Good morning. Cal
20 Casipit, I'm from Gustavus Alaska.

21
22 MR. SCHROEDER: Bob Schroeder from
23 Juneau.

24
25 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Any
26 Council members joined us on the phone yet this
27 morning.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Apparently not.

32
33 How about over to my left there, we've
34 got a number of Staff people from different agencies,
35 if you want to kind of introduce yourselves that'd be
36 great.

37
38 MR. RISDAHL: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
39 Members of the Council. I'm really glad to be here,
40 traveling again and just out of the big city. I'm Greg
41 Risdahl, I'm the Subsistence Program Leader for the
42 Forest Service. I started about Covid time. Prior to
43 that I was Refuge Manager at three Refuges, two in
44 Alaska here, and InterAgency Staff Committee member.

45
46 So I'm really glad to be here.

47
48 Thank you very much.

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1 MR. CROSS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
2 My name is Robert Cross and I'm the Tongass Subsistence
3 Program Manager and thank you for having us. Look
4 forward to a good meeting.

5
6 MS. GREDIAGIN: Hi, I'm Lisa
7 Grediagin, the Wildlife Division Supervisor with the
8 Office of Subsistence Management and I'll also be
9 serving as the Leadership Team Lead here at this
10 meeting.

11
12 Thanks.

13
14 MR. SANDERS: Good morning, Mr. Chair
15 and the Council. My name is Andrew Sanders, I'm a
16 Fisheries Biologist for Prince of Wales Island, Forest
17 Service, and I'm happy to be here at the meeting.

18
19 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Good morning. Jake
20 Musslewhite, I'm starting with my third week as the
21 North Zone Subsistence Interdisciplinary Fish and
22 Wildlife Biologist. I might have got that out of order
23 but, yeah.

24
25 (Laughter)

26
27 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: But, yeah, same old
28 job, new title.

29
30 (Laughter)

31
32 MR. ROBERTS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
33 Members of the Council. My name is Jason Roberts. I
34 work for the Office of Subsistence Management as an
35 anthropologist. Recently kind of switched places with
36 your former anthropologist, Pippa Kenner, so I'll be
37 the primary point person for anthropology stuff now.

38
39 MR. HOFFMAN: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
40 Members of the Board. My name's Jacob Hoffman. I'm a
41 cartographer with the U.S. Forest Service based here in
42 Juneau.

43
44 MR. CHEN: Aloha. Mr. Chair, and
45 Council Members. My name is Glenn Chen. I'm the
46 Subsistence Branch Chief for the Bureau of Indian
47 Affairs. Always a pleasure to attend your meetings.

48
49 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you

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1 all Staff members. Anybody else in the audience want
2 to introduce themselves this morning. You can but you
3 don't have to.

4

5 MR. STRONG: Good morning, Mr. Chair
6 and Council. My name is Dan Strong, I'm a Master's
7 student with UAF. I'm just here to observe today.

8

9 MS. MCDONALD: Yes, this is Jamie
10 McDonald from the Glennallen Field office.

11

12 REPORTER: Okay, people on the phone
13 could you just hold up just one minute, we still have
14 people introducing in the room.

15

16 MS. GUTHRIE: Good morning. My name is
17 Judy Leask Guthrie. I'm with the Ketchikan Indian
18 Community.

19

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Tina, are there
21 people on the phone.

22

23 REPORTER: There is people on the
24 phone.

25

26 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We'll go to the
27 people on the phone.

28

29 REPORTER: Okay, people on the phone
30 your turn.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Is there anybody
35 on the phone?

36

37 REPORTER: Yes, there were people on
38 the phone, only a few.

39

40 MS. LAVINE: Good morning everyone.
41 This is Robbin LaVine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator
42 with the Office of Subsistence Management.

43

44 REPORTER: Thanks, Robbin.

45

46 MS. KLEIN: Good morning, this is Jill
47 Klein with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm the
48 Regional Subsistence Coordinator and I'm also a
49 InterAgency Staff Committee member based in Anchorage.

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1 Good morning.

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3 REPORTER: Thanks, Jill Klein.

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5 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else on
6 the call.

7

8 MS. PATTON: Good morning. This is Eva
9 Patton with the National Park Service Regional Office
10 in Anchorage, Subsistence Program Manager and
11 InterAgency Staff Committee member for the Federal
12 Subsistence Board. Good morning.

13

14 MS. OEHLERS: Good morning. This is
15 Susan Oehlers, Wildlife and Subsistence Biologist for
16 the Forest Service based in Yakutat. Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else on
19 the phone.

20

21 MR. BURCH: Yeah, this is Mark Burch
22 from the Department of Fish and Game in Palmer.

23

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, apparently
29 not. Thank you for joining us on the phone.

30

31 Okay, thanks for standing by, we're
32 doing a little microphone check here. Is that better
33 Tina?

34

35 REPORTER: Not really, let me try
36 another change.

37

38 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So we're
39 still waiting for a couple local folks who would like
40 to welcome us to Juneau but I don't see anybody's
41 arrived yet so maybe we can kind of keep things moving
42 here by moving on with the agenda to review and adopt
43 our agenda for the meeting. So in order to do that we
44 need to look over the agenda, Council members look over
45 the agenda and somebody needs to make a motion to
46 approve it, and there may be some, you know, minor
47 additions and changes.

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49 MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chair.

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1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Frank.

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3 MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chair. Move to adopt
4 the agenda as a guide.

5

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Very good, thank
7 you, Frank.

8

9 MR. CASIPIT: Second.

10

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cal.
12 Okay, so the agenda's been moved to adopt as a guide.
13 Let me see, there could be some changes but there are
14 some -- maybe some specific things we need to point out
15 here. I don't know, DeAnna, there may have been some
16 specific additions to the agenda since it was published
17 and I don't know if you need to go over those. I know
18 we have some time certain presentations here we want to
19 take note of. Would you like to kind of run us through
20 that before we vote on it.

21

22 MS. PERRY: I'd be happy to, Mr. Chair.
23 DeAnna Perry, Council Coordinator for the record. Once
24 I read through these, if the Council adopts this
25 agenda, we will kind of print out a new version so
26 it'll be easier for you to follow but would like to
27 offer to strike the first item under old business, the
28 .805(c) report, and it's just because that information
29 is going to be brought to you through the regulatory
30 cycle agenda item a little bit later.

31

32 Would like to suggest that we add, or
33 actually replace 12d under new business with non-rural
34 determination proposal update. You'll see there that
35 it currently says annual briefing but the annual
36 briefing that it mentions is actually part of the
37 entire review and approve annual report agenda item so
38 we really don't need both of those. So if we could
39 replace that with an update on non-rural determination
40 proposal.

41

42 Next would be the Southeast Alaska
43 Sustainability Strategy update under Forest Service
44 reports. That would probably be the last day. We
45 could add that just below the tribal relations report.

46

47 And then underneath that, maybe at the
48 very end we could add Pacific Northwest Lab. I've been
49 contacted by Nicole Grewe and they have some good

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1 things to share with us so we'd like to add that as
2 well.

3
4 And as you mentioned, Mr. Chair, we do
5 have some time certians to try to accommodate as many
6 schedules as possible. The Unit 2 wolf update, which
7 is 11f under old business, the -- Sara Markegard with
8 Fish and Wildlife Service, she was going to give us an
9 update on the ESA listing where we are with that. She
10 is only available tomorrow morning. We also hope that
11 Tom Schumacher with the State may be able to join us
12 but he might have a conflict so, again, if we could
13 just move that old business item to tomorrow morning we
14 can for sure be able to hear from Sara.

15
16 11h, the Southeast Alaska
17 Sustainability Strategy update, Forest Management
18 agenda item that we need to hear around 2:00 p.m.
19 Frank Sherman, the acting Tongass Forest Supervisor is
20 actually in town and he's got dueling meetings going on
21 so that will allow him to actually visit us in person.
22 Tomorrow -- or actually this afternoon, rather, at 2:00
23 o'clock.

24
25 And, finally, under agency reports,
26 time certians for the Tongass update we'll probably
27 have Rob Cross -- if Frank Sherman is available, we're
28 not sure if he will be or not, but that might be 11:00
29 a.m., Thursday.

30
31 And then hopefully we will have Lauren
32 Sill or someone from ADF&G able to give us a
33 subsistence report at 2:00 p.m., on Thursday.

34
35 That was a lot of information. We have
36 to print our agendas so early so that we make sure all
37 the meeting materials get to the printer and out to you
38 in time for you to review, that's kind of like a months
39 worth of people giving us some more information.

40
41 So, again, if those are acceptable to
42 the Council I can insert those and reprint off an
43 updated agenda for everyone.

44
45 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

46
47 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
48 DeAnna. So Council members you should hopefully have
49 an updated printed version of the agenda that we'll be
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1 working from but questions. Mr. Schroeder.

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Bob.

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MR. SCHROEDER: I have a couple of
6 items, very brief items that perhaps we can consider
7 later in the meeting. One has to do with a little bit
8 of followup on our support for co-management
9 activities. And probably a brief discussion and then
10 figure out whether we want a group to proceed forward
11 to further embellish the policy statement we made.

12

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And then I'd like a brief discussion on
extraterritorial jurisdiction and to see whether
there's Council interest in developing a policy
statement on extraterritorial jurisdiction that would
apply to Southeast Alaska.

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
Bob. Do you think that would be appropriate to those
-- both those items under old business?

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MR. SCHROEDER: The one item, since the
Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy is pretty
related to the co-management item and our policy
statement, that could fit there. Where you put ETJ is
up to you.

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, yeah, thank
you, Bob. I think you're right, yeah, co-management
discussion would probably fit in well with the update
from the Sustainability Strategy which is this
afternoon so I'll make a note to add that discussion
after that presentation. And then extraterritorial
jurisdiction, that might fit better under new business
category so I'll kind of pencil that in for there.
Okay.

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Anybody else on the Council with any
other things they would like to add to the agenda.

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(No comments)

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Seeing none, are
we ready to call for the question on approving the
agenda.

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MR. KITKA: Call for the question.

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1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Harvey.
2 Just a voice vote. All in favor of approving our
3 agenda as revised say aye.

4
5 IN UNISON: Aye.

6
7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Is there anybody
8 opposed, say nay.

9
10 (No opposing votes)

11
12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. I think
13 we've got our agenda. Next item on the agenda is
14 election of officers. We have election of officers
15 here at this meeting so for that I will turn it over to
16 our Council Coordinator to get us started, as our
17 Designated Federal Official so, DeAnna, go ahead.

18
19 MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
20 the record my name is DeAnna Perry. As Son mentioned I
21 am the Designated Federal Official or the Council
22 Coordinator for the Southeast Council. In accordance
23 with the Council Charter, Council members annually
24 elect a Chair, Vice Chair and a Secretary for a one
25 year term.

26
27 I would like to open the floor for
28 nominations of the Council's Chair. And just a
29 reminder nominations need not be seconded so if there
30 are any nominations for the Chair position please say
31 them now.

32
33 Mr. Douville.

34
35 MR. DOUVILLE: Madame Chair. I
36 nominate Don Hernandez.

37
38 MS. PERRY: Mr. Hernandez has been
39 nominated as Chair, any other nominations.

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 MS. PERRY: If there are no other
44 nominations I will declare the nominations closed at
45 this time. So we have a nomination of Don Hernandez
46 for the Chair position for Southeast Alaska Subsistence
47 Regional Advisory Council. I'll ask for unanimous
48 consent for Don Hernandez to be Chair of this Council.
49 Is there anyone opposed.

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1 (No opposition)

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3 MS. PERRY: Thank you. Mr. Chair, you
4 get to keep your brand new gavel, congratulations.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Thank
9 you, Council members. Yeah, I'm kind of anxious to use
10 that new gavel so thank you.

11

12 (Laughter)

13

14 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So now I guess
15 it's up to me to continue on with nominations for Vice
16 Chair for the Council. Do we have any nominations.

17

18 Mike Douville.

19

20 MR. DOUVILLE: Mr. Chair. I nominate
21 Cathy Needham for Vice Chair.

22

23 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
24 Any other nominations for Vice Chair.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Hearing none, I
29 think I can ask for unanimous consent on the vote for
30 Vice Chair. Is there anybody opposed, say nay.

31

32 (No opposing votes)

33

34 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay.
35 Congratulations, Cathy. And we have to elect a
36 Secretary, so looking for nominations for secretary.

37

38 Go ahead, Mike.

39

40 MR. DOUVILLE: Mr. Chair. I nominate
41 Frank Wright for Secretary.

42

43 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
44 Any other nominations for Secretary.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: No other
49 nominations so I think we could also ask for unanimous

50

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1 consent vote for Frank Wright for Secretary. Is there
2 anybody opposed, say nay.

3

4

(No opposing votes)

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, very good,
thank you, Frank. Thank you, Council Members.

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So we can proceed.

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(Pause)

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And while we're
doing that I'm still hoping to see some local folks

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1 come and welcome us to Juneau. We'll kind of give them
2 an opportunity when they do arrive. And I would also
3 like to kind of mention that we generally start our
4 meetings first thing in the mornings with public -- any
5 public comment, testimony on any issues related to
6 subsistence from anybody in Southeast, the phone lines
7 are open. If local people want to come in and give us
8 some testimony in person, we offer up the time first
9 thing in the mornings and that will be at 8:30 at this
10 venue. And we also offer an opportunity to do that
11 this morning, that will come after we have the reports
12 from our Council members. So if there's anybody that's
13 listening in that wants to make a public comment or
14 testimony we'll get to that in a little while.

15

16 So getting back to previous minutes.

17

18 Are we ready for a motion.

19

20 Cal.

21

22 MR. CASIPIT: Mr. Chair. I move that
23 we approve our minutes from our last meeting, October
24 25th through 27th in Ketchikan, Alaska.

25

26 MS. NEEDHAM: Second.

27

28 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. So we
29 have a motion and a second. Is there any Council
30 members that would like to make a change or comment on
31 the previous minutes.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, seeing none,
36 are we ready to call for the question.

37

38 MR. KITKA: Call for the question.

39

40 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Harvey.
41 All in favor of approving the minutes from our previous
42 meeting in fall 2022 say aye.

43

44 IN UNISON: Aye.

45

46 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Is there anybody
47 opposed, say nay.

48

49 (No opposing votes)

50

0019

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, minutes have
2 been approved. So now we do get into our council
3 member reports. Opportunities for Council members to
4 tell the public what's been happening in their
5 communities and areas here since we last met.

6
7 So maybe for this I'll start over with
8 Bob Schroeder from Juneau.

9
10 MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Don. And
11 it's really great to see all of you but it's kind of
12 shocking because I missed the last meeting with an
13 excused absence but I haven't seen everyone for three
14 and a half years and remarkably no one's changed at
15 all.

16
17 (Laughter)

18
19 MR. SCHROEDER: You know, I mean like
20 it's suspended animation is what it is.

21
22 My comments today will be mainly about
23 our program and someone else can deal with the fish and
24 wildlife abundance and how the hunting -- how the
25 season is going.

26
27 My observation would be that we're now
28 sort of a middle aged program, the Federal Subsistence
29 Program, we're at about 30 years for that program. And
30 there were Regional Councils under the State following
31 the passage of ANILCA so we're really at the 40 or 42
32 year mark. And I think this Council, in particular,
33 should recognize that some of its major accomplishments
34 over this time and I've had the good fortune of being
35 in and out of the Council in one role or another for
36 most of that time period. And I think it's fair to
37 say, although this is a little bit bragging, but that
38 the Southeast Regional Advisory Council has overall
39 made the Federal Program just a way better program,
40 that the work people have done has been important.

41
42 I'd highlight a number of things.

43
44 First, is that kind of against the
45 odds, subsistence appears to be alive and well after
46 these 40 years, although we're not doing as much
47 monitoring of what subsistence harvests are now as were
48 done earlier. The likelihood is that subsistence
49 harvests are sort of about the same as when the program
50

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1 was being developed in the early 1980s. In particular
2 for this Council, this Council pushed real hard both on
3 the State and on the Federal side to recognize
4 customary trade, to recognize designated hunter
5 programs. We revised our procedure for customary and
6 traditional use findings seeing that all qualified
7 users in Southeast Alaska would be eligible for
8 subsistence harvest of all subsistence species. This
9 was a major piece of work that went on over four or
10 five years.

11
12 We've pretty much internally, and then
13 with some success with the Federal Subsistence Board
14 recognized that there needs to be a significant
15 priority for subsistence uses and establish some
16 criteria for that. And that's also led to something
17 that we don't endorse wholesale, but the Council has
18 been successful in recommending restrictions on non-
19 subsistence uses that is necessary.

20
21 I'd also highlight the achievement of
22 the Fisheries Monitoring Program which went through
23 this Council, primarily because of its bringing in
24 really good data that was needed for management, but
25 also empowering communities and tribes to undertake
26 field fisheries research. And so since this has been
27 going on for awhile we now have some of the people who
28 started out in high school or just afterward who are
29 now strong in their own rights.

30
31 This Council has spent a lot of effort
32 on Forest management and we've been an important force
33 in directing Forest management in a way that allows for
34 continued subsistence uses. I particularly highlight
35 the huge amount of work that went in on the Roadless
36 issue.

37
38 Let's see what else I have here, I'd
39 also herald our first steps towards supporting co-
40 management agreements. And I'll note that the Federal
41 government in some parts of the country has kind of
42 leapfrogged us. There was an announcement concerning
43 Bear Ears, which is on the Utah -- is it the
44 Utah/Arizona border where co-management of that
45 conservation unit is likely to be done through tribes.

46
47 That's pretty much what I have to say.
48 I'm hoping that we'll continue to work on co-management
49 and to work with Forest Service and Park Service to
50

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1 devolve more management activities to tribes and
2 communities. And then as I mentioned earlier I think
3 we have a little bit of work to do on extraterritorial
4 jurisdiction.

5

6 With that it's really good to see you
7 all and thanks so much for everyone's hard work.

8

9 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
10 Bob. Just a quick note here as we're going through our
11 Council reports, if, you know, local folks from Juneau
12 to welcome us I will pause our Council reports and
13 allow them to do that -- welcome them to do that right
14 off, so Cal Casipit from Gustavus, go ahead.

15

16 MR. CASIPIT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Well, I think most people kind of experienced the same
18 winter we did, if you want to call it that. Until
19 about the end of January we pretty much had spring
20 break up for most of our winter. The deer hunting,
21 because of the lack of the snow wasn't as good as it
22 has been. I know I spent a lot of time looking for
23 deer and not finding any. My daughter did luck out and
24 get one with one of my trips so, you know, we did get
25 one. But it was pretty tough without the snow.

26

27 Let's see what else.

28

29 Other than that I think we did pretty
30 well -- like I said last year we -- or the last meeting
31 we had a pretty good moose season, most people got the
32 moose they needed. Fishing was pretty good. But,
33 yeah, this winter was weird and made deer hunting
34 pretty tough for most of us.

35

36 Anyway that's all I had.

37

38 I do have -- I did have some comments
39 and some concerns kind of along the lines of what Bob
40 was talking about, more these higher level concerns and
41 observations I've made in regards to some of the
42 actions of the Board of Game and I think maybe when
43 that comes up on the agenda I'll talk more about some
44 of those concerns, but it has to do with meaningful
45 priority and providing a meaningful priority for
46 Federally-qualified users.

47

48 Anyway, thank you.

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yep, thank you,
Cal.

John Smith, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: (In Tlingit)

Good morning.

Gunalcheesh.

(In Tlingit)

Thank you all for being here today.
It's good to see your faces. You know I attended the
Board meeting -- the game meeting on the 20 and 24th in
Ketchikan and I'll report to that here soon. So it's
really good to see you guys faces in the team and thank
you for being here today.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.

Harvey Kitka, Sitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
had some concerns in Sitka and basically it had to do
with the salmon this year. Not only what has happened
with the lawsuit but also with the salmon being really,
for their age, were too short, for most of the fishing.
An awful lot of salmon were maybe an inch or two short
for commercial sale. There was fish out there but,
boy, lots had to be shaken and this was a concern.
Basically I think they're -- the food they need out
there is not enough. It's just -- at the early age of
their stage they need to grow a little longer and being
as so much of the fish no is hatchery it seems like the
way that they get their genes to grow is they're taking
the smaller king salmon. So an awful lot are really
too small for the commercial industry and the take. I
know there's some talk about changing the size to where
it's 26 inches instead of 28. That is just one
concern.

We've got another concern with our
sockeye in the Sitka area. We basically have Redoubt
Lake where we get our sockeyes. There's other places
but the price of fuel and the weather it's really hard
to get to. Klag Bay is probably -- the run size has
shrunk so bad that it's just -- it's really a hardship

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1 because most of the time during the time when the
2 sockeye's are running in that area we have had very
3 little rain. That sockeye stream in Klag Bay is barely
4 six feet wide when it is raining, when it's not raining
5 it basically just pools here and there. So a lot of
6 the sockeyes end up back in the bay until the
7 subsistence is taken care of and there isn't very many
8 that escape. I think they had 1,800 sockeyes make it
9 up the stream, you know, which is just not enough, it's
10 just too small.

11
12 We still have a concern with our
13 herring. Even though the Sitka Tribe has got a lawsuit
14 that won part of its case we still have problems with
15 what we call dispersal of the fisheries to where
16 they're taking a total biomass from three different
17 areas but only fishing in one area, which is my
18 concern. We've had some concerns with the State as
19 well as some parts of the Federal government with
20 subsistence priority. When we talk about subsistence
21 priority it doesn't necessarily mean a conservation
22 concern, what it means is the community -- the rural
23 community is not meeting its needs. It has nothing to
24 do with conservation, but has the needs -- the needs of
25 people not being met. So we need to look at from that
26 point of view at times. Not really as a conservation
27 concern but as a need for the people. We've got some
28 people, like Kake, where they have no ferry system and
29 no food for awhile. That was -- some of these things
30 I'll probably leave to the rest of the Council.

31
32 These are some of the concerns in
33 Sitka.

34
35 Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Harvey.

38
39 Frank Wright from Hoonah.

40
41 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
42 When you fly into Hoonah, you know, I'm hoping this
43 winter was cold enough to get rid of those bugs that
44 are drying up our trees. When you fly into Hoonah now
45 you see a lot of brown trees instead of regular green.
46 You know this climate change is a big deal in our area.
47 If these trees are going to dry up then we're going to
48 have more of a chance of a big dry Forest fire and
49 that's one of the things I always worry about. I
50

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1 remember one year there was no water in the river and
2 you could see the fish just milling around at the base
3 of the rivers so, you know, those bugs that are doing
4 this to our trees is going to be devastating.

5
6 You know my wife and I, we carry -- we
7 collect all our plastic -- we don't use a lot of
8 plastic but we do but we always end up bringing it to
9 Juneau when we have the chance. For what I do is
10 probably a rain drop in a rain storm. You know, I wish
11 there was a way we could get our community to see -- I
12 can't even get my crew to do it. I save all my plastic
13 on the boat, I bring it home. My wife is -- she's a
14 person that collects aluminum cans and then the money
15 she makes from the aluminum cans she donates to the
16 children, the kids programs. We are just lucky we have
17 on the Alaska Marine Highway to take the cans down to
18 Washington.

19
20 You know this coming year is supposed
21 to be a big season for fishing, for salmon fishing. I
22 read a report that was happening it's only supposed to
23 be 19 million and that's small. So if this issue of
24 fish not coming back when it's supposed to be then
25 something's going on out there.

26
27 You know this is just an example of
28 what people pay for food in Hoonah. A 25 pound bag of
29 rice cost \$87. In Juneau you can get it at Costco for
30 \$23. That's just one thing. Nine bananas 15 bucks.
31 And when the ferry is not running, you know, we have to
32 figure out how to -- the people have to figure out how
33 they can manage. You know I know there was a car in
34 Juneau that's on the ferry, we try to contact them so
35 we can provide for some of the people in Hoonah. I see
36 people that don't have jobs and walking up from the
37 store with a little bag that cost about 50 bucks, you
38 know, that's what they have to go through.

39
40 You know so this climate change affects
41 the subsistence way of life in Hoonah.

42
43 You know when the rivers dry up you
44 don't have the fish or like I just said this year's
45 prediction is going to be a small season for salmon.

46
47 So I always worry about the young
48 people. The young people that are going to have to
49 deal with this climate change and if we don't -- if we
50

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1 don't make an issue of it to try to help the young
2 people that are going to have to deal with it, there's
3 got to be a way we can help try to minimize what's
4 going on with our world. We might be small potatoes
5 compared to the rest of the world but like I said a
6 rain drop in a storm, it takes a lot of rain drops to
7 fill a bucket. So that's an issue that I feel strongly
8 about. Every time I go out fishing I always wonder is
9 it going to be bad again. Last year wasn't a good
10 season.

11

12 So thanks for listening.

13

14 Gunalcheesh.

15

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Frank.

17

18 I'm going to go ahead and give my
19 report as a Council member from my local area and leave
20 the Chair report up to Vice Chair Cathy Needham who
21 attended the Board meeting up in Anchorage this winter.

22

23 So from my area, north end of Prince of
24 Wales, yeah, it was kind of a year of extremes, or fall
25 and winter of extremes as other people have noted. You
26 know for my area it meant some really bitter cold
27 temperatures back in December with no snow pack which
28 is always worrisome to me because, you know, when you
29 get those cold temperatures you kind of like to have a
30 little snow on the ground to protect some of the
31 streams and I do worry about, you know, spawning beds
32 getting frozen out in conditions like that. But then
33 on the other hand, you know, not having snow pack did
34 make for better browse conditions for the deer when it
35 did get cold. And then after that we had a very warm
36 wet January and February, lots of rain. That's a
37 little worrisome as well. I worry about spawning beds
38 getting washed out by heavy rains that happen that time
39 of year. So a few concerns there with the kind of
40 wacky weather.

41

42 And our fall deer hunting was not very
43 good on Prince of Wales Island. As other Council
44 members have mentioned, the costs of going out and
45 harvesting are kind of getting pretty prohibitive.
46 Right now we're paying \$8 for gasoline, you know, in my
47 community and that makes it, you know, really important
48 if you're going out and harvesting something you want
49 to be successful because it's just getting awful

50

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1 expensive. So that's kind of putting of a burden on
2 people and, you know, the resources are not there,
3 we're not going out and being successful in our deer
4 hunting so it's a little challenging.

5
6 So, yeah, I think that's my main
7 report.

8
9 So Mike Douville from Craig.

10
11 MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
12 In my last report we were just getting into the hunting
13 season and I really wasn't very optimistic and we are
14 having a difficult time getting deer. I've never
15 hunted personally -- on a personal level so hard with
16 so little result. I've lived there all my life and I
17 know the country really well.

18
19 There's a couple of things that are
20 affecting it and wolf and timber, I believe that the
21 Department has been under estimating the wolf
22 population since 2013, and as a result our deer
23 population has plummeted because we can't even maintain
24 anywhere near a stable deer population. So until that
25 changes we have a long time of looking forward to
26 rebuilding that stock. I don't see it happening for
27 years to come, it doesn't look very good.

28
29 As far as timber, there's a lot of
30 concern on the island about cutting any more old growth
31 timber. And the other concern is you have the logging
32 industry that's thinking 19 or 20,000 acres a year of
33 young growth cutting, that's not okay either. The mind
34 set there is to locally process and not export young
35 growth timber down the road and 200 year rotation. But
36 the -- we have a real problem. We have a real high
37 wolf population, if you look at the graphs of our deer
38 population success rate, our hunter success rate has
39 plummeted in the last few years.

40
41 Like Mr. Hernandez said, we invest a
42 considerable amount to go out and go hunting and we
43 hope to have success and when we don't it's not okay.

44
45 So the other issue we have now is
46 conservative groups want to eliminate the trollers from
47 the salmon fishery. It's caused a lot of concern,
48 there's a lot of resistance, but where it goes I don't
49 know at this point. But it is stressful.

50

0027

1 So hopefully some of these things will
2 clear up down the road and we can continue our
3 subsistence way of life.

4
5 Thank you.

6
7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.

8
9 Louie Wagner from Metlakatla.

10
11 MR. WAGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
12 us in Metlakatla, we have at least two guys that trap
13 the wolves and they've been doing quite well with it.
14 It really helps with -- harder for them to get deer
15 during the winter, they're trapping around the beaver
16 ponds now and they're getting them at the beaver ponds
17 where they're feeding on the beaver. Looking forward
18 to seeing more deer come out the end of April, first of
19 May with their fawns, you know. Where I like to troll
20 across the bay there's a sand bar from the smaller
21 island across and they'll stay on the island there and
22 then they'll cross the sand bar and then they go back
23 up to the mountains later so they seem to stay on the
24 islands a lot, away from the wolves, I guess.

25
26 So for us, we're fortunate, you know, I
27 talked to the one guy he's going to keep trapping until
28 April and then he'll stop until next fall. Getting the
29 numbers down pretty good. We've lost three dogs so far
30 to the wolves just recently. So now matter how many
31 you take there's always plenty more behind the ones
32 that you take and they travel Duke Island, to Percy
33 Islands and over to Annette Island and they travel --
34 and I've seen them when I crab -- crabbed fish out at
35 Ponds Bay on Duke Island, they travel over to Cat
36 Island and then over to Mary Island. And there's times
37 when you'd be anchored and in Ponds Bay there's nothing
38 to see 20, 30 wolves in a pack and then they start
39 howling in the evening and it's pretty hard to go to
40 sleep for awhile, they're loud. But for us that's
41 working out real well with the guys being able to have
42 a longer trap season on the wolves and try to keep
43 control.

44
45 After the winter meeting last year my
46 son and I we went right on up to the Unuk River to see
47 if there was anything left up there and it was too
48 late, I got there too late, that river was empty. But
49 on the way out, the next day, the fathometer was solid
50

0028

1 fish on the fathometer in Burrows Bay and the
2 porpoises, there were so many you couldn't count them.
3 They were feeding -- they usually will come play off
4 the bough on the boat but they didn't pay no mind to us
5 they were just feeding and big long trails of them
6 working together and for me it had to have been
7 eulachons there because there's a very small population
8 of herring there that will spawn on the Klahini side
9 and it was just amazing to see and good to see the
10 porpoises, you rarely see porpoises anymore. And where
11 they go after, probably up to Stikine, I don't know,
12 but they sure disappear in a hurry.

13

14 And for -- I represent the community on
15 this Southeast Alaska Indigenous TransBoundary Mining
16 Commission and we've been having meetings once a month
17 with the Canadians and now they're starting to -- we
18 call them solicitors, they're switching them off on us
19 so we got to go over everything again with new people,
20 but we have a meeting in Ketchikan March 16th and 17th
21 on the mining issues. And if this mining continues and
22 -- they're going to destroy our rivers in no time and
23 we all know that.

24

25 For us and people in Saxman, you know,
26 and all the rest of the areas that benefitted from the
27 eulachons, this one bucket thing is ridiculous. And
28 you folks mentioned about the fuel, how much it costs
29 in fuel. But it's just not fair to go up and you get
30 one proxy, you know, so you can bring two buckets back,
31 it's just ridiculous. My son and I and granddaughter
32 were going to go up again and this time we should be
33 there in time and get some good documentation and it
34 won't be second hand information for what we bring
35 back. This will be real. Because we know where to
36 look for them, and how to find them and we know how to
37 take water samples now. I want to get some water
38 samples when we get there and maybe in the middle of
39 being there and before we come out so just anything
40 that might be able to help to get some fish back to the
41 people. That seems -- the same concern for all the
42 subsistence we're here for and talking about. We
43 really need something better, that's a 200 mile
44 roundtrip for me to go up there and I take my tender,
45 that's going to be 600 gallons round-trip so it's
46 pretty costly plus the gas for the outboards running up
47 to the river each day and back.

48

49 I think I really like what Harvey had

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0029

1 to say on how things could be handled better on
2 subsistence. I know escapement is important and we've
3 always -- my son and I, we've been very careful on what
4 we take. My brother, he took too much one year and
5 that really hurt us and we've been kind of dealing with
6 that ever since. But it's time to move on if the fish
7 are there.

8

9 So even when I started back about 1960,
10 if we get eulachons -- we go up and then they wouldn't
11 be there. The only other river we'd check at the time
12 would be the Chickamin, but they didn't only go up the
13 Chickamin, they'd go into the Blossom River there and
14 Princess Bay and then in 2005 they went up Carol Inlet
15 and it was packed in there, it was full, I made one set
16 and I got enough to make two batches of eulachon
17 grease, you know, and give enough away and smoke some.

18

19 So it's just tough to be this many
20 years and I'm still talking about eulachons when I
21 should be catching them and bringing them home to the
22 people. I'm running out of time, it's getting harder
23 for me, I turn 75 this month and dealing with three
24 different cancers it sucks the life out of you, it
25 makes you pretty weak. So it'd be nice if we could
26 come to some kind of conclusion here to get the fish
27 back to the people. It's important. It's a big part
28 of our culture. I don't remember who it was but they
29 came to Metlakatla after we delivered eulachons, you
30 know, and everybody had smokehouses then and they said
31 it looked like Metlakatla was on fire because there was
32 so much wood smoke coming from the smokehouses, now
33 there's just a handful of us. So it'd be nice to see
34 that again.

35

36 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Louie.

39

40 Patty Phillips from Pelican.

41

42 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43 Well, I was appointed originally I think back in 1993,
44 if you look in this book it shows that I only have two
45 years of service -- well, I had two years that I had to
46 step away but I'm back now.

47

48 I remember meeting in Craig where I was
49 just so emotional I just could not control the tears

50

0030

1 because the loss of tradition to our people, to our
2 indigenous people, and I want you all to know that I'm
3 kind of glum right now because I lost my father-in-law,
4 he was 91, just recently, and it makes you realize, you
5 know, my husband and I are the old ones now, that our
6 young people will look to. So if I'm a little
7 emotional I apologize.

8

9 But I want to add on to a couple things
10 that I heard from other Council members.

11

12 Harvey Kitka talked about, you know,
13 Klag Bay sockeye and, you know, I have lived in Pelican
14 50 years, I was born in Sitka, I skiff back and forth
15 between Pelican and Sitka during the summer, spring and
16 summer, fall months so I really know that area. Like
17 Mike said, I grew up there, I know it. But when we go
18 through Kaze in the summer when the seine fleets in
19 there fishing, they're right at the gates and the gates
20 are -- it's like a canyon that goes into Klag Bay,
21 they're right at the gates, they're nets are right
22 there, anything going into Klag Bay is being captured
23 by the seiners. I mean if the marker was moved back
24 just enough to let -- because if it's not the seiners
25 getting it, it's the sea lions getting it so that
26 salmon resource, you know, cohos and sockeye, and
27 they're getting hit -- we're seeing less amounts and so
28 it's sort of like my deduction is because they're
29 being intercepted before they can get into the streams.

30

31 Chairman Hernandez talked about, you
32 know, the heavy torrential rain events scouring our
33 stream systems. This stream scouring can be damaging
34 to spawning habitat, there's so much scouring that all
35 that's left is these bigger boulders, the gravel is
36 just being washed out to sea and so, yeah, they're
37 still trying to spawn there but are the eggs getting
38 buried like they're supposed to, you know. And so
39 we're seeing less return of pink salmon and chum
40 salmons to our local streams and the inlet. Not only
41 does the stream scouring wash away the eggs but the
42 gravel washes into the sea and the eggs provide food
43 for the ecosystem web and if you don't have that egg
44 feeding then, then what do the birds have to eat, or
45 the fish or what have you. I mean there are in-stream
46 and down stream effects that we can't quantify because
47 we see it when we vis -- you know it's our local
48 knowledge that sees this happening but do we have the
49 scientific basis to say, hey, you know, maybe there's

50

0031

1 not as much fish here as there used to be. I mean so
2 -- I mean the kind of waterfowl that I see are the
3 swans, the mergansers, the grebes, the loons, the
4 dippers, you know, the seagulls, I mean if they don't
5 have a food to eat then where are they going to go.
6 I'm seeing less of these sort of -- you know this
7 aviary type bird species in our area.

8
9 I'm going to talk about something that
10 I wrote about and I want sure that I talked about the
11 whole thing.

12
13 The effects by unguided non-resident
14 sportfisheries during inclimate weather and during
15 severe ocean conditions, because the fleet comes in and
16 they fish in the inlet rather than going out to the
17 open ocean, it causes a localized direct negative
18 adverse impacts and reduces subsistence opportunities
19 to local residents of Pelican. I listened to a
20 presentation by one of the managers from Alaska
21 SeaPlanes, they had 87 no-fly days in 2022. Well, a
22 lot of that could be fog or a lot of that could be just
23 stormy weather conditions which are much more severe
24 than they used to be, more frequent and quickly severe
25 and then drops back off but it affects -- can the fleet
26 -- the sportfish fleet go out on the ocean to fish and
27 if they can't then they drop their anchor right near
28 town and they're impacting the local resource.

29
30 Fish resources within an area that
31 local residents customary and traditionally use fish as
32 food for personal and family consumption and from areas
33 close to the community.

34
35 Several residents in our community are
36 low income or live on fixed income and they have few
37 options to meet their subsistence needs. The
38 traditional areas close to the community are being hard
39 hit by the sportfisheries, this has a disproportionate
40 negative impact on the ability to harvest locally and
41 further depletes the fish populations causing localized
42 conservation concerns. And it also poses a public
43 safety risk as the subsistence harvester has to travel
44 further away and they're the ones with the little boats
45 with the little engines and we've had that before. We
46 had someone -- when we met ion Kake once, we had a
47 local user say I got to go over to Pybus to get my
48 deer, someone's going to die and what happened, that
49 man was the one who died, him and his son, I mean these
50

0032

1 local subsistence harvesters, users, they're telling us
2 the problems and it's like, I don't want to be a deaf
3 ear that it falls upon. So this placement of the
4 subsistence harvester with a preference for
5 sport harvest is a wanton waste. Wanton waste is
6 observed as sport harvest release rock fish and the rock
7 fish float on the surface. I mean our local residents,
8 we have a small custom fish processors and when a
9 longliner brings in their rock fish that's overage then
10 that rock fish goes into a tote with ice and then local
11 residents can go down and get rock fish and then fillet
12 it up and put it into their freezers. When we see
13 sport boats out there just releasing that rock fish and
14 they're just floating out, and of course the eagles go
15 down and get them or seagulls will come along and peck
16 on them, but it's a wanton waste. I mean so someone
17 with a small boat from Pelican, they could go out and
18 fish for rock fish and they could bring it up and bring
19 it home and cook it but these fish are just floating
20 out to sea.

21
22 So with climate being more severe and
23 quicker to get severe, access can be more difficult and
24 a concern to local subsistence users. The Federal
25 Subsistence Board has made determinations that restrict
26 non-Federally-qualified, when appropriate, to provide
27 the required Federal subsistence priority in ANILCA
28 .804. By maintaining a long-term pattern of
29 traditional subsistence harvest it's much more
30 difficult and can pose a threat to public safety and
31 food security, the resource may overall regionwide be
32 healthy but there is localized depletion causing
33 subsistence users to lose access to important
34 subsistence resources. It's more than reducing
35 competition, it's providing a meaningful subsistence
36 priority while dealing with localized depletion.

37
38 Those are my remarks, Mr. Chair. Thank
39 you.

40
41 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty.

42
43 Now, lastly we'll turn to Cathy Needham
44 who can give a local report or, but she definitely
45 wants to report to us on what happened at the Federal
46 Subsistence Board meeting in January so, Cathy, go
47 ahead.

48
49 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

0033

1 I'll just do the Chair's report from the Federal
2 Subsistence Board meeting. Before I kind of get into
3 the particulars I just want to acknowledge that this
4 was the first time that I ever attended a Federal
5 Subsistence Board meeting and it was a little bit
6 intimidating but I had a lot of really great support.
7 So I just want to acknowledge that. DeAnna did a great
8 job making sure that I had everything that I needed to
9 be able to give a report of this Council's actions that
10 we had taken over the year and Rob, Jake and Andrew
11 were there answering my questions at the last minute
12 when I would have little panic attacks, like what
13 should I say, I mean can you remind me of the
14 difference between what we talked about with Kah-Sheets
15 Creek and Neva Creek please. And I had all that
16 information and I tried to study before I went but you
17 get a little bit intimidated and I kind of forgot and I
18 always had to be kind of regrounded. So we have great
19 Staff.

20

21 And, Mr. Chair, your shoes are really
22 hard to fill. Folks, I think missed you there. We did
23 have a social gathering of Chairs when we first got
24 there, it was not a Chair's meeting but it was an
25 opportunity for us to meet one another for working
26 together and there were a lot of Vice Chairs I noticed
27 at this years particular meeting, a lot of us, and so
28 that was a little encouraging, we were all like oh we
29 have big shoes to fill so I was not the only one.

30

31 Just a few takeaways from the Board
32 meeting that I thought I would share, a couple of
33 things before we get to the business that our Council
34 gave them.

35

36 One thing was that the Board covered
37 the -- they covered a topic called fisheries delegation
38 of authority and I really didn't know anything about
39 this topic when they were talking about it and so I was
40 like racking my brain while I was sitting at the table
41 going I don't remember us talking about this at all but
42 it wasn't something that came before the Regional
43 Advisory Councils. Essentially the fisheries
44 delegation of authority -- well, with delegations of
45 authority and how they work with wildlife is that you
46 have emergency actions and then you have temporary and
47 special actions, and with fisheries -- well, I'll
48 explain the difference for those of you that might not
49 know this or remember -- the emergency actions are
50

0034

1 things that the delegated authority official can do
2 within 60 days -- for 60 days during a period to
3 address a concern, a depleted population maybe, as new
4 information comes, and the temporary and special
5 actions last through the regulatory cycle and they
6 require a public hearing of the Federal Subsistence
7 Program. And in our processes the fisheries -- the
8 delegation of authority for fisheries did not allow for
9 temporary and special actions so that was something
10 that was a carryover from when the Federal program took
11 over and so that's something that's in place for
12 wildlife but it was not in place for fisheries. And so
13 the Federal Subsistence Board received a briefing about
14 all of this and were presented with some options and at
15 the end of the day they chose Option 3 unanimously, and
16 that option was to align the way delegated authority
17 works between fisheries and wildlife and so now for
18 fisheries the delegated authority in fisheries are able
19 to do temporary and special actions now.

20

21 So that was an interesting process to
22 see, something a little different and something that I
23 didn't have much information on and that I learned that
24 we -- you know, we, to this day, after all of the time
25 that the Federal Program has managed subsistence are
26 still working under some carryover type things that
27 haven't lined up over the years and these topics still
28 come before us -- or come before, at least, the Board
29 to sort of take care of and consider.

30

31 Another thing that I noted -- so when
32 we started getting into the business of the Regional
33 Advisory Councils is that there were a lot of closure
34 reviews in other regions and I was thinking about how
35 we -- you know we had one closure review under -- that
36 we took care of, but there was another region, the
37 Kodiak/Aleutians that had, I don't know a dozen closure
38 reviews that they did so that was another thing about
39 like sort of the history of the Federal Program is that
40 some of those closures -- it was like listening to the
41 analysis on it, it was like well we're not even sure
42 why it was closed in the first place, it was a
43 carryover kind of thing, and a lot of those opened up
44 and the Board action on all of those were always to
45 give deference to the Regional Advisory Council, and
46 they actually stated that in their justification for
47 how they voted on it. So I think it was just a really
48 good reminder of the work that we do at this table when
49 we look at those kinds of things, the closure reviews,
50

0035

1 which is something that we don't deal with a lot over
2 time, that we really are -- you know the Board is
3 really listening to those recommendations.

4
5 It was interesting, you know, we are
6 Region 1 and when you get there you give a Chair's
7 report and so my very first meeting, was like one of
8 the very first things we had to do is give a Chair's
9 report, a report for our region, and I was the first
10 one, and I'd never heard these things -- I like to
11 listen to everybody first before I decide like how I'm
12 going to do it but, no, put right on the spot and so --
13 but luckily DeAnna did a really good job of making sure
14 I had great talking points and we went through it. And
15 then the rest of the meeting, we went through the
16 process and Southeast was put last. So I had like this
17 starting out of the gates and then I had to wait for
18 three days for all the other business to kind of happen
19 and then we finally got a moment to spend some time on
20 the proposals that we had before us.

21
22 As you may recall we had four fisheries
23 proposals during this cycle. One was on the consensus
24 agenda which was the customary and traditional use for
25 shellfish. And then we had our two fisheries proposals
26 and a closure review. For the fisheries work the Board
27 did side with the Regional Advisory Council
28 recommendation. There was one, the Neva proposal, if
29 you guys remember from last year, the Neva Creek
30 proposal was an interesting process to watch. It was
31 not a unanimous vote, it actually was a four to four
32 vote and so when that happens then the motion fails and
33 so the motion was to support rescinding the closure at
34 Neva but because it was a 4/4 vote, that vote was voted
35 down and so even though the Federal Subsistence Board
36 didn't vote to support the Council's recommendation,
37 ours was to maintain status quo, it ended up going in
38 our favor because of the 4/4 vote, which was kind of
39 fascinating to watch that unfold. Because I didn't
40 quite understand that while I was sitting at the table,
41 that you have an even number of Board representatives
42 and what happens when you don't have a tie-breaker at
43 the end, it just goes away.

44
45 And then you may recall we had the
46 deferred wildlife proposals that went back to the
47 Federal Subsistence Board and all three proposals were
48 declined, did not -- they were all voted in opposition.
49 It was -- the vote was one to seven with the Bureau of
50

0036

1 Indian Affairs supporting the Regional Advisory
2 Council recommendations out of that. I want to thank
3 the time that the community members took to call in to
4 give testimony on those proposals. I think it was
5 helpful. Some things that I feel like were the
6 takeaways from that, there were questions, that was
7 really -- you know we have the work that we did and
8 it's written out and we present it to the Board and
9 this is what we have and then there's time for
10 questions and so that was another little panic attack I
11 think but hopefully I handled the questions well in
12 terms of what the Council discussed. I noticed that
13 the questions really were centered around being able to
14 show, which we might not have done a very good job of,
15 being able to show what Mr. Kitka was talking about,
16 the difference between having a reduction -- or a
17 closure or a reduction in harvest, whether it be
18 because of a conservation concern, which I think where
19 the overwhelming evidence with those deer proposals
20 really were, that there was no conservation concern
21 versus closing off a portion of other users due to
22 whether or not you can have the continuation of
23 subsistence uses. And I think if we were to take the
24 lessons that we learned out of that process is that we
25 probably could have done a better job documenting that
26 aspect, rather than focusing on the data that is around
27 the conservation and that deer are in abundance, unit-
28 wide, versus the local concentrations or whether or not
29 people are actually meeting their subsistence needs.
30 And so I think that was a really good take away on that
31 aspect of it.

32
33 And then I think we'll have a briefing
34 at this meeting, the Board did spend some time also on
35 the Tongass submerged lands issue as well as the non-
36 rural determination process for Ketchikan that is now
37 going towards its next stages.

38
39 So with that it was an exciting meeting
40 and I want to say I appreciate the opportunity to go,
41 it's the responsibility of the Vice Chair to fill the
42 Chair's shoes as much as she or he can when you're
43 unable to make it, and I appreciate the work that you
44 do, Mr. Hernandez, on behalf of this Council, because
45 now I realize how much work it really is.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cathy.

50

0037

1 And like I said, I'm really glad that the rest of the
2 Council does step up when needed. I think it's good
3 for the Council to be involved in some of these
4 processes too because it's really a good way to learn
5 about just how the whole systems work, both on the
6 State side, which we attend, and being at the Federal
7 Board meeting is a really interesting process. So,
8 yeah, thank you, Cathy for being able to do that.

9

10 Next up on the agenda is the
11 opportunity for public comments on anything unrelated
12 to the agenda. Any topic of interest to anybody. I'd
13 like to know is there anybody on the telephone lines
14 who would like to give public testimony at this time.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Not hearing
19 anybody. Is there anybody in the room who would like
20 to give testimony at this time.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, not seeing
25 any. Just for future reference, as the meeting
26 continues here for people who do come to the meeting,
27 if you know of anybody who is coming to the meeting we
28 usually have blue cards near the entrance there for
29 people to fill out if you do want to testify, fill out
30 a blue card and bring it up to our Coordinator and
31 we'll have an idea of how many do want to give
32 testimony. And for folks on the phone you just have to
33 let us know if you want to say something.

34

35 So we can take a break then and start
36 with old business. So let's take a 15 minute break.

37

38 (Off record)

39

40 (On record)

41

42 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thanks
43 everybody for coming back to the table. The gavel
44 speaks loudly, I like it.

45

46 (Laughter)

47

48 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We're going to get
49 into old business.

50

0038

1 MR. DOUVILLE: You made the lights go
2 out.

3
4 (Laughter)

5
6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I saw that. We'll
7 get into old business here very shortly and I think
8 first up on old business maybe we'll go to Dave Schmid,
9 the Regional Forester, to give us an update on Roadless
10 because Dave has to be gone this afternoon, but hold on
11 Dave, we're not quite there yet.

12
13 (Laughter)

14
15 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And then we'll get
16 into the Board of Game update from John Smith. But
17 before we do that we have a little presentation from
18 Rob Cross who has a little something that -- as you
19 remember we have students who come to our meetings,
20 come to our Council meetings and they were also up at
21 the Board meeting, so they put together a little
22 presentation about what they've been up to. So we'll
23 let Rob Cross present that for us first before we get
24 into any other business.

25
26 Go ahead, Rob.

27
28 (Video played)

29
30 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thanks Rob. That
31 was really interesting, great to see the kids'
32 perspective on the whole process here after talking to
33 them during the meetings and meeting with them and
34 seeing their viewpoint when the process was all
35 completed. Very informative, so, thanks.

36
37 Anybody else on the Council want to add
38 anything. Harvey, go ahead.

39
40 MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Last
41 week I got to talk to Heather and she's moving from
42 Sitka to Petersburg. I'm kind of sad to see her leave
43 because she was such an influence on the young people
44 in Sitka and hopefully wherever she goes she can start
45 it again but the young people in Sitka, they're going
46 to miss this opportunity. I don't know if anybody's
47 going to take it up and follow through with it but it's
48 a great stepping stone for these young people to get.

49
50

0039

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you
2 for that news, Harvey. Anybody else have anything else
3 they want to add.

4
5 (No comments)

6
7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, it does seem
8 like Heather's been the driving force behind this and,
9 yeah, hopefully somebody in Sitka will pick up the ball
10 or maybe we'll see students from Petersburg in future
11 meetings. I don't know what her plans are, but, yeah,
12 I hope it can continue for sure. There's been a lot of
13 students come to our meetings in the past number of
14 years and I believe some of them have moved on to
15 pursuing careers in resource management and so it's
16 really encouraging for all of us.

17
18 Very good.

19
20 Dave Schmid, before you have to leave
21 for the afternoon, maybe you can give us an update on
22 what's happening with the Roadless Rule.

23
24 MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Again, I'm Dave Schmid, the Regional Forester here with
26 the Forest Service. And I'd like to comment as well,
27 the Forest Service has helped fund Heather's efforts
28 here in Southeast and it's -- I have a warm spot in my
29 heart for this as well. It was really evident at the
30 Federal Subsistence Board meeting, Cathy was there as
31 well, and there are also three students that have
32 expanded to Hoonah as well and they had a
33 mentor/teacher/coach along with them. And I think we
34 shamed all of our other Federal family, the Department
35 of Interior, into this as well and so I know that Fish
36 and Wildlife Service, Park Service for sure, and BLM
37 and others are looking at expanding this across the
38 state here. Because I know Chairman Christianson at
39 the meeting looked out and it's like he was pointing at
40 some of those students and saying, you know, you are
41 the future here and there's a gap between the folks who
42 sit around the RAC tables and those that sit around the
43 -- public members especially with the Board, so it is a
44 great program and we'll continue to support that any
45 way we can from the region and whether Heather's in
46 Petersburg, and there'll be others, but we'll make that
47 up.

48
49 But today I'll be really brief here as
50

0040

1 well. I think I had shared at the Ketchikan meeting
2 was about the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy
3 and this topic is part of that. I won't go into all of
4 SASS, you're going to get an opportunity to interact
5 here later this afternoon and later in the meeting,
6 but, just again as a reminder there were four major
7 points that were announced July 15th, 2021 by Secretary
8 Vilsack.

9

10 The first of those was to end large
11 scale old growth logging in Southeast Alaska and really
12 refocus our resources around restoration, restoration
13 in a sustainable young growth program moving in the
14 future. I think this afternoon, SASSfm, I've been kind
15 of working -- I know Cathy has also worked with some of
16 the folks there as we start to work towards a public
17 outreach on what does that look like, and we're going
18 to start by asking you all, the communities, what you
19 want to see, it's not, this is what we're going to do,
20 what do you think, we flipped that with SASS. So large
21 old growth was a big piece of that.

22

23 One was to really enhance and move
24 forward with truly meaningful consultation with tribes
25 across the Forest Service but especially here in
26 Southeast and how we do that and we've been really
27 embarking here on that of late with a number of
28 opportunities.

29

30 The third was an investment piece that
31 kicked things off, short-term, long-term investments,
32 \$25 million and we did move that all into -- Barb will
33 be here to talk about a lot of the projects and things
34 that we did.

35

36 But the other piece was to repeal the
37 Alaska Roadless Rule and replace that with the 2001
38 Roadless Rule that restored the protections of that
39 rule. I know it didn't go as fast as some folks would
40 like, we were right on the cusp of that I think when I
41 met with you last fall. That did get to the finish
42 line and was published in the Federal Register. I
43 believe you may have a copy of that, I don't know if
44 DeAnna's provided that, but that did, that restored all
45 the protections of the Roadless Rule. There was a lot
46 of extra time spent to ensure that that rule was based
47 on good rulemaking and decisionmaking so that it could
48 withstand, as we know we'll continue to likely have
49 legal challenges into the future but that has been in
50

0041

1 place and I want to thank you all here. You were all
2 behind this. I know Member Schroeder and I think Cathy
3 as well actually got on with OMB the last go around and
4 you've just been a pittbull of a group here in not
5 letting go of that and those voices were heard.

6
7 My hopes are and I think that, you
8 know, we were always looking for some kind of a lasting
9 effort here, something that's durable. I've just
10 watched -- you know I've been in Alaska for 30 years
11 now and the last five, coming back here, I've seen
12 things start to change in Southeast Alaska and really
13 reflect what the communities are looking for toward the
14 future and so I hope we won't be in this ping-pong,
15 pendulum, back and forth anymore into the future and
16 I'm fairly optimistic about that. I don't even want to
17 talk about Roadless anymore, I just want to talk about
18 all the good things we're doing in moving forward.

19
20 So I thank this Council for your
21 interest and your proactive work around that and I also
22 appreciate this Administration and our ability, and our
23 Staff who have been directed to do things at times in
24 the last Administration but we got this through and so
25 I think it's, from my perspective, a good thing.

26
27 So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

28
29 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Dave.
30 Any questions or comments for Regional Forester Schmid
31 from the Council.

32
33 Mr. Schroeder.

34
35 MR. SCHROEDER: Thanks much for your
36 presentation, Dick -- Dave, excuse me. I did want to
37 just ask you just where Forest Service is going with
38 respect to co-management and doing more contracting
39 with tribes and communities for management activities
40 and, you know, this is something that the Council has
41 been really interested in. And then I think I got it
42 correct, I read an article that at the national level,
43 Bear Ears is moving towards a more tribal management or
44 co-management agreement and I wondered just how you see
45 that might proceed in Southeast Alaska.

46
47 MR. SCHMID: Thanks for the question.
48 A couple of points that are really important. Bears
49 Ears is one of those.

50

0042

1 And so the Forest Service currently
2 does not have some of the authorities that allow us for
3 full co-management that the Department of Interior
4 does, and we're working on that. In fact through the
5 Farm Bill is one of those efforts that are moving
6 forward here. But what we do and what we call --
7 there was a joint Secretarial order that came out by
8 both the Secretary Haaland and Secretary Vilsack with
9 the Department of Interior as well as the Forest
10 Service around co-stewardship and so we mix those terms
11 often here and there's some slight differences here.
12 We have been moving through co-stewardship, we've
13 signed several agreements here and we're looking to
14 build on those. For examples were the Forest
15 Guardians, I signed an agreement with Tlingit/Haida
16 Council and others. That has expanded, it's, I think
17 it's looking at SeaCoast Guardians and that's really
18 looking at communities and working through areas there.
19 We signed -- oh, gosh, there's several other agreements
20 that have come forward here just in -- out of SASS that
21 are moving. We're looking for that kind of entry point
22 into more co-management. I did get the policy work
23 that you all have done and we're looking at how does
24 that fit in here. Currently working on a co-
25 stewardship agreement here in Juneau with Tlingit/Haida
26 Council, again, there are others that we've been
27 working with, other tribes. And really looking at kind
28 of that entry point into using all the authorities.
29 We're using like participating agreements, we're using
30 some other authorities that we do have at this point
31 but hoping that that will expand over time.

32
33 The MOU that goes with that
34 participating agreement talks about how we make
35 decisions and it's co -- I forget what the terms are
36 exactly in there but it's making those decision
37 together. Like that agreement's around Mendenhall, the
38 whole Mendenhall rec area which was a very traditional
39 use area but that allows us to be working in what I
40 would say what is really close to co-management until
41 we get those authorities.

42
43 So I don't know if that answered your
44 question.

45
46 We're moving in that direction within
47 the authorities that we do have.

48
49 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead,
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0043

1 followup Bob.

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MR. SCHROEDER: Just more of a followup comment. Perhaps the Council will reinforce through some communication out of this meeting, our support for these activities, because I'm really positive on the steps that you're making but got a long ways to go.

MR. SCHMID: I would just suggest -- so Bears Ears was created, we started trying to use the Bears Ears work and because that monument and the way it was formed and put together did provide for that opportunity and so right now we don't have that same ability to do that here in Alaska.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Any other questions.

Patty Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. Thank you, Mr. Schmid. My question is related to the annual report where we talked about how we've been effective, the Southeast Regional Council has been effective in bringing issues to the Board of Fish and to the Board of Game and our success rate has been not too much to brag about in terms of like bags and possession limits on salmon and log book -- knowing how much fish that sportfish are taking and in terms of, you know, trying to have sound management practices in order to provide a subsistence priority. And there's just that, you know, lack of data missing. And so we're encouraged to work through the State process and we work at the Federal level but it's not working for us so what can we do more to advocate for something that we've been advocating for for the last 10 years or longer. I know you won't have an answer but it's just a concern I have.

Thank you.

MR. SCHMID: No, I appreciate the concern. I think one of the -- one of the programs I just mentioned here, Forest Guardians, SeaCoast Guardians, you know, we've put money in, others have, folks have -- even the regional corporation here has put millions of dollars into that and those are areas where local communities and folks can provide that, you know, better data. I don't know if it's better data,

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1 but good, using indigenous knowledge, you know, what I
2 hear at these tables, to be able to maybe really
3 enforce some of that knowledge to bring to bear. We
4 still, you know, have challenges between Federal
5 management, State management at times but I -- I'm
6 hopeful, I guess, that through the RACs and maybe
7 through some of these other investments that we're
8 going to be able to really get to that point. But I
9 recognize those challenges.

10

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else with
12 a question or comment.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I guess not. One
17 comment from myself, Dave. I'm encouraged with the new
18 direction the Forest Service is taking, I hope it can
19 continue and I think what I see is important that maybe
20 in the future that our resources will be viewed and
21 treated more as resources as opposed to commodities.
22 And I guess by that I mean resources just involve a
23 whole range of important things with those resources,
24 you know, they're social, they're environmental,
25 they're ecological, you know, that's resource
26 management in my view. And in the past I think our
27 management has been focused on our resources as
28 commodities and I think that's gotten us into trouble
29 and I hope your change is in that direction.

30

31 Yeah, thank you.

32

33 MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
34 appreciate that perspective.

35

36 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you
37 again. Like I say we'll have more reports this
38 afternoon, that looks like it's kind of a time certain
39 on the SASS updates at 2:00 p.m., so we'll look forward
40 to that. And now we should move on to our report from
41 John Smith about what happened at the Board of Game
42 meeting this fall down in Ketchikan. And I think this
43 is kind of an important topic because it may kind of
44 lead us into any wildlife proposals that the Council
45 may want to end up putting forward so I think it would
46 be good to get an update on what happened at the Board
47 of Game. So, John, go ahead.

48

49 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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1 Council. Boardmen. Team. I just want to share what a
2 great honor it was to represent the team in January
3 20th to 24th in Ketchikan. And, of course, you seen
4 some videos of the children, they were there, it was
5 great to see Heather and the kids. And just want to
6 echo, you know, I'm Tlingit, from the Kaagwaantaan. My
7 brother's right here, he's Kaagwaantaan himself. So I
8 just want to take a moment to followup with the
9 culture, in listening to Patty and Louie and, you know,
10 your heaviness, I want to wrap the blanket around you
11 and I want to catch your tears and knowing that you're
12 here because you know that our grandchildren and our
13 children need you to be here even though that you have
14 some heavy things, even echoing it to the people out
15 there that are here and putting importance to what
16 we're doing today. So I thank you.

17
18 And just to echo what I saw, just like
19 what Cathy was sharing, I'm the new guy, I've only been
20 here, you know, a year so the team putting me on the
21 table was very -- a good experience and -- and just
22 share that, you know, what Cathy -- echo a lot of the
23 information, of course, DeAnna was like top notch,
24 right there. And, of course, we honored DeAnna that
25 day for a lot of her work that, you know, a lot of
26 times people don't get recognized and we did that that
27 day and so I'd like to echo that, what Dave was sharing
28 about the work that you do, that there's always
29 somebody in the background that nobody sees but they're
30 making things happen so I want to address that.

31
32 But also being there, when I was at the
33 table, it's not me standing before you, it's the 13, so
34 I hope that this is the team that I was representing
35 and that I did the best I could.

36
37 Sow with that to say, echoing the --
38 watching the teamwork that was going on, and even the
39 community coming up and sharing their love and their
40 care and concerns of the two-legged, the four-legged,
41 the air, sea, land, universe that they were coming and
42 sharing and so it's very important and even just
43 hearing some of the words about our grandchildren -- so
44 with that to say I'm just going to share and read what
45 I have here.

46
47 I attended the Board of Game meeting
48 January 20th through the 24th in Ketchikan along with
49 our Council Coordinator, DeAnna, and OSM State Liaison,
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1 George Pappas, and participated in the public comment
2 process and representing of this Council. I presented
3 our comments on 24 Board of Game proposals that could
4 potentially affect subsistence resources for us here in
5 Southeast. For the most part the Board of Game carried
6 these proposals we supported with the exceptions of:

7
8 Proposal 2, requiring hunters
9 orientation for hunting goat in Southeast units. We
10 opposed. Board of Game passed.

11
12 Proposal 7, 8 and 9, which dealt with
13 extending trapping seasons for martin and wolverine.
14 The Council supported, the Board of Game did not pass
15 any of these proposals. Of note, though, they did pass
16 Proposal 6 which lengthened river otter trapping season
17 in Unit 1 through 4 to align with Unit 5.

18
19 There were a few proposals where Board
20 of Game made a few amendments to this proposal we were
21 interested in.

22
23 Proposal 5. Changing the waterfowl
24 season in Unit 1 through 4 by creating a split season.
25 The Council supported this proposal as written and
26 Board of Game amended the proposal starting a closure
27 period of December 1st through December 15th.

28
29 Proposal 10. Decreasing the bag limit
30 to four deer in Unit 4 remainder, the Council supported
31 the proposal along with Proposal 11 which was similar.
32 The Board originally opposed Proposal 10 and took no
33 action on 11, but the Proposal 10 was brought back up
34 for reconsideration. The Board of Game amended the
35 proposal to replace the original proposal language to
36 place a reduce on non-residential bag limits for all
37 Unit 4 to two bucks.

38
39 All of the other proposals we commented
40 on, the Board of Game took action consistent with our
41 support of opposition. That included the nine
42 proposals regarding proposal change of wolf management
43 in Unit 2. The Council opposed Proposal 45, and 47
44 through 54 and the Board of Game did not pass any of
45 those.

46
47 For details on this action taken on
48 each and every proposal our Council Coordinator sent
49 out a table with this action by email on February 6th
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1 to the Council.

2

3

4 And just to share, too, to make note
5 and just to call out to the community and the team, the
6 importance of reporting, you know, what we're
7 harvesting from the land, air, sea, it's very important
8 to make decisions at the table for a team and being the
9 new guy I'm looking at the data and it doesn't match
10 with what I see visually out in the communities. So
11 I'd like to echo out to the community, to please, you
12 know, take a moment and call up the Fish and Game, get
13 online, and report even if you can call and report --
14 maybe you didn't report last year, maybe you didn't
15 report the year before and making sure that that's on
16 the table, it will really help us all make good
17 decisions. Even if you didn't harvest an animal, let
18 us know where you went and you didn't see these
19 animals. So I really encourage that that's key for us
20 up here is making sure that matches makes us -- helps
21 us get the decisions on the table.

21

22

Thank you, very much.

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John,
for your report. Do we have any questions from Council
members about the Board of Game meeting that John might
be able to answer.

Cal, go ahead.

MR. CASIPIT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Thanks John for attending for us, appreciate that.
Maybe between you and DeAnna you might be able to come
up with the answer for me. But it's in regards to
Proposal 31. It was a goat proposal for the remainder
of Unit 1C that basically under State regs that hunt
starts on September 1st, under Federal regs it starts
August 1st and the proposal before the Board of Game
was to -- it came from the Resident Hunters of Alaska
was to change the State season to be an August 1 start
date and I believe that passed. And this relates to my
concerns I had, that I talked about in my opening
report.

I remember way back then when we were
talking about that unit remainder of 1C goat hunt. The
reason that the August 1st start date was put in there
for rural users was to provide a meaningful priority
for goats in that part of 1C. Basically, you know,

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1 hunting in August it's easier, it's better weather,
2 don't have to worry about storms as much so we thought
3 at that time, way back when that that seemed like a
4 reasonable thing to do to maintain a meaningful
5 priority. And it seems like overnight some folks, this
6 Resident Hunters of Alaska came in and said, well,
7 let's change it so everybody can start hunting on
8 August 1st, well, that took away that meaningful
9 priority that I was talking about earlier. And I
10 believe -- I know when the Icy Straits Advisory
11 Committee when we talked about 31, we opposed it for
12 that very same reason, and I'm wondering how the Board
13 of Game can basically ignore the comments of their Icy
14 Straits Advisory Committee.

15

16 And, anyway, it seems like whenever we
17 try to provide a priority for rural users, what we're
18 trying to do, provide this meaningful priority, somehow
19 somebody gets an idea they can change the State regs,
20 make it the same as ours and our meaningful priority
21 goes away. And it really frustrates me. You know it's
22 about Unit 4 remainder deer when they changed to six
23 under the State regs back in 2019, here it is they're
24 doing it again in 2023 when the Board met on this --
25 granted it's a small area, it's not a big area but it
26 may be important -- it may be very important to people
27 in Hoonah, Gustavus, people in that area.

28

29 And so I'm frustrated, I really am.
30 Because we're supposed to provide this meaningful
31 priority, yet we can't close to non-subsistence users
32 unless we've got this conservation reason and if we
33 don't have a conservation reason then we get rejected
34 at the Board level. You saw what happened to our three
35 proposals for deer in Unit 4. I kind of knew that was
36 going to happen, they were going to throw them out just
37 because, you know, the Fish and Game was coming in and
38 saying there's no conservation concern and I think
39 we've got to -- I think the Federal Program has got it
40 wrong. Why is it that we can only provide a meaningful
41 priority when there's a conservation concern, that is
42 wrong. We should be able to provide a meaningful
43 priority no matter what. And I'm frustrated, I really
44 am and I don't know where -- I don't know what to do or
45 where to go at this point but, yeah, I'm not happy.

46

47 Thank you.

48

49 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cal.

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1 Any other comments from Council members.

2

3 Patty Phillips, go ahead.

4

5 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
6 Hernandez. I have a question for Cal Casipit if you
7 wouldn't mind. Could we, the RAC, submit a proposal, a
8 wildlife proposal that says 1C is closed to non-
9 Federally-qualified harvest of goats August 1st to
10 August 20th, I mean I'm just throwing dates out, and
11 then it would return it back to its meaningful
12 priority?

13

14 MR. CASIPIT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Go ahead, Cal.

17

18 MR. CASIPIT: Ms. Phillips. You know,
19 I -- this is what I was talking about earlier. It
20 seems like the only way for us to restrict non-
21 subsistence users if there's a conservation issue.
22 Well, I know the first thing, if we were to put a
23 proposal like that together and submit it, the first
24 thing the Fish and Game is going to say is that there
25 ain't no conservation concern for goats in Unit 1C, and
26 there we go, we don't have a way. We don't have a way
27 to reach out and stop that anymore.

28

29 I'd love to do it but I don't think
30 it's going to work. It didn't work for us for Unit 4
31 for deer.

32

33 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Bob Schroeder, you
34 have a question or a comment.

35

36 MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, I do. And I'd
37 like to thank DeAnna for printing out our nice binder-
38 bound Title VIII Subsistence Management and Uses.
39 Many, many years ago we all had this little book that
40 had the whole of ANILCA and apparently we can't get
41 those anymore but this is really useful. And, you
42 know, this may be something where we would like to put
43 this before the Federal Program because if you look in
44 here and you're an ANILCA affectionado and you look at
45 the second page under Section .804, it would appear to
46 support Cal's contention because there are two
47 sentences in Section .804, and the first sentence which
48 ends in a period; it says, unequivocally: The taking
49 on public lands of fish and wildlife for non-wasteful
50

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1 subsistence uses shall be accorded priority over the
2 taking on such lands of fish and wildlife for other
3 purposes, and that's a period. And then the next
4 sentence talks about in time -- it doesn't use the
5 words conservation concerns, but it's basically a
6 paraphrase of conservation concerns, and I think in
7 terms of the law what Cal is saying is that the first
8 is an operant statement, that it shall be accorded
9 priority. And I think I'm kind of finally coming
10 around to Cal's view after years and years -- we worked
11 together many years ago when we were children.

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 MR. SCHROEDER: But I think this is
16 something -- I think we could probably put this
17 together as a -- I'm not sure it's exactly an
18 information request but an analysis that we would
19 provide following this logic that these are two
20 separate things under .804, that .804 is not one thing
21 but it has two things in it. And to get a -- perhaps a
22 legal finding on this because, really a lot depends on
23 this and, you know, hearing so much about the
24 difficulties in Pelican well maybe there is not a
25 conservation concern in Pelican but there definitely is
26 not a priority for Pelican at this moment. I think
27 that's what you're saying, isn't it?

28

29 MR. CASIPIT: That's what I'm trying to
30 get at, yes.

31

32 MR. SCHROEDER: So perhaps this is like
33 a -- we do a little bit of board work and we'll get
34 some response on this. That would be a suggestion.

35

36 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
37 Bob. Anybody else want to add anything to that.

38

39 Mike Douville, go ahead.

40

41 MR. DOUVILLE: This is a comment if
42 that's okay. We had a similar situation on Prince of
43 Wales and we went through deer planning sessions, there
44 was not a conservation concern but there was a
45 competition issue. And it was very difficult, it took
46 several meetings to accomplish a rural priority. We
47 tried closing the season as the Unit 4 proposals do, or
48 reducing the bag limit, but anyway they were refused.
49 We finally made a proposal to open the season earlier

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1 and that was finally accomplished which gave a rural
2 priority. But I fully understand what you're saying
3 but it was a very difficult thing because there was not
4 a conservation concern but needs were not being met
5 because of competition from non-rural users. So that's
6 kind of an example of how it was approached. It was
7 not easy. It took at least three or four meetings and
8 a couple years of deer planning meetings to accomplish
9 it but it was done. So I think it is worthwhile
10 pursuing.

11
12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
13 Anybody else on the Council. John Smith go ahead.

14
15 MR. SMITH: I don't know if this
16 connects but just the competition, but what was on the
17 table, I remember, was about people from out of town
18 coming in and, of course, shooting a nanny and when
19 they shoot a nanny, of course you don't get to come
20 back for a year but if you're from out of town people
21 are not worried about that because they're going to get
22 their nanny and not come back and so they shoot the
23 nanny and then, of course, they shut it down. So I
24 don't know if that pertains, I just thought I'd bring
25 that up that that was one of the concerns, was that
26 information.

27
28 So thank you.

29
30 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
31 John. I don't know if anybody else on the Council
32 wants to weigh in on this but we also have, you know,
33 somebody from Office of Subsistence Management with
34 some expertise in how the Board Program views this so
35 if we could maybe hear from Lisa Grediagin.....

36
37 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yes, thank you, Mr.
38 Chair.

39
40 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:who could
41 answer some questions we have.

42
43 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, for the record,
44 Lisa Grediagin, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist with
45 OSM. And I just wanted to distinguish between a
46 meaningful subsistence priority and restrictions to
47 non-Federally-qualified users. Because per ANILCA,
48 Title VIII, there cannot be any restrictions to non-
49 Federally-qualified users unless necessary for the
50

1 conservation of subsis -- or the conservation of
2 subsistence resources or continuation of subsistence
3 uses, public safety, things like that. So that's where
4 this frustration of Cal's where the State's -- I mean
5 they're under a different authority. I mean the State
6 isn't -- when they're making their actions they're not
7 concerned about Federal priority, that's the Federal
8 Subsistence Program's mandate under Title VIII of
9 ANILCA, but then once the State does match a Federal
10 season, you know, that had been longer like that goat
11 season in Unit 1C it is, as you said in the past, kind
12 of higher threshold to then restrict Federal -- non-
13 Federally-qualified users because this is under Section
14 .815(3) of ANILCA that it really -- that restriction
15 has to be necessary. And this is, again, you know,
16 like working for OSM I've gotten advice from our
17 Solicitor on really having to demonstrate that
18 necessary aspect of things.

19
20 So, you know, for example with the Unit
21 4 deer proposals, I think that's where the Board, you
22 know, struggled with really demonstrating that
23 necessary standpoint. I mean everyone's well aware
24 it's not just for conservation concerns, I mean you
25 have closures, you know, several examples of closures
26 to non-Federally-qualified users because of
27 continuation of subsistence uses such as caribou in
28 Unit 23, sheep in Unit 25, caribou in Unit 13 and all
29 of those were closed because the Board deemed it
30 necessary for that continuation of subsistence uses.
31 But, again, I just really wanted to highlight that
32 distinction for the Council between providing a
33 meaningful priority for subsistence uses and then
34 authorizing a restriction to non-Federally-qualified
35 subsistence users, it's a little bit different when you
36 have to prove that it's necessary.

37
38 MR. CASIPIT: I'm not sure quite how
39 I'm going to put this but isn't the fact that we have
40 seasons, bag limits, limitations on what you can use,
41 where you can use it, whether you can hunt from a boat,
42 blah, blah, blah, by the fact that we have all -- both
43 State and Feds have all this stuff in this book about
44 what you can and can't do and when and where you can't
45 do it, isn't that by definition meaning that we have a
46 conservation issue. Because if we didn't then there'd
47 be no closed season, no bag limit, right. If there's
48 no conservation concerns there's no season, no bag
49 limit, if you do then you got seasons, you got bag
50

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1 limits, you got all this other stuff. So in my opinion
2 we're under conservation concerns all the time if we're
3 talking about anything that's in this book and we
4 should be able to provide a meaningful priority.

5

6 Again, you're hearing my frustration
7 and you're hearing -- and I'm saying it on behalf of
8 people that are out in these communities that see the
9 same thing.

10

11 Yeah, you know, like I said I'm -- I'm
12 very concerned right now and I'm really struggling as
13 to where to go with this because it's ridiculous. It's
14 absolutely ridiculous that the State can do something
15 on their side that changes our meaningful priority that
16 we worked hard to provide and there's no recourse for
17 us when it happens because we can't cross this
18 conservation concern bar, this necessary for
19 conservation, when this whole book is conservation.

20

21 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, through the
22 Chair. I certainly understand your frustration, Cal,
23 but I was just trying to provide that kind of legal
24 perspective of this is the framework, you know, we are
25 kind of operating within that -- yeah, when there's no
26 conservation concern, sure, extend the season on the
27 Federal side provide that priority but when you're
28 talking about restricting non-Federally-qualified users
29 it is a harder to -- harder to do that because you have
30 to meet -- you know, demonstrate it's necessary.

31

32 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. I see
33 Bob Schroeder and Harvey Kitka both have comments. Go
34 ahead, Bob, I think you had your hand up first.

35

36 MR. SCHROEDER: Well, who knows what
37 the next fault line is going to be but it would appear
38 that this is a fault line and something for -- I think
39 it's very appropriate for our Council to consider,
40 especially now that we have this great printout of
41 ANILCA which I'll keep referring to because even those
42 of us who think we know ANILCA don't exactly memorize
43 all the words and as Cal and Lisa have affirmed, our
44 job and the job of the Federal Subsistence Management
45 Program isn't equivocal, it says it shall be accorded a
46 priority. It doesn't say shall be accorded a priority
47 if, if, if, if and if, that's what it says. And those
48 of us who have been around for awhile know that there
49 was extreme reluctance to ever put a restriction on
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1 non-subsistence users say early in the program and as
2 Council Member Douville pointed out, we went through
3 agony for like years to get some priority for
4 subsistence users on Prince of Wales Island. And
5 obviously the way Mr. Douville's depiction's of the
6 hunting possibilities on Prince of Wales right now that
7 that wasn't out of line at all because people are
8 having trouble getting things.

9
10 So simply because the Federal Program
11 has developed this interpretation doesn't mean that
12 it's the correct or lasting interpretation that
13 restrictions can only take place under the necessary
14 criteria. That would be true if we were talking about
15 the second part of .804, but what the logic there,
16 legally, you know, if you kind of follow heavy legal
17 arguments this would kind of put us in the strict,
18 constructionalist frame where we actually believe that
19 the law means something as it's written, not as it's
20 been interpreted for the last 30 or 40 years. So I
21 think this may be something that the Council would like
22 to weigh in on because it does appear that the law is
23 pretty straightforward on this respect.

24
25 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Thank
26 you for the comment, Bob. Harvey Kitka, do you have
27 something to add.

28
29 MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
30 pretty much agree with Mr. Schroeder. I actually
31 didn't know of anything that trumped .804, I thought
32 .804 was what we lived by basically, it doesn't say
33 meaningful priority, it says actual priority.
34 Interpretations can be looked at a lot of different
35 ways by attorneys but in a plain mind like mine, an
36 actual priority means actual priority.

37
38 Thank you.

39
40 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Harvey.
41 anybody else on this topic.

42
43 (No comments)

44
45 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I just, you
46 know, something that went through my mind in these
47 discussions when they were coming up it was kind of
48 exactly what you brought up, Cal, everything in these
49 books are restrictions of some form. If there were no
50

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1 reg books it would be you could go out and take a deer,
2 as many deer as you want whenever you wanted, you know.
3 Everything beyond that is some form of restriction. So
4 it's all a matter of, you know, degree, I guess, and
5 maybe now we're having a new perspective on to what
6 degree do we interpret these words to mean. And, yeah,
7 interpretation, that's a big part of the law, I guess,
8 who gets to interpret.

9

10 Frank, go ahead.

11

12 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
13 know there's a lot of frustration around here and I,
14 too, am frustrated, but how do we address this? I know
15 we addressed it again and we got turned down, but at
16 least we stepped forward, if we don't then we're kind
17 of -- how do you say, passive approval or something
18 like that, so we, as a RAC, should figure out a way
19 that we could address it to the Feds and the State. I
20 get frustrated a lot by seeing people come from out of
21 town come into my little town and I see 20 deer hanging
22 up on a boat and, you know, a lot of the people that
23 come in and take the deer don't know how to eat it.
24 When I skin a -- take the meat off a deer, I may leave
25 a little bit of meat on there so I can boil deer bone,
26 that's good. A lot of the guys that do hunt from out
27 of town, they debone it out in the woods, leave the
28 bones, do you know how much flavor a bone is, my
29 goodness. And we eat the stomach, the liver, and the
30 heart and we call it (In Tlingit), (In Tlingit), cook
31 it up, man it's something that I, as a Tlingit, look
32 forward to. My wife loves the liver, I always cut the
33 liver up and the heart and cook it up together.

34

35 You know I think that we, as a RAC
36 Committee, should figure out a way we can address this.

37

38 Gunalcheesh.

39

40 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Frank.
41 Yeah, I think that's the major question before us, if
42 we're going to address this, how do we go about it. Do
43 we just put in a proposals and then press for it or
44 maybe there's a different way and we need to talk about
45 that.

46

47 Patty, you had something to add, go
48 ahead.

49

50

1 MS. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Chairman
2 Hernandez. So this whole thing started because a rural
3 preference, the State of Alaska, like it went to court
4 and the Supreme Court of the State of Alaska said,
5 there can't be a rural preference for the management of
6 fish and wildlife and so the State of Alaska lost its
7 ability to manage for subsistence because the Federal
8 Program manages for rural residents by ANILCA Title
9 VIII. And, to me, it seems like this is a strategy now
10 they're using, some organizations are using to -- well,
11 we'll just match it up, we'll submit proposals to match
12 it up and, well, it seems to be working because that
13 meaningful preference is not being brought forward as
14 the original intention. So I mean it's correct. The
15 utilization of the public lands is to cause the least
16 adverse impact possible on rural residents who depend
17 on subsistence uses of the resources of such lands,
18 that's .802. And Robert already referenced .804. Lisa
19 Grediagin referenced .815. There's a lot of legal
20 precedence to support that meaningful preference, and
21 the deference that we're to be given as a Regional
22 Council, it's up to us to bring forward that
23 justification of why. Cathy mentioned it earlier, we
24 didn't present our argument good enough so we need to
25 beef it up some more.

26
27 And as far as the legal analysis, we've
28 had how many legal analysis through these 30 years of
29 being a RAC and that varies at times, so now I hear
30 we're in a legal analysis of you have to -- is there a
31 conservation concern, well, that's not what ANILCA
32 says, and we're saying it's -- ANILCA says is there a
33 meaningful preference, is our subsistence needs being
34 met, it's not just a conservation concern. So anyways
35 I just -- that brought that thinking up in mind, so
36 thank you, Mr. Chair.

37
38 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty.
39 Bob Schroeder, go ahead.

40
41 MR. SCHROEDER: Well, just it seems
42 like we're more or less aligned, the people who have
43 spoken, as our view of the meaningful preference so how
44 do we get some action or articulate on this. We
45 haven't been real successful with proposals. Some
46 other things -- you know, so you kind of look at where
47 has this Council been particularly successful and I'd
48 bring up for those people who are around, the revising
49 of C&T determinations, which were something that
50

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1 blatantly was not part of the ANILCA program, we don't
2 see C&T determinations mentioned at all in ANILCA. And
3 that took us like just a lot of work to do so, you
4 know, one problem with these things is, okay, that's a
5 really great idea but now you have to do a whole bunch
6 of work.

7
8 And, you know, something else where I
9 think we were very successful as a Council was in our
10 comments on the Roadless Rule and that took like a huge
11 amount of work for so many people and everybody pitched
12 in on that. We made very strong comments. And I also
13 believe that we really pushed things over to consider
14 the climate impact and that was -- came out strongest
15 from our Council and then it was picked up by other
16 people opposing Roadless.

17
18 So I think this might be one if -- I
19 don't know if we have more gluttons for meetings and
20 punishments and writing up policy statements but that
21 kind of seems to be the way that we might make some
22 progress here. The problem with just appending things
23 to a proposal is that we don't really develop our
24 arguments real strongly because that's just not the
25 form for that and if the Federal Subsistence Board is
26 picking up on a proposal, they're going to decide that
27 proposal not necessarily setting a policy direction,
28 and so what we're really talking about is a policy
29 direction here. So that would -- you know, if we want
30 to give ourselves a bunch of work we might prevail.

31
32 So perhaps we should hold that until
33 later in the meeting to see if we have appetite for a
34 bunch more work.

35
36 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Bob. I
37 think I would agree with what you just said, you know,
38 policy positions are definitely one of the functions of
39 the Council so, yes, we could do that, it's probably a
40 better way to address the overall situation other than
41 just by continuing to put in proposals and, you know,
42 try and argue for that point in the process but you're
43 right that would not be as successful.

44
45 The other -- I mean we've also,
46 recently as a Council, made a pretty strong policy
47 statement on co-management as well. And, you know, I
48 see that bearing some positive results for sure which
49 could help to influence some of this debate we're
50

0058

1 having as that moves along because I think a lot of
2 what we come up against is, you know, also in the
3 ANILCA, Section .815, when you want to have a
4 restriction and, you know, is it for a conservation
5 concern or is it to continue subsistence uses. And
6 just the whole definition or interpretation of what
7 does it mean to continue a subsistence use, I think
8 that's a big part of this discussion we're having now.

9
10 And, you know, in order to make a lot
11 of those arguments, as we found out in the past, our
12 whole information collection system has tended to
13 ignore subsistence uses, I think, in the last number of
14 years. I think you pointed out in your Council
15 comments that we used to do a much better job of doing
16 community surveys and what not and finding out what
17 subsistence are in the communities and that's kind of
18 fallen by the way side and that could be a big benefit
19 of part of this co-management, to be able to bring some
20 of that information out on a more, you know, localized
21 community basis and I think that would go a long ways
22 towards making some of these arguments that we're going
23 to make.

24
25 Yeah, so it's going to be a process
26 like everything else, always is, could take a lot of
27 time, a lot of effort. As you said we've had success
28 in the past, maybe that will be a new focus here for
29 the Council moving forward. Yeah, before the
30 conclusion of this meeting maybe we'll have some more
31 ideas come out how we might address this. So I think
32 we can probably hold off on that for now.

33
34 We've kind of gotten away from our
35 initial report on the Board of Game actions but, you
36 know, that's where it leads, we could see easily how
37 it's going down this path, the kind of tension that
38 exist between State management and perceptions and, you
39 know, the rural perspective and perception of what the
40 situations are.

41
42 So, yeah, I don't know anybody else
43 have anything else to add on State Board of Game issues
44 or this whole situation we're talking about.

45
46 Patty, go ahead.

47
48 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
49 Hernandez. I know it's on the agenda for later but our
50

0059

1 annual report, part of .805 is that we review and
2 evaluate proposals for regulation policies, so we could
3 just give a head's up to the Secretary that, you know,
4 we're looking at, you know, policy change that more
5 recognizes meaningful preference and something that
6 we'll be working on the future. Just a head's up.

7

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you
9 for pointing that out Patty. That might be helpful.

10

11 Anybody else.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. I think we
16 can conclude the Board of Game discussion. And let's
17 see where are we on time here, we could take up maybe
18 another item of business here in old business before
19 lunch. Next thing on the agenda is a report on the
20 North American Caribou Work Shop and Arctic Ungulate
21 Conference, apparently there's some issues that might
22 be of interest to our Council. So for that we have
23 Lisa Grediagin again.

24

25 MS. GREDIAGIN: All right, thank you,
26 Mr. Chair. Members of the Council. Again, for the
27 record, my name is Lisa Grediagin and I'm the Wildlife
28 Division Supervisor with OSM.

29

30 During your fall 2022 meeting you heard
31 about the caribou and ungulate conference taking place
32 in Anchorage this May. All Councils nominated one
33 member to attend the conference and provide input on an
34 Alaska ungulate management symposium. And
35 informational flyer about this conference can be found
36 in your meeting books on Page 16. Before I proceed,
37 would any Council members like another overview of the
38 conference?

39

40 (No comments)

41

42 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody.

43

44 MS. GREDIAGIN: No.

45

46 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Nope, go ahead and
47 proceed.

48

49 MS. GREDIAGIN: I'll just skip ahead

50

0060

1 then. So on Page 17 of your meeting books you'll find
2 a summary of all the potential topics suggested by
3 Councils for discussion during the State and Federal
4 ungulate management in Alaska symposium. This session
5 is intended to be a neutral forum for Council members,
6 State Fish and Game Advisory Committee members,
7 National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission
8 members, Federal and State agency Staff and other
9 interested parties to discuss ungulate management in
10 Alaska specifically regarding harvest regulations.

11

12 During the fall 2022 meeting cycle, all
13 Councils provided input on potential topics to discuss
14 during the symposium and several Councils asked for a
15 followup summary list during these winter meetings.
16 Councils are now being asked to review this list and
17 provide additional feedback for the symposium such as
18 highlighting topics of particular interest or providing
19 clarifications on topics. OSM Staff will then decide
20 which topics will be discussed during the symposium
21 based on feedback from all 10 Councils prioritizing
22 topics that are relevant statewide and applicable to
23 regions and Councils.

24

25 So, thank you, Mr. Chair. I will now
26 turn the discussion over to you and any additional
27 feedback will be very helpful in finalizing the
28 discussion topics for this symposium.

29

30 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
31 Lisa. Any Council members have a chance to look this
32 over and want to make any comments.

33

34 MS. GREDIAGIN: And I'll just add that
35 if you want time to look these over and just provide
36 feedback either later in the meeting or via email to
37 DeAnna or myself, that's welcome too. It's just an
38 opportunity to get feedback from you all on what you
39 think would be the most interesting, relevant to your
40 Council. So, thank you.

41

42 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Lisa.
43 Yeah, I do see some topics here that would be of
44 interest to Southeast so, you know, statewide topics.
45 You know, managing young growth Forest, you know, they
46 say for moose but, you know, obviously managing young
47 growth Forest is relevant for a lot of things. Antler
48 restrictions we've talked about that, predator control,
49 so, yeah, there might be some common topics here that
50

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1 we'd be interested in. So we can look that over and as
2 you said if anybody wants to make suggestions there's
3 opportunity to do that so very good.

4
5 Anybody else on the Council, any
6 questions at this point.

7
8 Okay, Patty, go ahead.

9
10 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. On Page 17,
11 No. 4, how biological data is collected, e.g.,
12 population surveys. For Lisianski Inlet, for the deer,
13 I mean they bulked us into, you know, this sort of
14 Region 4-region-wide population estimate, so is that
15 how they collect data -- is that a normal collection
16 data process? Like when you're dealing with ungulates,
17 like say moose or -- I'm just using that as an example,
18 to me it doesn't make sense to sort of, you know, coral
19 in Lisianski Inlet/Lisianski Straits population
20 estimates with the whole Unit 4, which is three island
21 wide with all these different weather conditions and so
22 forth, is that what happens with other ungulates.
23 That's my concern.

24
25 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26
27 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty.
28 Anybody else with a comment or a question.

29
30 Cathy Needham, go ahead.

31
32 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
33 You know I think it would be good for us to think about
34 highlighting what topics we are most interested in so
35 that when our representative, Mr. Casipit, goes to the
36 meeting in May he, you know, knows kind of what we
37 might want some feedback on when we have our fall
38 meeting. Obviously there's been a lot of -- I mean
39 he's been with us for a lot of years through his
40 service and on the Council so I know he knows like a
41 lot of those intricacies of questions for that so I
42 know he'll do a good job, but if there's anything even
43 more specific that we want to highlight we should have
44 that discussion for him so that he knows what to
45 potentially report back on. If there's specific
46 things, other than our general stuff.

47
48 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49
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1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cathy.
2 Thanks for reminding me that Cal was the one we
3 designated to go to that so I appreciate you doing that
4 Cal. So, yeah, we should be, right, looking this list
5 over and looking for the topics that are relevant to
6 our area and give those concerns to Cal, you know,
7 hopefully before leave Juneau here we can have some
8 things for Cal to consider.

9
10 Okay, very good. Thank you, Lisa, for
11 that report.

12
13 I think we have time for one more topic
14 before we break for lunch, it won't take too long.
15 Other old business is special action report. Rob Cross
16 has that for us.

17
18 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 Again, for the record my name is Rob Cross and I am the
20 Tongass Subsistence Program Manager. So this is an
21 update of special actions taken since our last meeting,
22 the fall 2022 meeting, and an updated list of special
23 actions is in your supplemental Council materials.

24
25 So in summary, WSA13-WO09 set a one
26 month season length for wolf harvest in Unit 2.

27
28 Three special actions were taken to
29 close goat harvest in the Whale Bay, Necker Bay, Hogan
30 Lake zones of Unit 4, and those were WSA13-MG10, 11, 12
31 respectively. So those special actions were taken in
32 those zones after the harvest quotas were reached in
33 each one of those zones. The Unit 4 mountain goat
34 management is structured to allow the maximum harvest
35 opportunity while sustaining the population. So,
36 again, that's where we're using these very small
37 harvest zones, they're usually watershed scale, and so
38 instead of closing large sweeping areas to mountain
39 goat harvest, if there's a conservation concern in one
40 small area we're able to target watersheds and keep
41 certain zones open for longer and allow -- and also
42 direct harvest to those areas.

43
44 And then finally a special action was
45 issued for District 1 eulachon. And so District 1 is
46 closed to eulachon harvest due to a severe conservation
47 concern, however, the Unuk River is open, you know, it
48 has a limited fishery for Federally-qualified users
49 which allows harvest of up to five gallons per
50

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1 household per year. So this fishery offers a harvest
2 opportunity although very limited, the harvest
3 opportunity, and it's also providing managers with in-
4 season information so we're collecting age, sex,
5 length, scale samples, and also just harvester reports
6 as far as the abundance of eulachon in those systems.

7

8 So that's all I have for you and I'd be
9 happy to take any questions at this time.

10

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Rob.
12 Any questions on special actions.

13

14 Louie Wagner, go ahead.

15

16 MR. WAGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Did
17 you have people up there on the river, on the Unuk
18 River last year to survey and how many days were you
19 there?

20

21 MR. CROSS: Yes. Through the Chair.
22 Member Wagner. Yes, we did have a crew up there, I
23 want to say they were up there for four or five weeks.
24 I can actually have Mr. Musslewhite, he'll be giving a
25 report of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
26 projects and I'll have him get you the actual amount of
27 days that they were up there. And to anticipate the
28 next question, we'll have a crew up there for five
29 weeks this year so they should be heading up there very
30 soon. They just went up to drop off gear, I believe,
31 last weekend they went up to drop gear off and then
32 they'll be heading up very soon.

33

34 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Followup, Louie,
35 go ahead.

36

37 MR. WAGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 What about the ice, it should have been iced over and
39 how they would have gotten up there, if the -- the ice
40 is usually all the way down to the high tide mark and
41 you can't get up to the cabins unless you hike through
42 the middle of the island where the cabins are?

43

44 MR. CROSS: Through the Chair. I
45 didn't get a report back of whether they made it up
46 there or not but they have inflatable jet boats so if
47 the ice is free then that's how they're shuttling gear
48 back and forth. So they'll be taking a Beaver and
49 landing in the Sault or in Landing Slough, I believe

50

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1 and then taking the inflatable jet boats up to the
2 cabins.

3

4 MR. WAGNER: Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, anything
7 else, Louie.

8

9 MR. WAGNER: For all my experience the
10 ice won't come out until the big tides, which will be
11 coming up soon, and I have two jet boats and they're
12 not ice breakers and you can't get up there so I was
13 just curious on what you're saying that the crew is up
14 there, they're getting up there, it's just I sure would
15 like better information because I'm going to wait for
16 that ice to break before I go up and come out of there.
17 I've been up there when we laid up below the mouth of
18 the river with the boat tied to our log there on the
19 bluff and a few times the ice came out while we were
20 laying there because it was close, we didn't want to
21 leave and some of those huge sheets of ice would come
22 out and it would lift the whole boat up, a 42 foot
23 small seine boat, and it was absolutely nothing we
24 could do on the river until that ice came out. You
25 couldn't see anything, you know, and I've been on the
26 Stikine when the fish were going under the ice farther
27 up into the river and we weren't able to get them. I
28 mean you would see them off the edge of the ice and you
29 couldn't really tell how much were there, there was a
30 lot, but that ice makes all the difference in the world
31 on what you're going to be able to survey.

32

33 So I'll look forward to seeing the
34 people up on the river there and get a good report.
35 We're going to do our best to see what we can do on the
36 river this year and be there on time, I hope. That's
37 always questionable if you'll make it.

38

39 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

40

41 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Louie.
42 Response, Rob.

43

44 MR. CROSS: Yeah, if I could address
45 Member Wagner again. So, yeah, what I know at this
46 point is that, you know, they're working with Ketchikan
47 Indian Community, we have five weeks roughly of funding
48 for Staff for both KIC and the Forest Service and KIC
49 is going to be taking water samples to include

50

0065

1 quantitative eDNA sampling to try to use that as maybe
2 a proxy or an index for how many eulachon are in the
3 river. As far as the ice goes, I know that the plan is
4 that they're staging gear, I'm not exactly sure where
5 that is but then they're funded for several flights to
6 fly over to see if the ice is clear, and the
7 individuals that are managing this project have been
8 doing it for a number of years. I believe John Hyde is
9 the fish biologist, I believe he's been doing this for
10 roughly six or more years on the Unuk specifically so,
11 yeah, he's obviously much more informed than I am as
12 far as the logistics of running this project. But I
13 know a big effort this year and last year are to get
14 there before the fish show up and stay until after the
15 fish are gone and so, you know, staying there until
16 after, that's pretty easy but getting there before they
17 show up there is hard, as you mentioned, with the ice,
18 so I can't speak directly as to whether the ice is gone
19 or not at this point but I know they're staging gear
20 and are posed to get up there as soon as possible.

21

22 MR. WAGNER: One more question.

23

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead,
25 Louie.

26

27 MR. WAGNER: Thank you. Have you folks
28 discussed anything on the mining up there and it's
29 going to be worse because we've been, as the indigenous
30 group, are trying to get a meeting scheduled with the
31 Canadian government to try to get them to stop, have
32 you folks discussed that part at all, because if that
33 goes in we're going to lose everything on that river
34 anyway.

35

36 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

37

38 MR. CROSS: Yeah, through the Chair.
39 It is certainly at the front of everybody's minds that
40 are working on this project. I know in most of the
41 conversations that I have with the project manager the
42 mining comes up as well. I can't really speak to how
43 we can affect any change as far as that's concerned. I
44 know that the -- again, the folks that are working on
45 the project are well aware of it, I'm just not sure
46 where we're at as far as our ability to affect any
47 change there.

48

49 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Question from John

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1 Smith. Go ahead, John.

2

3

4 MR. SMITH: My question's about
5 temperature and just to share a little bit too of our
6 culture and our cultural stories, but just observation.
7 You know I grew up going to Sitka and Haines and Kluk
8 -- and the Chilkoot, Chilkat area, that understanding,
9 you know, when the eulachon or even the herring come in
10 that there's a clean up crew that goes in and like the
11 temperature of the water makes a really big difference
12 of when they actually call on the females to come up
13 into the river, you know, it's a process that we've
14 seen for many years, like back home we -- when the
15 first group comes in we don't touch them, we don't
16 harvest, we might grab a little bit just to celebrate
17 with our community, but we leave them alone until we
18 actually see the rest of the crew come in. And most of
19 the time -- you might even ask Harvey, my brother,
20 that, you know, the lake will start to melt and that's
21 when you actually can see the females start to come up
22 into that area and actually start to do their thing,
23 you know, their cycle that they do. And of course, in
24 Sitka, when we harvest our herring, we know that
25 they're ready to -- by watching the lake that's there
26 and knowing that when it starts to melt and it's at a
27 certain point we know that the temperatures's right and
28 then you start seeing the eulachon start to run their
29 process of reproduction.

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30 But just sharing about knowing about
31 the -- the temperature and what not. Do you guys
32 observe a lot of that observation and when you're
33 working do you guys see that, feel that, that history?

35

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35 MR. CROSS: Through the Chair. Member
36 Smith. I'm not sure if I fully understand the
37 question. We do collect temperature and water -- or
38 water temperature and also water chemistry samples and
39 things like that. I'm not sure that that's really
40 addressing your question. We do also try to collect as
41 much local traditional ecological knowledge, we do have
42 folks that live or spend quite a bit of time on the
43 river that provide information to us and assist with
44 the timing as Member Wagner was just informing me of as
45 well.

47

48

49

50

47 So, yeah, we're trying to collect as
48 much of that information as possible and it's a really
49 logistically challenging spot to get to and that's --

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1 and just challenging to sample, and as Member Wagner
2 can attest to, it's just a very difficult system to get
3 to to harvest and to sample as well. So we're using as
4 much information as we possibly can.

5

6 MR. SMITH: Do you actually observe
7 that? What I'm sharing about the males coming up
8 first. I mean I've seen this because we're there at
9 the river and we would go and we would scoop them and
10 you would notice that they were all males. But not for
11 a long time until after a little while before you
12 actually seen them come. I just want to -- I just want
13 to -- that you're observing those -- that piece of
14 science, the history?

15

16 MR. CROSS: Yeah, through the Chair.
17 So I'm certainly not the expert on this project and I
18 can have Mr. Musslewhite address that in his
19 presentation if we can get that information in time.
20 Part of the sampling is we look at spawning conditions,
21 so we are looking at whether they're males or females
22 or whether they're -- what condition of spawning they
23 are, whether the females have spawned out or whether
24 they're still pre-spawn. So that is information that
25 we're collecting. I can't speak directly to whether
26 that's -- whether we're seeing the females come up
27 first or not, I apologize, I would love to get out to
28 that system and do some of that work, I just haven't
29 been able to so.

30

31 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, okay, thank
32 you Rob. A lot of information there. I'd just like to
33 remind the Council members, you know, you can collar
34 some of these guys when we're out in the hallways and
35 what not. It's nice that they're all here so if you
36 want to bend their ears a little further it's a good
37 opportunity.

38

39 So, yeah, I'm also glad to hear that
40 we're getting cooperation from the Ketchikan Indian
41 Community on that Unuk project. I know that's been
42 valuable in the past and I'm glad to hear it's still
43 continuing.

44

45 So we can take a break for lunch and
46 when we come back we'll resume with old business. I
47 would like to, when we do get back, maybe offer up one
48 more opportunity for some public comments. There might
49 be some folks that are available after lunch so I'll
50

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1 offer up that opportunity and then we'll move ahead
2 with old business. We have a time certain at 2:00
3 o'clock. That's a Forest Service update on the
4 Southeast Sustainability Strategy so we'll do that at
5 2:00. And then maybe before, if we have time, if
6 there's no public comments, we might get into the
7 Tongass submerged lands topic, but whatever we're
8 working on we will move at 2:00 o'clock to the Forest
9 Service presentation.

10

11 So I think being kind of new to this
12 venue and maybe until we get a little better acquainted
13 with what's available here in the downtown area let's
14 take an hour and a half lunch. Things have gone quite
15 well this morning and it'll give everybody a chance to
16 find a place to get some lunch, I don't really know
17 what's all that available here in the area so if that's
18 okay with everybody come back at 1:30 and we'll resume
19 with old business.

20

21 (Off record)

22

23 (On record)

24

25 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: There's still a
26 couple of Council members not at the table but I think
27 they're close by. So we can start off after lunch, I
28 did want to offer up the opportunity for anybody from
29 the public who wanted to talk about anything not
30 necessarily on our agenda, either anybody on the phone
31 or somebody in the room. I see somebody in the room so
32 we'll probably bring him up first. And like I say, if
33 there's anybody on the phone give a holler after we
34 hear from the person in the room and we'll get to you.

35

36 So, yeah, you want to introduce
37 yourself.

38

39 MR. STRONG: Yeah, thank you, Chair.
40 My name is Daniel Strong. I'm a lifelong Juneau-ite
41 and I grew up here and I started going back to grad
42 school here just about a year go, so my second year of
43 Masters and working on my thesis right now. So my
44 thesis is working on eulachon and I guess the reason I
45 came to the Board is maybe you guys might have some
46 ideas of directions to go. I don't have a clear idea
47 of where my thesis topic is going to go but I'm
48 interested in the trading network of eulachon grease
49 and also the grease trails up into the Yukon. But also
50

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1 I'm kind of interested in the spiritual aspects of
2 eulachon and that side of things, and maybe the health
3 benefits of the grease but also of consuming the
4 animal.

5

6 So I just wanted to introduce myself
7 and let you guys know that I was going to be starting
8 this research and if anyone has any suggestions on
9 things I should read or people that I should talk to,
10 I'm all ears.

11

12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you,
13 Dan. Any questions or comments from the Council. As
14 you know we've spent a fair amount of time talking
15 about eulachon this morning so there is a lot of
16 expertise here. Anybody on the Council have a comment.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Well,
21 you'll be around and if people want to talk to you
22 they'll grab you. Okay, thanks Dan.

23

24 Is there anybody on the telephone who
25 would like to make a comment to the Council.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Not hearing
30 anybody. So we can get into our business, old
31 business, back to old business.

32

33 I notice here we had this time certain
34 for 2:00 o'clock from, you know, Frank Sherman, from
35 the Forest Service, but Frank is here now so we'll just
36 go ahead and bring him up and talk about the Southeast
37 Sustainable Strategy.

38

39 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, very much, Mr.
40 Chairman. Well, first of all I just wanted to
41 introduce myself. My name is Frank Sherman and I am
42 the acting Forest Supervisor for the Tongass National
43 Forest. As you can see I am not Earl Stewart. Earl
44 was with you here at your last meeting and he was
45 selected for a national position in November and asked
46 to go down to the WO and lead up a strike team which he
47 has been working on for the last few months. So I
48 moved into the acting position then and I'll continue
49 in that role until they figure out how they're going to

50

0070

1 replace the -- bring on the next Forest Supervisor.

2

3

4 But with that said, Mr. Chairman, I'll
5 leave the Tongass update to Mr. Cross on Thursday. He
6 can provide all the salient points that are occurring
7 on the Forest. What I was hoping to do today was to
8 give you a general overview of the Sustainability
9 Strategy but specifically for the Forest Management
10 piece. And as I'm sure you are all aware that was one
11 of four announcements or objectives from the
12 Secretary's announcement that came out in July of 2021.
13 The Forest management piece was specifically addressed
14 to end the old -- large scale old growth timber harvest
15 and instead focus our resources on Forest restoration,
16 recreation, climate resiliency and building up a
17 sustainable young growth timber management program. So
18 if you looked at that specific objective and you looked
19 at -- I mean it's only two sentences long and that's
20 what we -- that's the information that we received to
21 start to build out a strategy. We started to and spent
22 the summer of 2021 at the regional level moving
23 through, you know, what does that framework look like,
24 what does an integrated Forest management initiative
25 look like and they came up with a pretty good strategy
26 that basically integrated aquatic terrestrial
27 restoration. It took a hard look at our young growth
28 timber management program and it also took us another
29 look at sustaining a small old growth timber program to
30 allow supply for our local vendors.

30

31 So that, in essence, that's what we've
32 been working on as a region and the Forest for almost
33 the last year.

34

35 We have developed an initiative and,
36 again, this is all based off the 2016 Forest Management
37 Plan, which basically that announcement from the
38 Secretary really hastened the transition from moving
39 from that predominately old growth timber program to
40 one that's a sustainable young growth program and also,
41 and probably more to emphasize and highlight the
42 restoration pieces that are now embedded within new
43 initiative.

44

45 The integrated Forest management
46 strategy really does take a hard look at integrating
47 all the different perspectives across the Forest and
48 the region and across Southeast Alaska. So what we
49 mean by that is we're proposing a very broad based
50

50

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1 public input initiative that allows tribal entities,
2 tribal corporations, stakeholders, industry, the public
3 to take a look at a number of landscapes across the
4 Tongass and provide comments on what they believe are
5 the most lucrative opportunities for restoration or for
6 young growth occur across the Tongass. We have a
7 storyboard, and I apologize, it's still not finished
8 yet, it's probably going to take two more weeks to get
9 this electronic storyboard, if you will, put together
10 with all the right tabs, it's being Beta tested right
11 now and so I asked my 18 year old daughter to figure
12 out if she could break it and she did in like 10
13 minutes.

14

15 (Laughter)

16

17 MR. SHERMAN: And so, you know, it's
18 gone back to the folks that really do a good job on
19 working all that and it was not just my daughter it was
20 a number of other folks that played with it, but we're
21 almost there. And so we'll get this thing prepared,
22 it'll be released once we roll out with the initiative
23 across the Forest.

24

25 We plan on starting with the tribal
26 consultation first. We'll go through that process and
27 once we move through that then we'll move into a more
28 public forum. I think the outcomes that we're looking
29 for in this engagement process though is that we are
30 looking for comments from all those stakeholders to
31 look at our landscape and propose initiatives within
32 areas in which we can look for economies of scale of
33 restoration work, where we have a work force that we
34 can either develop or already have and we can make use
35 of those folks, funding opportunities, you know, that
36 our partners bring in so those will all be parts of how
37 you look at the landscape. The hope is that we are
38 able to take all this in out and we'll most likely move
39 through the summer and in the fall put all this
40 together and the hope is that we come up with a 10 year
41 prioritized body of work across the Tongass.

42

43 That's what we're shooting for.

44

45 There's probably a lot of details that
46 I forgot or missed but I'm open for questions if you
47 have any at this time.

48

49 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you,

50

0072

1 Frank. We'll take some questions from the Council.
2 Harvey Kitka, go ahead.

3
4 MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
5 was curious on this consultation part, realizing that
6 it's hard to get tribal people to come to your meetings
7 and especially -- even the affected ones, there seems
8 like there has to be another avenue of how to get these
9 people to the meetings even if -- because in some cases
10 they have no money to make it to the meetings, so I
11 don't think they can have a meaningful talk with you
12 people unless you can find ways to travel to these
13 meetings. I realize that it might not always be the
14 case but in a lot of cases some of the tribes don't
15 have the money to send people. In some cases telephone
16 or internet doesn't work that great. So meaningful
17 consultation -- meaningful talks with these people it
18 just doesn't seem to work. I know when I attended one
19 of the meetings I was the only Native person there.
20 There was nobody who even called in. So I was just
21 lucky at the time that I was part of the Sitka Tribe
22 and they -- it was the only time I ever traveled for
23 the tribe was they let me go to this consultation and I
24 just hope that we can find a better way to reach these
25 people because I know it's really hard to make contact
26 with the tribal leaders.

27
28 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, response Mr.
29 Sherman.

30
31 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
32 Mr. Kitka, yes, I acknowledge that, it is very
33 difficult. We have number of venues set up that I hope
34 to get as much participation as possible from the
35 tribes. We're already outreaching directly through the
36 Rangers, directly to the tribes, to begin setting up
37 consultation for this initiative. So we're going to
38 try to do those direct, face to face. I think that's
39 the most appropriate way to move through this
40 particular type of initiative, because we are talking
41 about a significant land management issue that I think
42 is something that all the tribal entities want to be
43 part of. So we're doing our very best to make these
44 all face to face.

45
46 I've spent the last -- I was just
47 telling the Vice Chair, I spent the last two and a half
48 months on the road, and as you all know trying to
49 travel across Southeast Alaska in the wintertime is
50

0073

1 always a challenge. In fact I got stuck in Gustavus on
2 the Taz, so I mean it's just -- but it's valued and I
3 think people really appreciate the time and effort that
4 we take to try and do these consultations face to face.
5 So that's going to be our first method and our most
6 preferred method is to go face to face and conduct a
7 tribal meeting.

8
9 I've also been asked to do public
10 meetings but just allow tribal citizens, that's also an
11 initiative that we're going to take a hard look at and
12 integrate at a number of different locations. I know
13 specifically on Prince of Wales we'll be doing that and
14 maybe looking at one other location. But in places
15 where it's a little bit more difficult to try to get
16 people into one area. And, again, I think that
17 addresses some of the travel concerns.

18
19 And, then, finally, we will be doing
20 some virtual. I personally -- I just find that it's
21 another method that some people prefer to use because
22 they don't have to leave the house and if they have
23 decent internet they just prefer to attend the meeting
24 virtually to learn and to provide comments.

25
26 So I think through those three venues
27 -- and this is going to be over time, too, we're not
28 going to be just one shot and done, for some -- some of
29 our tribes have already asked for multiple meetings so
30 I'm thinking it's probably going to take me 90 to 120
31 days to move through this consultation period with the
32 tribes and then I'll sequential or simultaneously
33 release to the public, but I've got to start with the
34 tribes.

35
36 Is that helpful, sir?

37
38 MR. KITKA: (Nods affirmatively)

39
40 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you.
41 John Smith, you have a question.

42
43 MR. SMITH: Thank you. I like your
44 response about the virtual. I think we shouldn't be
45 afraid of that. You know education before Covid we
46 were -- education was already on the table and we were
47 doing virtual and I think that we'll cover more people
48 and then you get to see their face and see their
49 feelings. I think that's important.
50

0074

1 So my question is referring to my
2 brother, Harvey's, is the partnerships. I hear you
3 talking about partnerships in these corporations. Can
4 you be more specific of who these people are and their
5 names and maybe more of a -- their efforts and their
6 concerns and, you know, what's their point of interest
7 and what's their goals and -- and their focus is on.

8
9 Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Go ahead, Mr.
12 Sherman.

13
14 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
15 Mr. Smith, there'll be a varied number of partnerships.
16 I don't know all the ones that we'll engage at this
17 point. I have spoken with a few, particularly for
18 restoration, like Trout Unlimited, the Nature
19 Conservatory, SpruceRoot have all already contacted me
20 and said, hey, as soon as you can roll this out we want
21 to jump on it, I mean we see it as a work force
22 development program, we see it as an opportunity to do
23 some great restoration work out on the -- across the
24 Tongass so those are the three that come off the top of
25 my head. Tribal entities, of course, Sealaska has
26 already asked and I'm sure there'll be many others once
27 we roll this out.

28
29 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

30
31 Bob Schroeder has a question.

32
33 MR. SCHROEDER: Yeah, thank you for
34 your presentation and I apologize for coming in a
35 couple of minutes late there. This is all about
36 sustainability and, of course, the Council is very
37 pleased with the turn from harvesting more old growth
38 in the Tongass National Forest and as you know we
39 participated fully in comments on the Roadless Rule, in
40 fact, many iterations of comments on the Roadless Rule.
41 Overall the Roadless Rule received a huge number of
42 comments in Southeast Alaska and something like 70
43 percent of those comments, according to the analysis
44 that I saw, or heard about, referred to the Tongass as
45 a major source of carbon sequestration. And this may
46 not exactly be on your plate but your the Forest
47 Service person that we have here, and we also know that
48 Sealaska has put some of its lands into carbon bank and
49 receives payments for those and that's a major economic
50

0075

1 source of income for Sealaska and I think there's
2 another village corporation that has done the same
3 thing, but I'm not sure. I'd really like to see Forest
4 Service take a little bit of leadership in recognizing
5 the importance of the sustainability of carbon
6 sequestration in the Tongass National Forest and I
7 think it's time to move beyond simply saying trees are
8 good because they sequester carbon but to actually come
9 up with some carbon balance and a carbon estimation of
10 how much carbon is sequestered in the Tongass National
11 Forest using the amazing data sources that Forest
12 Service has in GIS and land -- ground truthing Forest
13 types.

14
15 You may or may not be aware that there
16 has been very exciting work that's been done in other
17 Forests, particularly with Redwood Forest in California
18 that both estimate total carbon sequestered in a Forest
19 by type. By Forest type. Which means trees and where
20 there is second growth or old growth and what types --
21 how much carbon is taken up by different Forest types.
22 So I'd really -- you're not exactly the person --
23 you're the Forest Service to bring this up with, but I
24 think this is really, really important and as we move
25 forward into the further local effects of the climate
26 catastrophe, this is really important and this may be
27 the highest and best economic use of the Tongass
28 National Forest. So I really urge that you relay this
29 on and possibly include it in your message when you're
30 talking about what the best use of the Forest is and
31 the best use may not be cutting it down in any way.

32
33 Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, any response
36 there, Frank.

37
38 MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chair. I will -- I
39 acknowledge the concern. I understand that the
40 Washington office is working on that but I have not
41 received any type of guidance at my level. So I mean,
42 yeah, I don't know much more -- I can't offer too much
43 more for you there sir.

44
45 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. John Smith,
46 go ahead.

47
48 MR. SMITH: Just to share a little bit.
49 I mean as far as a tree, a young tree that's growing is
50

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1 going to produce a lot of oxygen -- I mean -- yeah, a
2 lot of oxygen but absorb a lot of carbon and when it
3 starts to get to an age where it starts to die it's
4 going to recede that where it's not going to be
5 absorbing as it's going to actually go into a negative
6 and the only way to stop that is by knocking it down
7 and letting it hit the ground and let it start to break
8 down, will actually start to neutralize the carbon
9 without producing more carbon. So just understanding
10 that, that some of our old trees that are standing up
11 that are probably dead and standing there, it would
12 probably be good to take them down and let them hit the
13 ground and that would actually open it up and give more
14 trees to give more growth and those trees would absorb
15 more carbon.

16
17 I'm just sharing a perspective and a
18 little bit of knowledge.

19
20 Hooray.

21
22 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
23 John. Anybody else with the Council with a question.

24
25 Patty.

26
27 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
28 Hernandez. So I live in Pelican which is in -- one
29 side's wilderness area and the other side is LUD2 area
30 and the integrated Forest Management, I mean there
31 isn't logging that goes in our area. But I'm
32 wondering, we're having a lot of like, you know, dead
33 tree die-offs, I mean tree die-offs and so is there
34 something in the plan that would allow a community to
35 go in and, you know, just start sawing down these dead
36 swaths of trees, you know, for local fireweed. I mean
37 right now you have to get some sort of use permit in
38 order to go do it and it just seems like -- they're not
39 falling down, they're still standing up but we have a
40 need for firewood, is there something in the Forest
41 Plan that allows for that?

42
43 MR. SHERMAN: For -- yes -- oh, I'm
44 sorry, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Phillips, yes, there is.
45 There are a number of different ways that we can move
46 forward with that. If you have a community firewood
47 program, we have a number of them across the Forest.
48 We, the Ranger, can give you a free use permit for
49 those types of -- for that type of firewood. There are
50

0077

1 other -- if you have a dead still standing tree that
2 you want to use for a particular commercial purpose,
3 say you want to cut that down and mill it so that you
4 can use it for local timber, those are what we call
5 salvage sale and those are very economical and we do
6 those all the time. But I think what you're mostly
7 concerned about is trying to get firewood, if that's
8 the case then that's a pretty easy process and that
9 goes right through the Ranger.

10

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you.
12 Is there a followup, Patty, yeah, go ahead.

13

14 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
15 Unrelated to that question, when you say that there's
16 the old growth transition to young growth, how long is
17 that going to last because like 10 years ago we were
18 told that there's this old growth transition to young
19 growth so how much more years?

20

21 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
22 So Ms. Phillips, the current Forest Plan that we have
23 transitioned from old -- predominately old growth to
24 young growth by 2032. The Secretary's announcement
25 accelerated that considerably. So we are moving
26 forward with the SASSfm initiative to try to understand
27 -- to try to get a better picture of where are young
28 growth stands are. We know where they are and we know
29 the age of them. We understand the growth rates so we
30 have timelined when we are going to be seeing young
31 growth become economical by year. I mean I think we do
32 it by every two years but something like that and we
33 have a timelapsed type of photo. That's what we've
34 used to try to figure out where's the best places where
35 we might have these opportunities throughout the next
36 10 years and that will help inform us as we show that
37 in the landscape and get public input on. Okay, if
38 we're going to be doing a young growth program -- and
39 we also shouldn't dismiss that when we talk about
40 resiliency, a climate resiliency, going in and thinning
41 a stand is part of climate resiliency, you're making
42 that stand healthier so, you know, thinning is
43 something that not only improves the health of the
44 Forest but also provides local jobs and it gives you
45 some wood product that you can use for all types of
46 purposes. Right now we're looking at a contract to
47 pull the thinned slash out and then use it for pellet
48 making. We'd been doing that down in Ketchikan. But --
49 so there are some products that you can pull even from
50

0078

1 what we used to call just slash. So I think that's all
2 part of this new initiative that we're trying to do and
3 think about the landscape a little bit differently.

4

5 Is that helpful, did I get at your
6 question.

7

8 MS. PHILLIPS: (Nods affirmatively)

9

10 MR. SHERMAN: Okay, thank you, ma'am.

11

12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. I have
13 a question along those lines. What does the Forest
14 Service envision moving forward here with round log
15 expert? I mean that's something that was always, you
16 know, off the table with the old growth harvest but, of
17 course, all of our, you know, all the other timber
18 harvest efforts here in Southeast by the State and
19 private corporations has all been exported in the
20 round, and, you know, it's been my impression that the
21 local markets for the second growth harvest may not --
22 just may not be there to much extent. So are you
23 contemplating round log export for second growth
24 harvest?

25

26 MR. SHERMAN: So, Mr. Chair, I thought
27 you were going to ask about the old growth piece but if
28 you're looking at specifically young growth, I don't
29 think we know enough information about the products
30 that can come off and whether they're going to be
31 economical if you try to push those out and try to do
32 it -- export them. I just don't know. I think there's
33 going to have to be some more work done to see if
34 that's something that's going to be profitable or not.
35 Speaking with some of the mill owners that do that sort
36 of type of work, they're still looking at old growth
37 which of course we're not -- we're not -- right now
38 we're not providing those owners, they're getting those
39 from different sources.

40

41 So I'll have to write that question
42 down and take a harder look at that, Mr. Chairman,
43 because that's definitely something I can look into
44 here in the future. I just haven't heard that one
45 presented that way, that question.

46

47 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, well, thank
48 you. I think that is going to be a very important
49 question because I think what the indicators are, you

50

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1 know, in the past timber markets has been if you get
2 into round log export it's got to be high volume and if
3 round log export becomes part of the program for a
4 young growth harvest it also will be in large volume
5 and if that's the way it ends up that would be very
6 damaging to -- I mean you would then not be doing much
7 in the way of restoration you would get back into a
8 robust, you know, timber harvesting regime on young
9 growth Forest and there will be a lot of young growth
10 Forest available in the future because all of the, you
11 know, previous old growth potentially is, you know,
12 available for harvest. And there will be, you know,
13 significant pressure from industry to develop that
14 market. So, you know, you really have to be aware of
15 this, you know, this whole Forest management regime
16 that you want to transition to could end up going in a
17 direction we don't want it to go. And I think, you
18 know, a major component of that will be what the Forest
19 Service decides to do with round log export. So I
20 just, you know, kind of want to make that as part of an
21 important consideration I think is probably from -- you
22 know, from our perspective on this Council of what the
23 implications of that could be for our, you know,
24 habitat concerns.

25

26 So I just wanted to make that known.

27

28 Cal Casipit, comment.

29

30 MR. CASIPIT: Well, I just had one
31 additional comment, concern, suggestion. I would
32 really -- you know the Forest Service converting to the
33 second growth and all that stuff, I would really like
34 to see an effort made to ensure that there's some of
35 that volume that's available for local use, local
36 milling and, you know, I'd love to buy a 2 by 6 of
37 local stuff for me to build, you know, a chicken coop
38 or anything. And I'd like to be able to go to a Don
39 Ables or a wherever and buy a local, locally made 2 by
40 4, a locally made 2 by 6, I'd love to do that. So to
41 the extent that you guys, that the Forest Service can
42 help, either through, I guess one of the things I've
43 heard is that well none of the local stuff here is
44 graded so you can't use it in a constructed -- in a
45 permitted construction project or something like -- you
46 know stuff like that, you hear that all the time. But
47 I would surely like to see -- I would really like it
48 for me to be able to go buy one. You know I do have
49 that option in Gustavus just because there's a local
50

0080

1 guy that cuts and I can get a rough cut 2 by 4 or a
2 rough cut 2 by 6, but I'd sure love to get a plain done
3 one and dried and, you know, standard construction
4 grade 2 by 4 or 2 by 6.

5

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any comments Mr.
7 Sherman.

8

9 MR. SHERMAN: No, Mr. Chairman. Mr.
10 Casipit brings up a great point. We have been doing a
11 number of mill outreach just to understand what we
12 currently have on the ground right now and the
13 capabilities. There have been a number of funding
14 opportunities that have come down for some of those
15 local vendors. I know of one that's on Prince of
16 Wales, that is going to be going -- he's going to be
17 putting in a new mill and also a kiln. Now, I think
18 what he -- he's leaning forward because he fully
19 expects the State to come back with a grading program
20 and that's what he told me, was that I'll be one of the
21 first graders in Southeast Alaska and I plan on selling
22 graded wood. So I think there's folks out there that
23 really want to do that and provide graded lumber, not
24 only rough cut because we have that now, but graded
25 lumber for construction.

26

27 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. John
28 Smith, go ahead.

29

30 MR. SMITH: Yeah, I just want to share
31 and thank you guys because I grew up in Hoonah and John
32 Shelton was my history teacher and I used to chuck wood
33 and he would mill up, he would actually every year get
34 his 10,000 board feet and every year you just watched
35 his house get bigger and then his shed got built and
36 then, you know, he just sold his mill a few years ago
37 and I was asking, hey, do you still have that, but he
38 sold it. But just to share that that resource is
39 available and I think we all should jump on that and
40 use that.

41

42 You know I really -- I have a lot of
43 passion for what you're talking about is like -- just
44 to share how our gardens have been used and not taken
45 care of after they're finished and you can actually go
46 and look and you can see it with your own eyes and even
47 to where the talk of why is it dark here and it's not
48 green like some of the other places. I think we need
49 to look at the process of logging and get a rubric out,
50

0081

1 some kind of process that everybody's following and
2 that's working. A lot of times we have things that are
3 working here and we don't follow it and the other
4 people don't follow those things. It would be awesome
5 to see that. Because I just came from Portland and, of
6 course, it's been on my mind, you know, just watching
7 how we see here, how we manage our gardens, when I went
8 down there it was amazing, I mean they're pulling
9 everything, all the resource out and I see that where
10 you cut the whole tree, drop it, send the whole thing
11 to the landing, even the limbs, everything can be
12 recycled right there to pellets, to methane, to
13 whatever you'd like and it's right there, you can leave
14 it there, just in case the pulp -- leave the pulp there
15 so that maybe you come down and the pulp comes back up
16 we can go grab it and keep moving. And then looking at
17 the resource out there that now we just cleaned it
18 there's no limbs and all that to make this big huge
19 carbon issue because you leave all that and then it's
20 over carboned and then you look at it, it doesn't grow
21 as fast so if you think about it, if you removed it I
22 truly believe -- because I do test -- I do science with
23 kids in the garden and we've actually proven that by
24 throwing seaweed for mulch on one and we threw wood on
25 the other one, the one with wood on it, it didn't even
26 grow, it was dark, it was black, the other one is nice
27 and bright and green.

28
29 So just to make it short it's like I
30 truly believe -- you know I worked for Whitestone for
31 28 years, I'm retired from them, and I really believe
32 that just a different process and making people -- even
33 though it's their land, make them responsible to manage
34 it in a good way because it's going to help our
35 children and the future because of our carbon issue
36 we're talking about. And I really like the idea of
37 taking down many generations -- even here, you look at
38 the history here in Juneau, there was no trees all the
39 way down Douglas, all the way even look at Thunder
40 Mountain High School, a lot of that, you go back in,
41 there was selective logging, out of the Lemon Creek
42 area, you go back in there you'll see trees that are
43 stumps out there where all the trees are growing, so
44 obviously you can see the -- you can reproduce trees in
45 20 to 30 years instead of 100 years. So if we hold
46 them accountable it would really like -- it's really a
47 sore thumb to see somebody go cut all our -- I have
48 history with the property across from Douglas side
49 here, March Trail, it's my grandpa's property, they
50

0082

1 sold it years ago to make a move to buying a boat. But
2 looking up there and seeing it just sitting there and
3 not being done and being used, we need to have rules
4 and laws to harvesting off the land.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
9 Frank Wright you had a question or comment.

10

11 MR. WRIGHT: Yes. My name's Frank
12 Wright and I'm President of the Hoonah Indian
13 Association. And just Friday we had a meeting with the
14 U.S. Park Service of Glacier Bay and for a long period
15 of time we wouldn't get any response from the Park
16 Service and then all of a sudden a person came in, a
17 new Superintendent, he said to the tribe, what do you
18 want, we all looked at each other, this is new. So
19 what I would like to know is what -- what kind of
20 proposals would you put up to the tribes so that they
21 can work with you? I know we signed an agreement
22 probably two months ago with Forest Service in Hoonah
23 and it was a collaboration on energy. So, you know,
24 what would you be able to do for us? I'm glad a little
25 while ago you said you don't know and I said, wow,
26 that's pretty new.

27

28 (Laughter)

29

30 MR. WRIGHT: So anyway, that's a
31 question I have. What would you be willing to do with
32 the tribes?

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Go ahead, Frank.

37

38 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
39 Mr. Wright, I know Ranger Downs has been reaching out
40 to all the tribes on both Admiralty and Hoonah and he
41 will continue to do that, and we will be, as part of
42 SASSfm, we will be coming to Hoonah to meet with you
43 directly and we'll ask you the same question, what do
44 you want to do on this landscape and we'll take your
45 comments and we'll figure out how to get it integrated.

46

47 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Followup Frank.

48

49 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

0083

1 I'll remember that, thanks.

2

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Patty
4 Phillips.

5

6 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
7 Hernandez. A followup to my first question. You
8 mentioned salvage sale for lumber. How does that come
9 about?

10

11 MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chair. So Ms.
12 Phillips, the process is normally the folks who --
13 they're very selective in the trees they want. So if
14 you find a tree that's dead but still standing then
15 normally all you do is take the position down, you can
16 use a lat/long, it doesn't really matter, a mile
17 marker, whatever wherever it is and then just come down
18 to the district or from you -- you said you're in
19 Pelican so you'll have to call and say, hey, I want to
20 take this tree down and then we work through -- it's
21 called a categorical exclusion but it's a permit
22 process that we move through. We will have to have a
23 resource specialist go out there, you know, just to
24 verify the tree but sometimes we can -- we, on some
25 really remote places we've done that verification
26 through a number of different avenues and what I mean
27 by that is virtual. So there's a little bit of that,
28 too, we can work specifically for. It really depends
29 on how many trees you're talking about. But we've have
30 done them all just down to one tree, somebody's wanted
31 just one tree, yeah.

32

33 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Cathy
34 Needham, do you have a question.

35

36 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
37 question doesn't have anything to do with Forest
38 management. As you can see we have a lot of brilliant
39 minds around the table when it comes to that. It's
40 more a little bit about the process. You mentioned
41 you're going to be doing this public engagement project
42 and right out of the starting gates you're going to
43 start with tribal consultation. I'm wondering if you
44 can give us an idea of how long you expect your public
45 engagement process to go, and the reason why I'm asking
46 is because obviously, you know, the Regional Advisory
47 Council, we're a FACA committee, we actually take our
48 job seriously when it comes to commenting on Forest
49 management planning as you know from our engagement in
50

0084

1 the Roadless Rule, but we only meet twice a year so I'm
2 kind of wondering what your public engagement process
3 looks like and whether there'll be opportunity beyond
4 this meeting for this Council.

5

6 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
7 So, Ms. Needham, the -- we hope to have consultation,
8 that will begin over the next few weeks and like I said
9 it's probably going to take me 90 to 120 days. I will
10 do that -- I'm going to start off with consultation and
11 then when it's appropriate we'll move forward with the
12 stakeholders, partners and the public. I would think
13 that that's probably six to maybe eight weeks after I
14 begin tribal consultation. Once we begin that process
15 then it's going to accelerate, we're going to move
16 through that public -- that electronic web story board.
17 We'll most likely keep that up for between 30 and 45
18 days. So now you're kind of in the summertime of
19 getting, you know, feedback from partners, tribes.
20 We'll spend the summer, you know, getting -- finally
21 consolidating all of that and then probably in the fall
22 we'll be compiling it and coming up with that plan.

23

24 So if you're -- what I guess what I'm
25 hearing is your next meeting is in October, sometime
26 right around there, and we'll either be very close to
27 finishing or finished by then. So if there's no other
28 opportunity I'm more than willing to come back at your
29 convenience to provide an interim update if you'd like.
30 Or if you ask very specific questions I'll offer that
31 we're going to go to -- the same we'll do with
32 everybody else, is you go ahead and put your public
33 comments on the website. If you want something very
34 specific to the RAC then maybe we could work out
35 another briefing at your convenience.

36

37 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you,
38 Frank. Any followup, Cathy.

39

40 MS. NEEDHAM: No.

41

42 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Frank
43 Wright, go ahead.

44

45 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
46 You know the bug infestation that's been going on in
47 the areas, have you guys had discussions about any of
48 that because I worry about Hoonah and the rest of
49 Southeast, have you had any discussion on it?

50

0085

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2

3

4 MR. SHERMAN: So, Mr. Chair. Mr.
5 Wright. Yes, we have not only had discussions but we've
6 had teams out for the last two years doing surveys,
7 tracking the areas that had mostly been in the southern
8 part of the Forest have been bud worm, and then of
9 course the sawflies have been kind of the southern part
10 -- or the central part of the Tongass, but we've been
11 tracking that pretty close. I'm no expert in bugs so
12 I'll just tell you that the folks that do that have
13 been doing public engagement across the Forest. If you
14 haven't seen one in your area then you can always let
15 me know and I'll make sure that they become available
16 to you. They've been holding a number of public
17 education meetings, which I think have been really
18 helpful for the communities so they understand what's
19 happening in their backyards, from these experts. So I
20 can offer that up as well, Mr. Wright.

20

21 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you.
22 John Smith, you have your hand up again.

23

24

25 MR. SMITH: Yeah, just a comment of
26 years ago that the bugs weren't here. And just
27 something to think about when you're out there
28 studying, is what's missing out here that was here
29 before, because like you're saying there's many things
30 that eat these bugs and there's squirrels, chickens,
31 ptarmigan, you know, those kind of things of, you know,
32 trying to find out what happened to all the things that
33 eat those things.

33

34 So just a thought.

35

36

37 Thank you.

38

39 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
40 Anybody else with any questions for Mr. Sherman.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Not seeing
45 any, you've answered a lot of questions. That was very
46 informative, it's always nice to have somebody from the
47 upper eulachons come, someone who has all the answers.

47

48 (Laughter)

49

50

0086

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So appreciate it,
2 thank you very much.

3
4 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you very much, Mr.
5 Chair. I appreciate the opportunity. And since this is
6 the first time I had to do this, it was quite the
7 experience so thank you very much and I've got my notes
8 there, Mr. Wright, and I will come to Hoonah.

9
10 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, again.
11 Yeah, I was just informed that we also have the deputy
12 Regional Forester that joined us here and maybe we
13 might want to ask him to introduce himself. I don't
14 know if we've met the Deputy yet.

15
16 MR. VANORMER: yeah, good afternoon,
17 Mr. Chair and Council. I have been here in front of
18 the Council here in the past. I'm Chad VanOrmer, I'm
19 the Deputy Regional Forester for the Alaska region and
20 I think the last time I was in front of the Board was
21 during the Roadless Rulemaking process. I attended
22 with Deputy Chief Chris French at the time, I believe
23 it was down in Ketchikan we testified in front of the
24 Board. But it's great to be here today.

25
26 Thank you, for inviting me up.

27
28 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Yeah,
29 I do recall, yes, you were here in a different capacity
30 so it's nice to see you back.

31
32 MR. VANORMER: Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Moving on
35 in old business, I think we can take up the Tongass
36 submerged lands issue. I think we have a presentation
37 there.

38
39 MR. RISDAHL: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair
40 and members of the Council. Jake and I are going to
41 give you a brief presentation. My name by the way, for
42 the record, is Greg Risdahl, I'm the Subsistence
43 Program lead for the Forest Service and the InterAgency
44 Staff Committee member for the Forest Service.

45
46 This presentation is actually something
47 that we presented recently to the Federal Subsistence
48 Board with some slight additions which we're very happy
49 about. The Board meeting took place January 31 through
50

0087

1 February 3rd. At that meeting the Board made
2 recommendation to the Secretarys of Interior and
3 Agriculture to move forward in the rulemaking process
4 to complete regulatory proceedings addressing submerged
5 public lands within the Tongass National Forest as
6 directed by the court.

7
8 This was the second rulemaking on the
9 subject. The first took place with the publication of
10 a proposed rule in June 2016 and the final rule in May
11 of 2018. To comply with the court's order in
12 Peratrovich, et al., versus United States of America
13 and the State of Alaska, the Secretarys were directed
14 to initiate regulatory proceedings to identify those
15 submerged lands within the Tongass National Forest that
16 did not pass to the State of Alaska at statehood and
17 therefore remain Federal public lands subject to
18 Federal Subsistence provisions. This task was
19 forwarded to the Federal Subsistence Board by the
20 Secretarys. The proposed rule will add to the list of
21 submerged parcels in the Federal Subsistence
22 regulations that have been identified through agency
23 review if approved by the Secretarys.

24
25 The majority of these identified lands
26 are low water lines, reefs, rocks and very small
27 islands and we're talking about 100 yards to a half a
28 mile in length for the most part. During the public
29 comment period for this proposed rule, which closed
30 August 10th of 2022, only one comment was received on
31 August 7th and that comment asked the decisionmakers to
32 do their best to protect the animals living in these
33 lands from destruction.

34
35 In summary, the proposed rule will add
36 the identified submerged parcels to the list of public
37 lands and waters into Federal regulations available for
38 subsistence per Title VIII of ANILCA.

39
40 And today I'm really, really pleased
41 to bring Jacob Hoffman here, he's from the Tongass
42 National Forest GIS Staff, cartographer and he'll give
43 you a little bit more about it but I just want to say
44 that Jacob was asked to this just a few months ago,
45 produce a set of maps specifically for the Southeast
46 Regional Advisory Councils so you guys would have a
47 better idea what these areas are and where they're
48 located and he jumped right on that with the Regional
49 Forester's permission and he's done a remarkably
50

0088

1 excellent job and it's really come together well. So
2 ladies and gentleman, Jacob Hoffman, Forest Service
3 cartographer and he will present to you what he's done
4 as far as his mapping effort goes.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Greg.

9

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 Again, yeah, Jacob Hoffman, cartographer with the
12 Forest Service based here in Juneau. So Greg came to
13 me with this request late last year and to basically
14 make reference maps for the locations in the proposed
15 submerged lands proposed subsistence rule and I imagine
16 you are familiar with the document. Here's the Federal
17 Register document from last May and in that Federal
18 Register document is the table that contains all of the
19 locations. So this table lists 162 individual
20 locations and there's the name, chart reference and
21 area description which often includes a legal
22 description as well as a survey description and then
23 approximate latitude and longitude. So in approaching
24 this -- so it gets us started but we don't have a firm
25 sense of where it is on the ground, and I don't know
26 about you but I had to brush up on my quadrant bearing
27 for the survey descriptions and stuff, I had to kind of
28 puzzle my way through that. And then the location
29 coordinates are rounded to the nearest half minute, so
30 that's about a half a mile in latitude. So they're
31 definitely approximate, they're not right on the actual
32 spot that's being described.

33

34 So with that information with this
35 proposed rule I set about to make some reference maps.

36

37 Where are we at here -- the icons are a
38 little different, apologies for that.

39

40 Using publicly available information
41 and the information that's in the proposed rule -- so
42 going through -- and in this slide here I show on the
43 right, there's just an example of it and where the
44 information that's contained in the maps came from. So
45 there were final 157 unique proposed rule locations so
46 there were five duplicate locations in the proposed
47 rule that I just omitted from the maps. The locations
48 were approximate so I refined the actual point location
49 using the BLM survey map layers and as well as pre-
50

0089

1 statehood nautical charts from the U.S. Coast and
2 Geodetic survey. Most of these locations are
3 associated with titles reserved by the U.S. Government
4 for lighthouses and aides to navigation. So in this
5 example map the plotted -- the approximate coordinates
6 from the proposed rule puts you out here in the ocean
7 but what they really meant was over here and then here
8 this hash mark is the survey that's referenced -- I
9 know that's too small to read, but it's the survey
10 that's referenced in the proposed rule.

11

12 With that said, you know, errors may
13 still exist. We used the best available data at the
14 time to really get a -- to really determine where
15 actually delineate the submerged lands would take a
16 site survey. So this gives you a picture of where it's
17 at but doesn't go into the details of saying exactly
18 right here, you couldn't actually like sketch in an
19 area and say it's right, right, you know, there along
20 the coastline. I think that's just an important piece
21 to mention.

22

23 This -- because these are reference
24 maps that we're just setting alongside the proposed
25 rule we have draft in the title. These are not
26 official maps or final maps but just merely a reference
27 as when you're looking at the rule.

28

29 So we have these reference maps and I
30 will go on -- so then -- and I apologize for not having
31 these available sooner, just last Friday we got them --
32 I got the approval from the BLM to share them publicly
33 so last Friday I got them put on a public-facing URL,
34 so we will be sharing -- DeAnna will send this out to
35 this group and then I imagine in talking with Greg and
36 DeAnna that we would place this information up on one
37 of the Tongass or regional web page -- public web
38 pages.

39

40 I'm just going to click on the link.
41 And the code you saw there is a QR, or a quick response
42 code, and I'll put it back up when we go to questions,
43 but if you have a mobile device you should be able to
44 scan that and it will take you to a preview of the PDF
45 document. So this is -- you can preview it in a
46 browser, or you can click the download. It is a large
47 document, 42 megabytes so if it's slow I would suggest
48 saving it to your computer, and maps are really
49 designed to be viewed on a home computer, not on a
50

0090

1 phone.

2

3

So you got the table of contents.

4

5

And the ordering is the same as the proposed rule so it goes with A, AA, AAA, sequencing that the Office of Subsistence Management used.

6

7

Page 4 just provides some background data sources, Greg's contact info.

8

9

10

The maps feature BLM survey data as well as the locations from the proposed rule and then the Forest Service land ownership and then a nautical chart back -- kind of a base map.

11

12

13

14

15

So anyway there are -- here's the map collection, so there's 157 pages, a lot to look at. So each map has a locator map in the lower right with kind of a grey rectangle and it shows the approximate location of that as well as the communities in Southeast Alaska.

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

And I did want to mention in some descriptions it contains the survey information with the distance and direction. Other proposed locations are just -- they say these islands here in this section and that's it. So in some cases you'll have a map and there's just a dot and that's all the proposed rule gave us and you just have to work with the description that was given.

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

You'll see one other comment is just the accuracy of the map layers. As you can mapping the shoreline in Southeast Alaska is, you know, sort of an impossible task. So the green is the Forest Service basic ownership layer that approximately goes to the high tide mark but it's not, it's just a map reference layer, it's not a legal description or anything.

32

33

34

35

36

So that's all, Mr. Chairman, that's what I have and I'm happy to answer any questions that the group might have.

37

38

39

40

41

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Sure, thank you, Jacob. Questions from the Council about the submerged lands.

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

(No comments)

0091

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Well, not seeing
2 any -- oh, wait a minute Patty has a question and then
3 Cathy has a comment. So Patty go ahead.

4
5 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
6 Hernandez. On the north end we're having a lot of
7 isostatic rebound, which is, you know, glacial --
8 glaciers melting and the land lifting, does that affect
9 this mapping of these submerged areas?

10
11 MR. HOFFMAN: Mr. Chair. Patty. As
12 far as the map, that's not taken into account in the
13 maps that I produced. These are general reference
14 maps. The Alaska region and the Tongass National
15 Forest are in the process of collecting, you know, high
16 resolution elevation data and tying them to tidal data
17 information to come up with a high water -- a mean high
18 water delineation but that's not something that we have
19 available at this time so these don't go to that level
20 of detail.

21
22 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Cathy, do you have
23 a question or comment.

24
25 MS. NEEDHAM: I just had a comment.
26 Years ago we met in Petersburg and the Tongass
27 submerged land issue came before us and our Council
28 really didn't know what to do with any of it because it
29 was like gibberish and I just want to commend you on an
30 amazing job of taking gibberish and putting it into,
31 you know, the visual that we probably should have had
32 from the very get-go, years and years ago when we were
33 in Petersburg. And I know it's a lot of work. And I
34 just want the Council to know that this was presented
35 to the Board but at the time the maps weren't publicly
36 available so we didn't get to see them, we just got to
37 see the first concept map and so it's actually really
38 nice to see the final product and be able to scan the
39 QR code and visually look at it. So I just want to
40 acknowledge all of the hard work that -- I mean I know
41 that you did the nuts and bolts on the ground part, but
42 just actually getting to this point where we have a map
43 to look at to understand what we're really trying to do
44 with a particular type of management, or anything that
45 we to do, maps are key.

46
47 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cathy.
48 Anybody else with a question or comment. John, go
49 ahead.

50

0092

1 MR. SMITH: Just a comment to Patty.

2

3 (Teleconference interference -
4 participants not muted)

5

6 REPORTER: Excuse me, folks on the
7 line, we're hearing other conversations, can you please
8 mute your phones. Everybody take a second and mute
9 your phone, please.

10

11 MR. SMITH: I know that NOAA and them
12 are always, every couple of years updating their
13 mapping system so knowing that the change that, you
14 know, they're always keeping an eye on those kind of
15 things but does make a difference that that big change
16 is happening. Yeah.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
21 Anybody else with a question or a comment.

22

23 (Teleconference interference -
24 participants not muted - on hold and music playing)

25

26 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, guess not.
27 So anything for Greg Risdahl either.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, very good.
32 Thank you, Jacob. Thank you, Greg. Very informative.

33

34 REPORTER: So whoever may be getting in
35 their vehicle, or shopping or anything like that, could
36 you mute your phone.

37

38 MR. RISDAHL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So I think we can
41 take a break here, a nice 15 minute break. So we only
42 have one other item of old business but that's kind of
43 set up with a time certain of tomorrow morning so we'll
44 have to come back to that. So after the break we can
45 start in on new business, I guess.

46

47 Oh, excuse me, I got to go back, on the
48 -- on our revised agenda, Bob, you brought up the co-
49 management issue to be talked about again and we put

50

0093

1 that under old business. At the time I was thinking
2 that it might fit in with Mr. Sherman's presentation
3 but he was focused mainly on Forest management and
4 further down in the agenda we have another Sustainable
5 Strategy report coming up and that one deals more with
6 the.....

7

8 (Teleconference interference -
9 participants not muted)

10

11 REPORTER: Whoever's talking right now
12 and talking about their great progress, could you
13 please mute your phone, you're interrupting our meeting
14 with your conversation.

15

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:other aspects
17 of the Sustainability Strategy which might fit in
18 better with the co-management issue. So I think it
19 might be a good idea to move that co-management
20 discussion to down to the bottom of our agenda, we have
21 Barb Miranda is going to give us an update on the other
22 aspects of the Sustainability Strategy so that might
23 fit in better with the co-management questions.

24

25 MR. SCHROEDER: What's that under?

26

27 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So that's under
28 Forest Service reports, yeah. It's also tribal
29 relations and we've got some reports from Tlingit/Haida
30 in that portion of the agenda so I think all that will
31 fit in better so we won't get into that right now.

32

33 Okay, so sorry, I didn't explain that
34 earlier, I kind of forgot. But it was pointed out to
35 me that that might be a better fit for that discussion.
36 So we'll take a 15 minute break and come back with some
37 new business.

38

39 (Off record)

40

41 (On record)

42

43 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
44 Council members and Staff for coming back together. We
45 can move on with new business, beginning new business
46 and we can start out with subsistence wildlife report
47 with Andrew Sanders with the Forest Service. So Andrew
48 come on up.

49

50

0094

1 MR. SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
2 Council. I'm happy to give a report on the 2022
3 wildlife harvest and who is in charge of the slides
4 here.

5
6 MS. PERRY: I believe the clicker's
7 next to you.

8
9 MR. SANDERS: Oh.

10
11 MS. PERRY: To your right.

12
13 MR. SANDERS: Okay.

14
15 MS. PERRY: Is it working?

16
17 MR. SANDERS: Yeah, there we go. So
18 we'll start with deer harvest across Southeast Alaska,
19 Units 1 through 5.

20
21 You can see that in Units 1 and 3 there
22 we've had a pretty steady but gradually increasing deer
23 harvest, and in Unit 4 it's all over the place but it's
24 still been pretty high bouncing around 6,000 deer
25 harvested each year. But I would like to point out in
26 Unit 2 you can see that there was a spike in 2015 and
27 that it has decreased substantially since 2015. And,
28 you know, we've been hearing about that quite a bit.

29
30 Mountain goat harvest seems to be down
31 a little bit in Unit 1A, but otherwise holding fairly
32 steady -- well, besides Unit 5A there as well, but
33 fairly steady hunter success, Mountain goat harvest.

34
35 Moose harvest as well has been mostly
36 staying pretty level there across the last few years.
37 Moderate success rates there in Unit 5 and a little
38 lower there in Units 1 and 3. And just an update on
39 the Berners Bay moose draw permit for 2023 there will
40 be one State permit and one Federal permit.

41
42 Elk harvest in Unit 3 also staying
43 fairly steady over the last couple years. There is
44 also a new subsistence elk permit that just started in
45 2022 and it covers Units 1, 2, 3 and 4 except for
46 Etolin, Zarembo, Shrubby, Brushy, Kashevarof and those
47 other surrounding islands that are part of the State
48 elk draw and hunt. There were 17 of those permits
49 issued in 2022 and there was no harvest reported on
50

0095

1 that elk permit.

2

3 Designated hunters since 2003 you can
4 see that the main communities that are taking advantage
5 of our Federal designated hunter permits are
6 Petersburg, Sitka and Wrangell, with the rest of
7 Southeast Alaska making up a little bit less of a
8 quarter there.

9

10 As far as the deer harvest by
11 designated hunters, you can see that the harvest is up
12 over the last 10 years compared to those first seven
13 but the number of hunters has stayed relatively level
14 around 100 designated harvesters each year. And here
15 you can see the number of deer harvested per designated
16 hunter permit and you can see there towards the end the
17 all time high record there of 33 deer in one year. And
18 I went and looked through those permits and what those
19 really high numbers represent are just a handful of
20 super users who are really harvesting a lot of deer
21 every year for their communities. You can see that
22 most people that get a designated hunter permit don't
23 take a deer at all on that permit.

24

25 Wolf harvest in Unit 1A has been
26 bouncing around kind of all over the place over the
27 last 10 years with a high of 40 and a low there of 15,
28 28, 33 over the last couple of years, which is maybe a
29 little higher than last few years before that but
30 fairly in line with the harvest over the last decade.

31

32 Unit 1C wolf harvest has been a little
33 higher over the last seven years or so but still fairly
34 steady harvest there, we're not seeing a whole lot of
35 change.

36

37 And Unit 2 wolves, you can see there
38 was quite a spike in wolf harvest in Unit 2 in 2019 and
39 over the last few years since then it's kind of
40 gradually been coming back down towards more historic
41 numbers, and in 2022 the wolf season in Unit 2 was a
42 month, November 15th to December 15th.

43

44 1B3 wolves over the last three years,
45 we might possibly be seeing a decline in wolf harvest
46 but it's hard to say exactly what's going on and if any
47 of that effort has moved to Unit 2 perhaps. There's a
48 few things that could possibly be happening there.

49

50

0096

1 And with that I'll take any questions
2 or if anybody wants to make any comments.

3
4 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
5 Andrew. Council members might want to ask you to go
6 back to some particular topic there, I don't know. Are
7 there any questions from Council members or anything
8 you want to look at a little more closely or ask
9 questions about.

10
11 MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chair.

12
13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Frank, go ahead.

14
15 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At
16 the beginning you were talking about Unit 4 and you
17 said it was jumping all over the place, is there a
18 reason why you can think it's doing that, jumping
19 around, when we should have some kind of constant
20 number?

21
22 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23
24 MR. SANDERS: Through the Chair. No, I
25 can't say that I have a hypothesis of why the Unit 4
26 deer harvest seems to show so much more variation than
27 the other units but that's a very interesting question
28 and I can look into that and see what I can put
29 together for you if you'd like.

30
31 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you.

32
33 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you,
34 Frank. Or maybe some of the Council members have some
35 ideas on that, so, Harvey, go ahead.

36
37 MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
38 out of curiosity, Unit 4, is this all of Unit 4 or is
39 this just the northern part of Chichagof?

40
41 MR. SANDERS: Through the Chair. It's
42 my understanding that these numbers are for the
43 entirety of Unit 4.

44
45 MR. KITKA: Okay. So this doesn't
46 cover Baranof Island -- or, I mean, it covers all the
47 hunters out of Baranof Island as well as out of the
48 northern Chichagof. Northern Chichagof is a little
49 different than a little further away than where I live
50

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1 but it seems like the hunters in our area, it seems
2 like they hold fairly steady. I was just wondering
3 whether the jumping around had to do with a difference
4 in the weather year to year in this area.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Harvey.
9 Let's see I saw a number of hands up. Cal, did you
10 have your hand up.

11

12 MR. CASIPIT: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
13 Chair. Yeah, I kind of agree with Harvey there, I
14 think a lot of this difference in this Unit 4 is due to
15 just weather conditions. I think an interesting
16 exercise here would maybe look at effort, the number of
17 -- see how many hunters are out there and the level of
18 effort, maybe that's a little more consistent and it
19 bounces around because of weather conditions, I'm not
20 sure. 2021 the reason it's high is probably because we
21 got a bunch of snow in 2021.

22

23 Anyway, I want to skip over to the Unit
24 1C goat thing, if you can go to that. Do you have an
25 idea, that 1C line there, do you have an idea of how
26 many -- let's just take 2021 for 1C, of those 66
27 hunters, how many were Federally-qualified and how many
28 were non-Federally-qualified, do you know?

29

30 MR. SANDERS: Through the Chair to
31 Council member Casipit.

32

33 MR. CROSS: Do you have it, I do.

34

35 (Laughter)

36

37 MR. SANDERS: Rob does.

38

39 (Laughter)

40

41 MR. CROSS: Sorry, so this is Rob
42 Cross, the Tongass Subsistence Program Manager. So we
43 -- I just had Jake Musslewhite look this up and the
44 only way that we can distinguish between the two is
45 people who harvested during that one month, I guess
46 I'll call it the extended season so people who
47 harvested during August would definitely be Federally-
48 qualified users, and that was one goat for 2021, and it
49 was pretty -- it seems like it's pretty consistently
50

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1 very low harvest for that one month. As far as the
2 months after that it's hard to distinguish between
3 Federally-qualified and non-Federally-qualified.
4

5 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
6 Rob. Anything else, Cal, on that.
7

8 MR. CASIPIT: That's unfortunate. I
9 really think we should be trying to keep track of
10 Federally-qualified and non-Federally-qualified in all
11 these hunts. You know, I see hunters and all that
12 stuff but no breakdown as to who's Federally-qualified
13 and who's non -- because that's what we're trying to do
14 here is provide priority for Federally-qualified users.
15 If we don't know the breakdown between non-Federally-
16 qualified and qualified, how are we even supposed to do
17 our job.
18

19 MR. SMITH: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
20

21 MR. CASIPIT: That's just a comment, I
22 don't require an answer.
23

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Did you have a
25 response to that or.....
26

27 MR. CROSS: Yeah, through the Chair.
28 Member Casipit. So really the best way I can think of
29 to do that without having people file that information
30 or report that information with the State is to create
31 a Federal permit for that hunt. And I guess it would
32 be up to this body to determine whether that would be
33 an undue burden. Otherwise the best way that we can
34 distinguish between the two are people that are taking
35 advantage of that Federal subsistence priority and
36 those would be the individuals that are harvesting in
37 August versus during the regular State season.
38

39 MR. CASIPIT: Well, I don't want to get
40 into.....
41

42 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, if I could
43 just -- well, I kind of want to explore that a little
44 further. Because, you know, it's relevant to all of
45 these hunts, not just goat hunting. Really, we need to
46 see -- a lot of times that breakdown between Federally-
47 qualified and non-Federally-qualified and, you know, it
48 is the Department of Fish and Game who does compile all
49 these numbers and, you know, in the case of the goats
50

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1 where it's a permit they must have a record of where
2 the people are applying for the permits are from so
3 that -- it seems like that would be available. And,
4 you know, even in their deer surveys they do, you know,
5 ask where you live. It seems like they do keep track
6 of that. I know these are all questions for the State
7 and they're not here before us. But would you kind of
8 agree that these numbers can be teased out if we wanted
9 them to be, is that right?

10

11 MR. CROSS: Mr. Chair, yes, that is
12 correct. And I was just talking to Lisa Grediagin
13 about that as well. So, yeah, we can request that
14 information from the State and go off of individual's
15 reported community of residence to get that
16 information.

17

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Right, okay.
19 Lisa, did you have something to add to that or?

20

21 MS. GREDIAGIN: Well, it was pretty much
22 what Rob said, but basically this sort of data we rely
23 on the State. I mean, we as Federal managers, or, you
24 know, OSM, can't get the data, we just have to put a
25 request into the State and hope they respond and, you
26 know, can give us what data they have based on their
27 community, or residence that's reported in the
28 registration permit. So there's definitely a lot of
29 benefits to having just one permit for both Federal
30 users and State users to use but if you really want to
31 get the difference in harvest between people harvesting
32 under Federal regulations versus State you need a
33 separate Federal permit, which then still has issues
34 with Federal users hunting and using the State permit
35 even though they could use a Federal permit so, yeah.

36

37 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Right.
38 Understood. John, you had a question.

39

40 MR. SMITH: Could you pull up a graph,
41 the pie graph that was up there.

42

43 REPORTER: John, your mic.

44

45 MR. SMITH: The pie graph, yeah.

46

47 REPORTER: Thank you.

48

49 MR. SMITH: I know we have a lot of

50

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1 folks from different communities, take a peek up there
2 and look at your community. I grew up in Hoonah, so
3 you see 28 but I also traveled a lot with families, and
4 I look at Kake, look at Saxman, Ketchikan, those
5 numbers. I know the families who hunt so I'm looking
6 at them and I don't believe that data. So I'm going to
7 lean back on the community and not that it's the State
8 or anybody else or your guys' job, it's like we need to
9 really encourage our community to report good data and
10 I don't see that. So -- and really being specific, to
11 like what he's saying is, is yeah we hunted in
12 Chichagof, it's a big area, we need to know exactly pin
13 point where they're hunting at and even if they didn't
14 get anything, hey, I was here, I was right at this
15 location and didn't see anything. All that information
16 is important to us. And that up there doesn't --
17 doesn't showcase that, I don't see truth to it. Do
18 you? I just find that -- so I really push that we try
19 to get our community -- so I'm actually begging out
20 there for people to call in, give us the information,
21 will help us to get true data on the table so we can
22 make a good decision up here.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.

27

28 Response to that Rob, go ahead.

29

30 MR. CROSS: Yes, Mr. Chair, or Through
31 the Chair. Member Smith. I think that that's a really
32 good point and I think some of this -- we're trying to
33 do a better job of going out to smaller communities
34 where there maybe necessarily isn't a Forest Service
35 office and just do a better job to help issue
36 subsistence permits so we can get this information from
37 folks. And then we're also going around to a lot of
38 the communities in Southeast to do subsistence outreach
39 and give just general subsistence information and as
40 part of that is trying to explain to folks who aren't
41 in these types of meetings why it's so important to
42 report this information so we have maybe -- so we have
43 the best or most accurate information that we can get.

44

45 Yeah, so, duly noted.

46

47 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Rob.

48 Cathy Needham, go ahead.

49

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1 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
2 Kind of along the same lines, when I was at the Federal
3 Subsistence Board meeting and we were talking about the
4 Unit 4 deer proposals, during a break one of the
5 InterAgency Staff Committee members came up to me and
6 asked why we just didn't have a Federal permit
7 reporting process where we could actually ask for this
8 specific information on the permit that we wanted and I
9 had explained that it was a joint reporting process.
10 This member wasn't from Southeast Alaska so they -- in
11 their region they have, you know, that ability and it
12 really made me start thinking about like I was on this
13 Council when we voted to support having a joint
14 reporting system, at least, for deer at the time and --
15 because it helped streamlined the information that's
16 coming in. So my question to you is, how much does the
17 Federal Program or do you guys, as biologists, that
18 work in our program have interaction with the Alaska
19 Department of Fish and Game in what information gets
20 collected on those permits, and then -- because it
21 sounds to me like we decided to have this joint
22 reporting system but then we're just letting Fish and
23 Game do it all and obviously we're not getting the
24 information when we get into these conversation where
25 the data isn't telling us that, do we have the data,
26 well, maybe we did but we didn't request it in the
27 right way and so I'm wondering how that reporting --
28 how much influence or work that you guys do together to
29 make sure that we can actually start asking these
30 questions on those reporting forms, that folks go back
31 in online and do?

32
33 MR. CROSS: Through the Chair. Member
34 Needham. I don't know if I can answer that just
35 because, you know, we work really closely with the area
36 management biologist from the State, I think we have a
37 really good working relationship with them. The reason
38 why I don't think I can answer that is I'm not sure
39 that we have ever tried to change what is on the
40 harvest reporting so, yeah, that's a really question
41 and -- oh, go ahead -- oh, I was just going to say,
42 that's a really good question and I would love to look
43 into that and chat with our State contacts on that.

44
45 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Followup Cathy.

46
47 MS. NEEDHAM: Well, in followup to
48 that, specifically, with the committee member and I, we
49 were talking about, is our Council's recognition of the
50

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1 fact that effort is not really captured and this is
2 something I talked about a little bit when we were
3 providing our justification for the Unit 4 deer
4 proposals and how communities report their effort.
5 Like they don't always, like number of days hunt is one
6 thing, but how many days did you attempt to -- or how
7 many days were you just out on the landscape and you
8 ran across a deer and you took that deer and you don't
9 report that as effort. So I think that the Department
10 -- was there, and they've been through that whole Unit
11 4 process -- Unit 4 deer process with us and I think
12 that that would be another really good place to start
13 as talking about is we've identified some very key
14 pieces of information we want to know and effort is one
15 of them. I think the non-Federally-qualified versus
16 Federally-qualified is another one, and it seems very
17 timely that we should try to engage as much as possible
18 in getting the harvest reporting to capture the
19 information that we really need.

20

21 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cathy.
22 Anybody on the Council, John Smith, go ahead.

23

24 MR. SMITH: Just to share, too, I like
25 your -- I like the Fish and Game site where you can
26 report and I know that was my first time using that
27 system and I had issues reporting so I just walked in
28 the office. But the simpler it is to where just a
29 yes/no question and simple basic questions on there
30 making it simple to walk through is key. I think even
31 digital would be -- I think that would work. But like
32 I said it was like it wasn't friendly, you need to make
33 it really super easy for many different -- especially
34 us older guys that don't know computers much.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Bob
39 Schroeder.

40

41 MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We
42 definitely need harvest by community because we
43 represent the management of Federal subsistence and I'm
44 really basically shocked that this information isn't
45 present -- that you don't have it and you're not
46 presenting it because in a way this was a standard item
47 that we worked out. The way it worked out when -- even
48 when computers weren't as powerful as they are right
49 now, is we just got information from Fish and Game and
50

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1 then sorted it out in a way that worked for the
2 Regional Advisory Council.

3

4

5 So I'm just seconding what Cal is
6 saying there, basically, you know, we know from
7 previous information that people in urban areas, Juneau
8 and Ketchikan harvest a lot of deer and so we need to
9 see what's going on in communities, and then when we
10 get proposals the proposals are usually community-based
11 because somebody is having a problem getting deer or
12 another resource in that community so the aggregate
13 data doesn't help us out very much. So I'd suggest
14 that you just make that happen and it's pretty easy to
15 have happened because it's available unless Fish and
16 Game won't let you do the work.

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CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Bob.
Patty, go ahead.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
Hernandez. So in our community, customarily and
traditionally the hunter -- there's always the hunter
who provide for community members who need deer or need
fish or need, you know, a subsistence resource and if
you notice Pelican is not on the list of designated
hunters but we do have designated hunters and there's a
lack of trust in wanting to apply for a designated
hunter status and then having to report it. All the
why it should be done is duly noted but it's not being
done and I'm not saying this so enforcement comes down
on my community on these designated hunters because
they're doing what they customary and traditionally do,
which is go and hunt deer and share it with those who
have need.

Also, so harvest by community, there's
a complication with that and, you know, these deer
proposals for Lisianski Inlet, it turned into a hot
button issue because you have -- they qualify as a
resident, the State of Alaska, they can vote, they can
get their Permanent Fund, but they don't qualify for
Federal Subsistence status as a Federal qualified
hunter because they're not here year-round and so a
person could apply for a deer hunting license, say
they're from Pelican, but they're not Federally-
qualified so you have that complication.

And then also, you know, trying to
track -- perhaps we should track Federally-qualified

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1 hunters and non-Federally-qualified hunters, you know,
2 that process, put it into regulation. I mean because
3 we said in the past we want to do this, we want to
4 track it and then we've had all these turnovers and
5 then it's like, oh where's all that gone, what happened
6 with that. So I mean if it were a process within the
7 regulatory framework then perhaps it could be better
8 tracked and maybe Fish and Game would share it with us
9 more readily and that sort of thing.

10

11 Anyways, thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty.
14 Any other Council members, questions or comments.

15

16 Harvey, did you have your hand up.

17

18 MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've
19 been wondering about an idea. I know some of the
20 Council has touched upon it and that was hunters by
21 community. I just was wondering, Unit 4 is a big area,
22 and I was wondering, the lat year, whether -- our last
23 meeting on this, whether they did the deer population
24 over the whole area and not just the areas that was
25 being affected. The affected area seems like it was
26 Northern Chichagof. The area on Baranof Island and
27 parts of Admiralty weren't being affected. The
28 population, I just was wondering if they did the entire
29 area as a figure and not just the areas that were
30 affected. And that is my question.

31

32 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, do you have
33 an answer to that either Andrew or Rob.

34

35 MR. CROSS: Through the Chair. Member
36 Kitka. Do you mean as far as harvest is concerned or
37 the Unit 4 deer proposal population estimates?

38

39 MR. KITKA: Part of the question was
40 Unit 4 population. When they gave us the Unit 4 it
41 kind of bothered my mind that they'd take a population
42 assessment where on Baranof Island there's probably
43 more deer than most of the other places, parts of
44 Chichagof, it's got an awful lot of deer but you get up
45 into Hoonah and maybe in Pelican where a lot of the
46 non-Federally-qualified people come in and hunt and
47 bother, in Sitka there's no road system so we don't
48 have that problem because they can't hunt along the
49 road, Lisianski's got a really protected area where the
50

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1 waters aren't as turbulent as some of the other places,
2 but when they take the assessment of all the Baranof
3 and the southern part of Chichagof, they're not really
4 looking at an area that got affected by hunters that
5 were coming in from other places and maybe decimated
6 the deer population. So I just was more curious at the
7 time if they took the total area of Area 4 or just an
8 area that got affected.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Harvey.
13 Is that an easy question to answer or is that a hard
14 one.

15

16 MR. CROSS: Yes, through the Chair.
17 Member Kitka. So I believe for the Unit 4 deer
18 proposals, specifically, they were using Wildlife
19 Analysis Areas which are a bit smaller and then they
20 were basing the deer populations off of pellet surveys
21 and there's not pellet surveys in every single Wildlife
22 Analysis Area or I think they were just using the
23 closest one as possible, the best information that they
24 had. Otherwise I think we were looking at just the
25 general trend and deer population for Unit 4 as a
26 whole. But, yeah, we were looking at Wildlife Analysis
27 Areas.

28

29 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Rob.

30

31 John and then Frank.

32

33 MR. SMITH: Just a question mainly to
34 the team of thoughts of amendment. Of putting up a
35 proposal of changing or actually adding a couple
36 demographics on the table to what's up there like
37 location, even if like you're saying, even if they
38 didn't harvest one there but they'd been there but then
39 also the -- the non-subsistence and, you know,
40 separating all of those. And I really think that would
41 be a good movement, just what do you think team, I'm
42 just thinking that would be a good thing to do to add
43 some more data on the table, would really help.

44

45 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Do you have a
46 response, Rob. Yeah, go ahead.

47

48 MR. CROSS: Through the Chair. Member
49 Smith. I think that using community is probably a very

50

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1 good proxy, or the best proxy that we can for Federal
2 harvest outside of making Federally-qualified users get
3 a separate permit for let's say deer harvest. One
4 issue with it is that, you know, as I'm sure you know a
5 subsistence harvester can harvest under State
6 regulations if they shoot a deer off the beach and then
7 five minutes later they can be hunting under Federal
8 regulations. So, you know, there's probably a good way
9 to figure that out but I can't tell you right now, I'd
10 have to think about it quite a bit but, yeah, I agree
11 that collecting more information is always better.

12

13 MR. SMITH: Yeah, and having it all on
14 one sheet, one page.

15

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
17 Frank, go ahead.

18

19 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
20 know with this computer world, pressing a button you
21 can get a lot of information. You know I was crabbing
22 and the Coast Guard called me up and why wasn't -- why
23 wasn't all my data put on the computer where the Coast
24 Guard can show that I had a safety decal. It's the
25 same thing what we're dealing with now, why can't the
26 State and the Federal government work together, let's
27 do this, collaborate with each other, instead of having
28 to say, oh, that's my form, that's not your form, you
29 know, with this computer world I don't see what the
30 problem is. But now that you got all these questions,
31 now you're going to go back to a new drawing board and
32 start over and see if you can collaborate with each
33 other and figure this out because some of the
34 information we're getting, if we had to make decisions
35 on it, would not be enough. But if we -- people --
36 there's a word in our language, (In Tlingit), working
37 together, pulling together. That's a word that is in
38 our language and if we didn't have that word, the
39 Tlingit people wouldn't be around. We wouldn't exist.
40 (In Tlingit) means working together.

41

42 So here we are talking about issues
43 that should be simple.

44

45 You know, it's kind of like when I
46 first started talking about subsistence with the
47 Department of Fish and Game, I said subsistence, it's
48 simple. To me, as a Tlingit, it's simple, but to other
49 parts of the world it's not so simple because
50

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1 regulations get in the way. I am brown because I am a
2 Tlingit. I'm brown because I'm a Tlingit and the land
3 that I've lived on my parents and ancestors have lived
4 on for centuries. So if everybody would just (In
5 Tlingit) worked together, we wouldn't be even talking
6 about this. But, you know, like I said, the first
7 person that answered me when I said, subsistence was a
8 simple issue, they didn't understand where I was from.

9

10 So I think that, you know, your
11 marching orders to try to figure out how to get these
12 numbers right and then if we have to make decisions on
13 these issues then it would be easy.

14

15 Gunalcheesh.

16

17 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Frank.
18 Louie, go ahead.

19

20 MR. WAGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21 I've got three questions. I'll start with the first
22 one on what Frank and them were talking about.

23

24 We used to get our deer tags along with
25 our moose tag at the Forest Service in Ketchikan at the
26 office there and we had a lady there, an older lady,
27 she'd print them right out in a hurry, it was no
28 problem and then she retired, I guess. Then you had a
29 younger gal there and every time we'd go there, well,
30 she's not in and so it takes a lot of time, you know,
31 we got to run 15 miles to town to get our permit and 15
32 miles back but on the moose permit she said, for next
33 year, which is this year you'll have to make an
34 appointment to get your permit so I was wondering if
35 maybe you were going to put them on a computer and we
36 could get them off line there. And the other one is
37 what about the eulachons and the proxy permit, are we
38 going to be able to get that online or do we got to go
39 stand in line in town because it always takes over an
40 hour we stand around waiting there.

41

42 And, I think that's all of them.

43

44 MR. SANDERS: Through the Chair to
45 Council Member Wagner. I -- Rob may have more
46 information than I do about moving to an online
47 permitting system but as far as I know we will not have
48 online permitting ready this year. However, I work
49 with a lot of people from remote communities on Prince
50

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1 of Wales, folks that are not on the road system, other
2 folks around Southeast Alaska to do permitting and I
3 know that it can be very difficult for people to make
4 it to a Forest Service office to get their permits and
5 because of that I work with people all the time, call
6 the office and we can do it through the mail, we can do
7 it over the phone. There are absolutely ways that we
8 can get permits to folks. Of course if you come into
9 the office you can get your permit that day but by all
10 means we can put it in the mail and folks can get their
11 permits.

12

13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Andrew.

14

15 Anybody else, did you have something to
16 add Lisa?

17

18 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Lisa Grediagin
19 for the record. And just Federal permits are not
20 available online anywhere in the state and it's because
21 we have to verify people's rural residency and so this
22 was actually a topic for all Councils I think last year
23 at your winter meeting where we were reviewing the
24 potential for potential Federal permits to be online
25 and it's just kind of really hard to overcome that
26 hurdle of verifying rural residency. And so as of now
27 no Federal permits are available online but as Andrew
28 said, the kind of somewhat work around is to go through
29 the mail. And I know other offices have a policy where
30 if it's your first time getting a Federal permit you
31 have to go in person to show, you know, your electric
32 bill or voter ID card, or however you're verifying your
33 rural residency but then after that first time you can
34 just call in and get it through the mail. So that at
35 least saves you, hopefully, the trip to town or having
36 to make an appointment. But, yeah, I just wanted to
37 clarify that online piece of Federal permits.

38

39 Thanks.

40

41 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Lisa.

42

43 Louie, followup.

44

45 MR. WAGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
46 Well, we've been in the system for 20-some years, I
47 believe, you know, and it started out real easy and now
48 it's harder and harder, we're standing around waiting
49 and days are short, you know, weather comes up, we want
50

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1 to get back over to Metlakatla. So there's been no
2 problem for us being in the system, the lady even said
3 that, why she said we have to make an appointment
4 because we watch for the weather to get there and she
5 was a little upset that we came in to get them. She
6 was a different lady that we had to deal with, I don't
7 know who she was.

8

9 But what happened to that deer harvest
10 tickets, we got them from the Forest Service up to the
11 last few years, you issued them to us for the Federal
12 subsistence harvest tickets, they were all made out, it
13 would be nice to see those back again. That's what we
14 always got.

15

16 Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you,
19 Louie. I don't know if you're thinking of a response
20 there, Rob, go ahead.

21

22 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 Member Wagner, I -- just back to one of your earlier
24 statements. I do know, as far as the eulachon permits
25 are concerned I know there was an effort, I think it
26 was last week to try to get to Metlakatla to do a
27 community permit issuing event and the folks got
28 weathered out but I know that that's still in the
29 cards, I guess. It's still something we're trying to
30 do just -- I mean travel, as you know, back and forth
31 is difficult, but we're trying to make a better effort
32 to get out to the smaller communities and make it more
33 of a -- I guess it's our issue, we should be trying to
34 get out to folks and make it a lot easier for them to
35 get their permits and so, yeah, it's very unfortunate
36 to hear that that's what you're going through. Yeah,
37 and I've not heard of needing to set up an appointment
38 to get a Federal subsistence permit and that's
39 upsetting to me. So, yeah, I apologize about that.

40

41 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you,
42 Rob. Any other questions or comments from the Council.

43

44 Okay, Mike did you have something,
45 Mike, go ahead.

46

47 MR. DOUVILLE: Okay, back years, there
48 was a joint effort to gather deer hunting data, I can't
49 remember if it was just focused on designated hunter or
50

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1 what it was, but it gathered excellent information and
2 it was good data but somehow the joint effort between
3 the State and the Feds fell apart and I'm not sure what
4 the reason was. Because it appeared to me that the
5 data that was coming in from that effort was excellent
6 and we don't have that anymore and I don't know why it
7 went away.

8

9 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
10 Either of you guys know anything about that?

11

12 Consultation up front.

13

14 (Laughter)

15

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, it looks
17 like Greg Risdahl is joining the table, go ahead.

18

19 MR. RISDAHL: Mr. Chair. So I actually
20 started working with OSM back in 2006 as a wildlife
21 analysis and then a division lead then, a Wildlife
22 Division Chief, which is what Lisa's doing. And about
23 that time -- right about that time the State and the
24 Feds had a bit of a falling out, and I won't go into
25 all the details there but we used to be able to get
26 information from the State very easily, in fact, they
27 gave us passwords to get on to their Winfo.net site and
28 I would just go on and just like whatever data I
29 needed. Like if I needed residency information for
30 mountain goat hunters I'd just get right on the website
31 myself and do it. And then once that disagreement took
32 place between the State and the Feds I was very
33 fortunate because I was the Refuge Manager at Tetlin
34 then, later, and I would go to the Alaska Department of
35 Fish and Game area biologist, who was a good friend of
36 mine, because we used to be hunting buddies in Montana,
37 and he said, don't worry, if you need something we'll
38 just get it for you, we're not supposed to be doing
39 that anymore but they would go online on the Winfo.net
40 site and just say whatever you need just let us do it.
41 And sometimes they would say, well, here's the
42 password, you do it. But generally speaking after that
43 point, that was like from 2008 on, we had to get -- we
44 had to ask for the information and it became harder and
45 harder and harder to get that information. And so now
46 we've had this process where you have to go through,
47 you know, Ben Mulligan or Mark Burch from ADF&G, or ask
48 through Pat -- excuse me, George Pappas, and we're
49 supposed to do this information exchange through them

50

0111

1 and things are getting better though, so that's the
2 good news. Ben Mulligan just said here a few weeks ago
3 that, you know, we should loosen up a little bit here,
4 the only time we really -- we really need, I guess,
5 advanced permission, if somebody's asking for a large
6 data set.

7

8 But in the field, the biologists, both
9 State and Federal biologists are able to communicate on
10 a normal basis and ask for information but if they need
11 specific information where they have to go into the
12 Winfo.net site then they need advanced permission.

13

14 So, definitely, that data is there.
15 They collect it on everybody, it's just that the
16 process has become much more onerous. Literally, in
17 the old days we could go on ourselves and get that
18 data, the Federal biologists all over the state had the
19 access to the State's database but we do not have that
20 access now.

21

22 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay.

23

24 MR. RISDAHL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Greg.
27 That was very informative. I think somebody once said
28 information is power so, you know, it's what it's all
29 about, I guess.

30

31 So anybody else with a question or a
32 comment.

33

34 (No comments)

35

36 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And we've, you
37 know, raised a lot of topics here and information needs
38 has been one of the main concerns of this Council for
39 some time and once again we're back to it. I really do
40 believe that a lot of the solutions to this situation
41 will be entering into these co-management agreements on
42 a local level to gather information and that is
43 probably going to be a Federal initiative. A lot of
44 those efforts will probably be in joint efforts with
45 local tribes and, you know, we're hearing a lot of
46 commitment from Federal managers that they are going to
47 undertake that. But then on the other hand, I don't
48 know, the State of Alaska doesn't seem to want to
49 interact with the tribes as much so, you know, the
50

0112

1 future of information gathering, I could foresee, maybe
2 a little bit of speculation, might become more of a
3 Federal effort than a State effort in the future, which
4 I think would be beneficial to the subsistence users.
5 It might be a little premature to say that but I could,
6 you know, see us going down that road. You know, maybe
7 the State might want to take notice of that but, yeah,
8 I think it would solve a lot of the problems that we're
9 dealing with, you know, just information, information
10 is power. It's really important that we get good
11 information and make better recommendations.

12

13 So, yeah, anybody else, final comments.

14

15 Rob, go ahead.

16

17 MR. CROSS: Yeah, Mr. Chair. So again
18 I think at the local level and largely at the regional
19 level we do have a good working relationship with the
20 State and a lot of that data is collected. I guess it
21 would be really helpful for me to know what additional
22 information you guys would like to see collected by the
23 State so that we can work with, again, the folks that
24 we have a good working relationship with so, yeah, I
25 don't want it to seem like we don't have a good working
26 relationship with the State or that they're not
27 collecting this data. So, again, if maybe during a
28 break or at some point the Council could come together
29 and decide what information they'd like us to ask the
30 State to collect or for us to collect on our effort,
31 then that would be really helpful.

32

33 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you for that
34 Rob. But we also have identified in the past that the
35 quality of the information is not always what we --
36 this Council would like to see. Maybe -- you know I
37 don't want to put the State down but the type of
38 information that we're looking for is not their
39 priority. You know we want to know what's happening
40 in, you know, these communities and we want it, you
41 know, in a more user friendly way, I guess, is the best
42 way to put it. Because when you get out in our
43 communities, these rural communities, dealing with the
44 State Department of Fish and Game is not always the
45 best way to communicate with people. They just --
46 there's a lot of trust issues involved, and I think we
47 would just get better data if we had entities that the
48 people in the rural communities trusted to gather that
49 information and do it in a sensitive manner and more of
50

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1 a personal manner and people have to know, you know, as
2 John Smith has pointed out, yeah, the information is
3 important, and people don't always want to give the
4 information. It depends -- I think it makes a big
5 different who they're giving the information to.

6
7 So I think we've got a long ways to go
8 here and, you know, we're just starting down that road.
9 So I think we can see improvements in the future and,
10 you know, part of what you just said is helpful but I
11 don't think it answers all of the situations we're
12 dealing with.

13
14 So Bob Schroeder.

15
16 MR. SCHROEDER: Well, thank you. And
17 excuse me for not understanding that you guys just
18 didn't have the information because I'm sitting here
19 scratching my head and I'm thinking, you know, well,
20 basically that's it for our harvest data for deer in
21 Southeast Alaska. I mean we can't see how many deer
22 were taken by what community, I mean that's just like
23 crazy. And I understand that it isn't for want of
24 trying, that you weren't able to present that
25 information.

26
27 The Council only meets a couple of
28 times a year and, you know, perhaps to get the
29 attention, perhaps we should suggest if we can't get
30 the information on a regular basis, not going through
31 endless channels which we hear that we're now supposed
32 to do, that we suggest that there be a Federal permit
33 because otherwise we'll be doing this again next year
34 and whatever list of information that we request you to
35 request, well, something else will come up, it depends
36 on how fine grain you want it. The joint permit was
37 actually a total breakthrough in our region when it
38 came about during the major deer negotiations that
39 Member Douville talked about and that was alike a major
40 change that the Federal government and the State would
41 have a joint permit for deer hunting. That was like
42 wow. And I think the Federal government paid like some
43 huge amount for this as well, you know, like we kicked
44 in something like 50K for getting permits out there.
45 And then just the data was there, it was just raw view
46 what you'd like, I mean you don't want, well, gee, I
47 didn't quite request that piece of data, you want the
48 data. And then that's what you do, that's why we want
49 you on our team is to figure out what's going on in a
50

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1 data set and to tease it out. Usually it was down to
2 VCU data, which meant that you could actually see what
3 was happening for harvest in Pelican because I don't
4 know how many VCUs you got there but there's probably
5 only three or four and you could look at it over time,
6 a data series that went back before time immemorial
7 and, you know, it's kind of the information that you
8 needed.

9

10 So I don't think that it's a reasonable
11 way for the Federal Program to decide way in advance
12 that it has to come up with a little set of stuff that
13 maybe we can get Fish and Game to provide to us. But
14 that's a bigger issue.

15

16 But what the Council can do it can just
17 say, well, we need the data, if you can't get it
18 cooperatively with Fish and Game, which gets major
19 funding from the Federal Program then we need to do it
20 ourselves, because we need the information, we can't do
21 our job with surrogate data. And I do appreciate that
22 you broke out the designated hunters for us, which was
23 the data set that you had control over.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Bob. I
28 think Cal has a hand up and Mike Douville. Cal, go
29 ahead.

30

31 MR. CASIPIT: Well, this is kind of
32 along the lines of what Bob was talking about, you
33 know, there's quite a few of us around this table that
34 remember those conversations way back when when we all
35 agreed that we were going to cooperate and use the
36 State's system for data information gathering, and we
37 were going to use their registration permit data base
38 and all this other stuff for the information we need.
39 Well, if that ain't working now then maybe that
40 decision that was made back then needs to change.

41

42 And that's all I have to say.

43

44 You know, I'm with Bob, maybe we need
45 to put all these fisheries and hunts on Federal permits
46 and we control the data, we have the information and if
47 we need it we have it in front of us. And, I mean,
48 this was supposed to be a cooperative effort and Fish
49 and Game was supposed to help us do our management and
50

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1 as far as I can tell they're not. I mean that's a
2 simple question. And, granted you had that information
3 at your fingertips, you knew that one goat was
4 harvested by a rural resident but, you know, that's not
5 going to be the same everywhere.

6
7 Anyway, that's enough.

8
9 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cal.

10
11 Mike.

12
13 MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Chairman.
14 Bob referred to a system that on the Federal side they
15 aggressively pursued your information and you didn't
16 get your permit the following year until you submitted
17 it. At the time you were issued another permit you had
18 to provide the information. And that's why I was
19 saying it was so accurate, it provided a lot of good
20 information. So thanks for mentioning that Bob.

21
22 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
23 Mike.

24
25 John, did you have something else you
26 wanted to add.

27
28 MR. SMITH: Yeah, I just echo that we
29 don't move on until we actually make some movement to,
30 you know, building this relationship. You know, I hear
31 we're not trying to point the finger, it's your fault,
32 your fault, but we're seeing that there's that
33 connection of not supporting each other and why that
34 is. But how can we move on that right now so that it's
35 on the table and we don't forget about it. Like
36 actually adding all the data information that we would
37 like for them and then even requesting the relationship
38 to the Feds and the State and the Fish and Game to have
39 that access again and that relationship be key to all
40 of this. But also still to put the finger on the
41 community making sure that they're giving us that
42 information, I believe that's key too.

43
44 Thank you.

45
46 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
47 Rob, do you have a response to that.

48
49 MR. CROSS: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I think a
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1 lot of this could be solved by our Staff doing a more
2 targeted data request. I don't really think -- you
3 know as far as harvest by community, I don't think that
4 that's an issue. I think that's something that if we
5 put that in our data request to the State then we can
6 get that information and we can break out deer harvest
7 by community if that's something that the Council
8 certainly wants from now on that's something that we
9 can definitely do.

10

11 I think an issue that was brought up
12 previously as to, you know, assumptions that can be
13 made about residency and whether people were hunting
14 under Federal regulations or State regulations, I think
15 some assumptions can be made there and also presented
16 to the Council. So, yeah, I just want to clarify that
17 I think a lot of this can just be addressed by our
18 Staff submitting a more detailed data request to the
19 State with enough time for them to turn it around and
20 get it back to us for this presentation.

21

22 So I would just like to take ownership
23 of that and say it's not really an issue with the State
24 as far as the harvest by community it's just us now
25 knowing in the future that that's something that the
26 Council certainly wants and we will not leave that off
27 of the presentation from now on.

28

29 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
30 Rob. I guess I would like to note that when we put in
31 specific proposals we get all that information from,
32 you know, the State, they break it down and, you know,
33 they provide it to us in response to a proposal we
34 usually get to hear that but, yeah, just for our
35 general information we want to -- like right now, this
36 is kind of prelude to drafting proposals and this is
37 where we want information that helps us to do that and,
38 you know, that's right -- we're not getting it before
39 the process, we're getting it as a response to the
40 process but maybe we need to see some of that now,
41 right, in order to, you know, make better proposals
42 essentially.

43

44 So, yeah, I think we've kind of covered
45 that so unless anybody else has anything else they'd
46 like to add here.

47

48 (No comments)

49

50

0117

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you
2 all for coming forward. It was a very interesting
3 discussion, I think we learned a lot so, yeah, thank
4 you. So let me just consult here with DeAnna just for
5 a second.

6
7 (Pause)

8
9 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you
10 everybody. I wanted to check on our timeframes here
11 because we kind of have some limitations on our meeting
12 time here in this room so I just wanted to see what we
13 could get to here. We have the next item up the deer
14 research. that person, Bonnie isn't available until
15 tomorrow morning so let's move down to the call for
16 wildlife proposals. And, once, again, that's Rob
17 Cross.

18
19 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
20 the record, again, my name is Rob Cross and I'm the
21 Tongass Subsistence Program Manager. So now, as you
22 mentioned before, is the call for wildlife proposals
23 and the Council's opportunity to submit proposals to
24 change Federal subsistence wildlife harvest
25 regulations. So an informational flier on how to
26 submit a proposal to change Federal subsistence
27 regulations can be found on Page 18 of your meeting
28 books. And proposals need to include the regulations
29 you wish to change, the specific changes you're
30 proposing, an explanation of why the regulation change
31 should be made and any additional information that may
32 help in evaluating the proposed change.

33
34 The window to submit proposals opened
35 on February 27th and closes on April 12th. So the
36 Council can vote to submit a proposal during this
37 meeting and the Council Coordinator can then officially
38 submit it. Also the opportunity for Councils to submit
39 proposals is available during the entire meeting. So
40 if a Council member thinks of a proposal later or in
41 response to another agenda item then they're welcome to
42 suggest submitting a proposal at that point. And, of
43 course, anyone can submit a proposal as an individual
44 before the submission window closes.

45
46 So, thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm happy
47 to answer any questions at this point.

48
49 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, okay, are
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0118

1 there any questions from the Council on that.

2

3

(No comments)

4

5

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, I think we're all pretty aware of the process. And it's also been pretty helpful when we have all our meetings in person that we have Staff people here, such as yourself, Rob, that, you know, if we have any questions come up on how to word a proposal and sometimes it's helpful to have you available and I assume you will be available for that.

12

13

14

MR. CROSS: That's correct, Mr. Chair.

15

16

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Very good.

17

18

19

MR. CROSS: Myself and my Staff as well.

20

21

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Very good, thank you very much. So to the Council, I guess I might ask again, I don't know if anybody's ready to discuss proposals right now. I also could throw out the idea that if any groups of Councils from specific areas want to get together in any kind of a working group to discuss proposals we could do that. So I'll just leave it up to the Council, is there anybody that wants to take any action at this time, or like I say we have the entire meeting to develop proposals so I don't know if anybody's prepared right now so I'll just throw that out there.

32

33

34

(No comments)

35

36

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So we will just wait through the course of the meeting and see if there's any proposals develop in the course of our other discussions. Yeah, we've got plenty of time.

39

40

41

So thank you, Rob.

42

43

We could -- the non-rural determination proposal update, do we have Jason Roberts here. Okay, let's move on to that non-rural determination proposal update from Jason Roberts, OSM.

44

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48

MR. ROBERTS: Good afternoon, Chair. Members of the Council. Again, my name is Jason

49

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1 Roberts, I'm an Anthropologist for OSM and I'm going to
2 give you a brief update on the non-rural determination
3 process going forward for the recently submitted
4 proposal NDP25-01. And my supervisor, Brent Vickers, I
5 believe is online if you have any questions he is still
6 planning to be kind of the primary point person on this
7 proposal and then I'll be assisting him as the process
8 moves forward.

9

10 So last year the Ketchikan Indian
11 Community submitted Non-rural Determination Proposal
12 NDP25-01 requesting the Federal Subsistence Board
13 rescind the non-rural determination of the Ketchikan
14 area thereby making Ketchikan a rural community in
15 terms of sort of the Federal Subsistence Program.

16

17 The first step of a non-rural
18 determination proposal, we've already gone through
19 that, is a threshold assessment, which is an evaluation
20 of the merits of the original proposal. At the Federal
21 Subsistence Board meeting last month, the Board adopted
22 the Office of Subsistence Management's recommendation
23 that NDP25-01 met the threshold requirements and so
24 this initiated a full analysis of the proposal which is
25 starting now. OSM Staff will now start collecting data
26 and writing an analysis on the rural character of the
27 Ketchikan community. One thing to keep in mind is that
28 this process for the non-rural or rural determination
29 proposals takes a year longer than it does for your
30 typical wildlife or fishery proposal analysis. The
31 analysis that we finish conducting, that will be
32 presented to the Council for its recommendation at its
33 fall 2024 meeting. So OSM's full analysis of NDP25-01
34 will be presented in the fall of 2024.

35

36 There will also be public hearings on
37 the proposal where the public will be able to provide
38 testimonies on the merits or otherwise regarding the
39 proposal. The Office of Subsistence Management will
40 work with your Council Coordinator, DeAnna Perry, to
41 update you on the dates and locations of those public
42 hearings as soon as we have them set. And then the
43 Board will make its -- the Federal Subsistence Board
44 will make its final determination on NDP25-01 at its
45 meeting in the winter of 2025.

46

47 If the Board adopts the proposal, the
48 Ketchikan area will be recognized as a rural area and
49 that means that Alaskan residents who have their

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1 primary year-round residency in Ketchikan will have
2 rural status and will become eligible to harvest the
3 fish and wildlife for which they have a customary and
4 traditional use determinations on Federal public lands
5 under Federal Subsistence regulations at that time. If
6 the Board fails to adopt the proposal then the
7 Ketchikan area and its residents will maintain non-
8 rural status. The residents will remain ineligible to
9 participate as Federally-qualified subsistence users if
10 that's the case.

11

12 So to summarize the presentation here
13 is just an update, it's not an action item. OSM Staff
14 is beginning its full analysis of NDP25-01 presently.
15 This was a request to recognize Ketchikan as a rural
16 area. There will be public hearings during which the
17 public can share testimony on this issue and the
18 Southeast Council will make a recommendation at its
19 meeting in the fall of 2024 and the Federal Subsistence
20 Board will make a final determination on this proposal
21 at its winter 2025 meeting.

22

23 So please let me know if you have any
24 questions and DeAnna has printed out this sort of
25 timeline on how this proposal process will go moving
26 forward, and that's on the overhead here and also I
27 think you have a handout of that available for you to
28 look over. But other than that if you have any
29 questions that's kind of my update for now.

30

31 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Are there
32 any questions from the Council. Louie Wagner, go
33 ahead.

34

35 MR. WAGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
36 think I asked last fall on the threshold assessment
37 what it started out at, I would like to see that, and
38 where the new one is at now so we know what we're
39 voting for. See, I originally thought the first
40 threshold was 8,000 because Sitka just fit under that
41 assessment. So it just feels like I don't know
42 what.....

43

44 MR. ROBERTS: I'm sorry, through the
45 Chair. I'm not sure I'm totally understanding your
46 question.

47

48 MR. WAGNER: The first threshold.

49

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1 MR. ROBERTS: Uh-huh.

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MR. WAGNER: When the non-rural was determined and now you said -- we were told in the fall meeting that there was a new threshold, I would like to see the old one and the new threshold if possible by the fall meeting.

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, so that will be a part of the overall analysis, right, the population figure but that's not, right, the total deciding factor is not population. This is going to be -- you know, the initial threshold analysis has passed and so now we're moving into a complete analysis of Ketchikan for its rural character which will take into things like population, subsistence harvest, availability of services, like access to grocery stores, things like that, and so we'll have all of that for you to look over before your fall 2024 meeting.

MR. WAGNER: Okay, thank you.

MR. ROBERTS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any other questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I have one. The public hearings, do you envision, how widespread are they going to be, are they going to be like region-wide, Ketchikan area, or do you have any ideas yet?

MR. ROBERTS: That is a question I have to get back to you about. I don't know how widespread they'll be right now.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Well, I'll just kind of make the.....

MR. VICKERS: Hello.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:request that.....

MR. VICKERS: Hello.

REPORTER: Hold on, just a moment.

0122

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:some of
2 those.....

3
4 MR. ROBERTS: Oh, I think Brent's
5 trying to answer the question.

6
7 MR. VICKERS: Hello, can you hear me?

8
9 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: There might be an
10 answer, go ahead.

11
12 REPORTER: Ready.

13
14 MR. VICKERS: Yeah, hello.....

15
16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, go ahead,
17 there.....

18
19 MR. VICKERS: Hello, this is Brent
20 Vickers, I am the Division -- Anthropology Division
21 Supervisor for OSM. And I at this point have been more
22 or less taking the lead on this non-rural determination
23 proposal so I'm a little bit more familiar perhaps than
24 Jason with the process.

25
26 So far much of this is all new. So
27 Board just determined this a few weeks ago that we're
28 going to proceed with an actual full analysis of the
29 rural character of Ketchikan. We have to -- so we have
30 not started looking into that analysis very far, nor
31 have we had much time to start coordinating these
32 public hearings. You're very lucky, in that, the
33 Council Coordinator, DeAnna Coordinator, is one of the
34 only Council Coordinators who is very well skilled in
35 essentially coordinating these public hearings for non-
36 rural determination proposals so she is a great asset
37 for us in having this, she will be able to answer -- if
38 she wants to answer questions about where we're going
39 to have these things, but right now since it hasn't
40 been set I really don't want to give any -- any false
41 assumptions that, oh, yeah, we're going to have it
42 here, here and here, I'd really like to be able to
43 hammer that down with -- with DeAnna before I say
44 anything, but if DeAnna wants to speak about these
45 public hearings at all, please, I invite her to do so.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
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1 Brent. I do want to make the comment that I think the
2 public hearings need to be fairly widely-based. I
3 think the impacts from, you know, Ketchikan, being
4 determined non-rural would have impacts, you know, all
5 the way up into some of the communities in Central
6 Southeast as well, you know, Wrangell, Petersburg,
7 Prince of Wales Island will be a hot topic, you know,
8 in that discussion and, yeah, we get a lot of use from
9 people in Wrangell, Petersburg, so, yeah, all the
10 communities on Prince of Wales. I hope they're fairly
11 widespread so everybody will have a chance to have
12 their input. So I'd just like to make that comment.

13

14 Anybody else on the.....

15

16 MR. VICKERS: Mr. Chair.

17

18 REPORTER: Hold on a minute Brent.

19

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:Council have
21 -- does Brent have something to add?

22

23 REPORTER: Do you have something to
24 add?

25

26 MR. VICKERS: No. No, I just was going
27 to say thank you very much, Mr. Chair, I appreciate
28 that -- that comment and we definitely will take that
29 into consideration while working out some venues.

30

31 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Any
32 other questions from the Council, comments on the
33 process. Patty, go ahead.

34

35 MS. PHILLIPS: I just have a comment.
36 And that is we sort of have been through this when the
37 community below Ketchikan?

38

39 REPORTER: Saxman.

40

41 MS. PHILLIPS: Saxman, they did their
42 rural determination. We had a joint RAC, both Federal
43 Subsistence Board meeting in Ketchikan or Saxman, one
44 or the other but I mean we've been through this before,
45 but Saxman is much smaller and so you're right there is
46 a bigger influence that we need to take into
47 consideration.

48

49 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

0124

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patty.
2 That was a pretty memorable public hearing that we held
3 there in Saxman. A lot of the Council members will
4 remember it went late into the night, there was a huge
5 amount of testimony, you know, it was mostly people
6 from Saxman who were trying to get their rural
7 determination reinstated because it had been taken away
8 from them so it was kind of a different situation but,
9 yeah, it was a very interesting public hearing time.
10 The one thing I remember, specifically from that is
11 John Littlefield was Chair and during the course of the
12 whole public testimony that went on until 10:00 or
13 11:00 o'clock at night, something like that, he never
14 took a break.

15

16 (Laughter)

17

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: He knew that if he
19 took a break, you know, things were going to
20 deteriorate as the evening went, so it was just like if
21 you had to go take a break, go take a break but he
22 didn't want to interrupt the proceedings and I thought
23 that was pretty well handled. And everybody got a
24 chance to give their testimony, nobody was left out,
25 so, yeah.

26

27 Okay, any other questions or comments.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you
32 Jason. Thank you, Brent.

33

34 MR. ROBERTS: I just had one -- I guess
35 one thing to kind of reiterate is that, you know, this
36 would only be for permanent residents, right, of
37 Ketchikan if this goes through. And this is more for
38 the public record, I guess. If Ketchikan is recognized
39 as rural it would only be for permanent residents, not
40 seasonal residents, right, so with that that's all I
41 had to say.

42

43 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you.
44 You know that is an issue. It's an issue in a lot of
45 communities, I think. I know it came out, we had that
46 deer summit on Prince of Wales Island and that was one
47 of the topics that, you know, some of the locals
48 brought forward is just this whole idea of who's a
49 resident now. I mean we have a lot of property in rural
50

0125

1 communities that's, you know, becoming partial year
2 residence and just the whole criteria of how do you
3 claim residency is starting to get a little murky. And
4 there was a lot of people who were upset with, you
5 know, who is being considered a rural resident now, so,
6 yeah, I'm glad you mentioned that, that's going to be
7 an interesting analysis that's going to have to be
8 closely looked at. A community like Ketchikan, it's
9 going to be a factor and it could set a precedent for a
10 lot of places in Southeast Alaska, I think, what kind
11 of determinations you make. So, yeah, be aware of
12 that, it's not just a Ketchikan issue, it's widespread.

13

14 Mike.

15

16 MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
17 I would be most interested in the process used to
18 determine who is seasonal and who is not. We have been
19 struggling with this for some time and we have some
20 suggestions as to how that could be done but that is a
21 very interesting subject I would like to learn more
22 about.

23

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.

25 Anybody else.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you,
30 again.

31

32 MR. VICKERS: Hey, Mr. Chair.

33

34 REPORTER: Okay, hold on just one.

35

36 MR. VICKERS: If I may, this is

37 Brent.....

38

39 REPORTER: Wait, Brent, I have to turn
40 your microphone on, hold on just a minute.

41

42 MR. VICKERS: Thank you.

43

44 REPORTER: Okay, go ahead, Brent.

45

46 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Go ahead.

47

48 MR. VICKERS: Yeah, thank you, I
49 appreciate those comments. Again, this is Brent

50

0126

1 Vickers from OSM. And in regards to your questions, I
2 will have to find out what I can because it is -- it is
3 unclear exactly how it will be established, who is a
4 resident, you know, the idea is that your house and
5 your belongings have to be in this community. How
6 exactly that's verified, I'm unclear with, and so this
7 is information that seems very important, that not only
8 all rural residents, but particularly to this Council
9 and the residents of Southeast right now and so I'll
10 make it a point to try to update you at the next fall
11 meeting if that's -- if that sounds good to you.

12
13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yep, thank you,
14 Brent.

15
16 MR. VICKERS: With what I find out
17 about permanent residency and how that's established,
18 sorry, just to clarify what the update would be.

19
20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I know the State
21 has criteria, but they kind of have two criteria. You
22 know there's a criteria in order to get an Alaska
23 Permanent Fund, which is pretty stringent, but, you
24 know, we had a discussion on this in our community and,
25 you know, for other purposes we were coming at it from
26 who are we obligated to provide services for because we
27 have pretty limited ability to do that and apparently
28 for those types of discussions it's, you know, your
29 main residency is where you spend most of the year.
30 And, you know, for a lot of people they might only be
31 in -- you know they might say they're in Southeast
32 Alaska for four or five months but they might be in
33 Montana for a couple months, they might be in Mexico
34 for a few months, it's like, yeah, you can only be
35 there for a few months of the year and still say that's
36 where you spend most of your time. So it's an
37 interesting -- yeah, it's kind of an interesting
38 subject and, yeah, it does need to be resolved.

39
40 Does somebody else have a comment or
41 question.

42
43 Mike, go ahead.

44
45 MR. DOUVILLE: Okay. Yes, not only how
46 this applies to Ketchikan become a rural and their
47 residence, but, overall, the Craig AC has discussed or
48 is interested in -- has had several discussions about
49 being a resident means that you qualify for the
50

0127

1 Permanent Fund but don't necessarily have to collect it
2 is what is being discussed at our local level so -- and
3 that would determine whether or not, not that you own a
4 domicile and live there for one month out of the year
5 and claim residency. I mean that's a real problem that
6 we're having is many people do that and under State
7 regulations it works.

8

9 So, thank you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So, yeah, and then
12 there's -- you know I don't know what the criteria are
13 in a situation as far as getting a State hunting and
14 fishing license, what do you show to get a, you know,
15 qualify as a resident when you buy a hunting license, I
16 really don't know. I know, you know, if you're out in
17 the field and you get stopped, you know, they look at
18 your driver's license and, yeah, you can have an Alaska
19 driver's license and not be here very long at all so I
20 don't know, there's just -- yeah, there's a lot of
21 questions to be answered on this and it does affect
22 subsistence users. We're getting more and more part --
23 you know part of the year residences in our rural
24 communities, it's really becoming a big factor. I know
25 it came up in the Pelican discussion on that deer
26 proposal, but it's not just Pelican it's everywhere and
27 it's really prominent in, you know, fish bag limits and
28 what not.

29

30 So Patty, do you have something else.

31

32 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
33 Hernandez. I mean like 10 years ago or 15 years ago we
34 had 172 people and a lot of the homes were lived in and
35 now we're down to 83 people and 10 of those are kids so
36 you've got 73 adults. And the criteria for voter
37 registration in the city of Pelican is set by the
38 State, you have to reside in Alaska 30 days with the
39 intent to return and you can vote in State elections.
40 and then for -- for the Permanent Fund you have to
41 return every 90 days, or for your State retirement
42 benefits you have to return every 90 days in order to,
43 you know, meet the criteria of the Permanent Fund or
44 your retirement. So we have people who -- we have a
45 lot of vacant houses, it's their domicile when they
46 come for a few weeks or -- you know, of the year, and
47 the rest of the time it sits empty but if they come
48 back every 90 days to the state of Alaska they can
49 maintain their State residency. For a resident hunting
50

0128

1 license, that's an interesting question, what is the
2 criteria, I believe you have to be a year-round
3 resident in order to get a resident hunting license and
4 if you're not in Alaska year-round then you have to get
5 a non-resident license because we've had people in
6 Pelican try to hunt and fish on a resident license but
7 it was determined that they didn't qualify. So I think
8 we need to find out what those criteria are.

9
10 And so for the Federally-qualified
11 hunter I think it needs to be more spelled out, what
12 that really means. You know it's my opinion that it's
13 12 month residency in your rural community. So I don't
14 know if I'm right or not, I don't know if that's the
15 definition or not.

16
17 So thank you, Mr. Chair.

18
19 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We might have an
20 answer at the table. Rob Cross.

21
22 MR. CROSS: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 So for the record my name is Robert Cross. And I can
24 just read the letter of the law here in the Federal
25 regulations. So it states, to qualify to hunt, trap or
26 fish under Federal subsistence regulations you must
27 have your primary permanent place of residence in a
28 rural area and you must have lived in Alaska for the
29 previous 12 months. Having a seasonal residence does
30 not qualify you as a rural resident. And so there's
31 further definitions in there as far as what qualifies
32 as rural, but that is on Page 6 of the Federal
33 regulations.

34
35 And it sounds like -- or looks like
36 Greg has an additional comment.

37
38 MR. RISDAHL: Yeah, Mr. Chair, if it's
39 okay, I'll just mention. And as far as the State
40 hunting residency goes, you have to also be a resident
41 of Alaska for a full year, you have to claim this as
42 your primary residence. You cannot file taxes in any
43 other state, you can only file for your returns,
44 whatever, here in the state of Alaska. So those are
45 the primary things they look at. But it is murky
46 because I've dealt with this with law enforcement a
47 number of times and it is very difficult because we had
48 people, for instance out at Izembek that were not
49 permanent residents and they pushed the envelope all
50

0129

1 the time and they were not -- they were not -- I mean
2 they did investigations and -- law enforcement did
3 investigations but it is really hard to tell you're not
4 a resident if you come five months versus six months,
5 or seven months or whatever it is. So it is a
6 difficult thing and I can tell you the State Troopers
7 have a difficult time enforcing that, residency. But I
8 mean they'll investigate and if they find that you do
9 have a residence somewhere else and you're filing taxes
10 somewhere else, or whatever, then you will lose your
11 residency, but if you're not then if you're only here
12 six months you still may be considered a permanent
13 residence. So it isn't really black and white but
14 there are -- they do have a definition of what it is to
15 be a resident for hunting and fishing purposes.

16

17 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you
18 for that. Yeah, I think where the problems are and why
19 we're hearing about it on a local level is because, you
20 know, apparently there are ways that, you know, makes
21 it really hard to enforce, people can get around what's
22 in the regulations there. So, yeah, that might be
23 where it has to be addressed is just how do you enforce
24 that wording. It might be challenging. Yeah, doing
25 full scale investigations on people is just, you know,
26 like.....

27

28 (Laughter)

29

30 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:like I say
31 when you're out there in the field and somebody shows
32 you their license it's like, you know, what are you
33 going to do. So thank you both for that.

34

35 I think we should probably think about
36 adjourning because we do have to be essentially out of
37 the building by 5:00 o'clock because they're going to
38 lock it up so in order to have a little bit of time to
39 gather up our stuff, I don't think I want to start any
40 new topics here. We are kind of recessing a little
41 early but we're also starting a little earlier in the
42 mornings so everybody -- so the normal starting time is
43 9:00 but we're asking people to show up at 8:30 and
44 we'll leave at 4:30 so we'll recess for the evening and
45 come back tomorrow morning.

46

47 We'll look for public comments first
48 thing in the meeting and then.....

49

50

0130

1 MS. PERRY: Wolf update.

2

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: What's that?

4

5 MS. PERRY: Wolf update.

6

7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah, we've got
8 some time certain for tomorrow morning, Sara Markegard
9 from Fish and Wildlife Service with the wolf update
10 wants our time tomorrow morning. We might have
11 somebody from Department of Fish and Game to add to
12 that discussion and then we also have the deer research
13 project, the LiDAR project, Bonnie Bennetson is also
14 available tomorrow morning so that's kind of where
15 we'll be getting started.

16

17 So thank you, recess until tomorrow.

18

19 (Off record)

20

21 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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